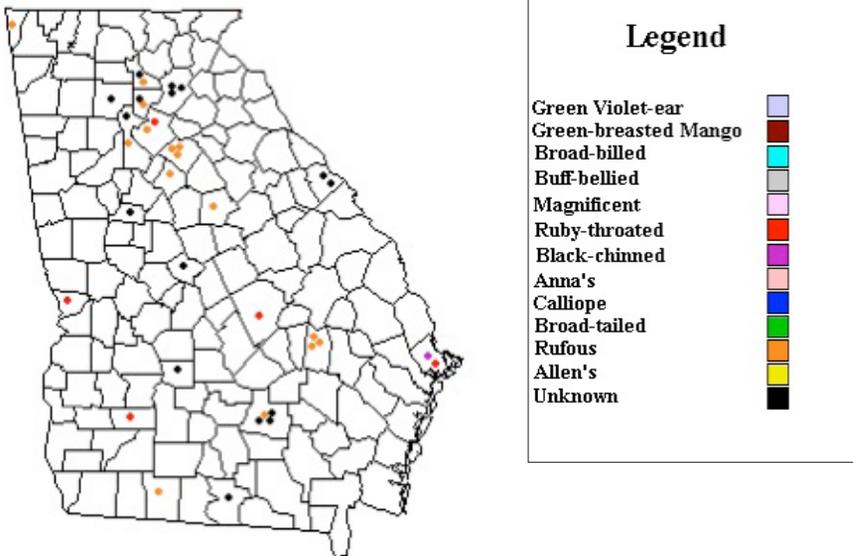


WINTER HUMMINGBIRDS 2008-2009

Master bander and hummingbird expert Rusty Trump created the map below showing the distribution of hummers in Georgia during winter 2008-2009, and also provided data for some species accounts below.

“We had 37 reports of hummers in 23 counties during the winter of 2008-2009. This was the lowest number of winter hummers reported since we have been tracking them. We also had a good number of returning adults that were banded in prior years. Thanks for all of your help in gathering these data on wintering hummingbirds in Georgia. It will be interesting to see the trend on the yearly reports as the word gets out about feeding our winter hummingbirds in Georgia.”

- Rusty Trump



Note: This figure includes some hummingbirds that were observed outside the December – February period.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - The distribution of this species wintering in the Southeast is not fully understood, and some very interesting data were provided by banders and birders. A total of 131 were confirmed in the Region this winter, while an additional 60 probable Ruby-throateds were reported. The vast majority winter on the coast or in the Coastal Plain, with only 5 reported in Georgia (compared to 77 in North Carolina and 49 in South Carolina). Likely influences on this pattern range from public awareness about winter hummingbirds to possible variability in the quality of micro-climates to differences in the availability of insects and nectar-producing plants.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD - One visited a feeder on Skidaway Island from 16-18 December (Russ Wigh).



Black-chinned Hummingbird, Chatham Co., 16 December, by Russ Wigh

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD - As expected, this species was well represented, with 15 confirmed, several of which were returns. Remarkably, a female captured in Good Hope on 15 December (Karen Theodorou) had been banded in Tallahassee, FL, in December 2008; this individual was later recaptured in the same Tallahassee yard on 29 January 2009 (Fred Bassett)!

WESTERN KINGBIRD - A single bird was reported at AWMA on 18 December (Bill Schmid).

WHITE-EYED VIREO - Rare for the Piedmont in winter, one was detected on the Peachtree City CBC on 20 December (Patrick Brisse et al.).

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW – A rare mid-winter sighting and a particularly early arrival were represented by one seen at MBBP on 3 December (Eric Beohm), and 2 seen at OM on 24 February (Walt Chambers).

CAVE SWALLOW - One bird was spotted mixed in with Tree Swallows at MBBP on 3 December (Eric Beohm). As regular readers of this column know, some lingering birds from the late fall flight (a phenomenon which has only developed in recent years) are known to winter successfully in eastern North America.

BARN SWALLOW - Though a few December loiterers and mid-February early arrivals were typical for Barn Swallows, one at Ft. Pulaski on 18 January (Grant McCreary) was quite unusual.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH - Illustrating how drastically the counts of irruptive species can fluctuate, the CBC total was down 83% in Georgia (from