

Additional Fall-Winter Temperature Tolerance Records of Rufous Hummingbirds

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ABSTRACT

Yunick published details of a banded Rufous Hummingbird (Selasphorus rufus) enduring temperatures as low as 4° F at a feeder in Vermont (Yunick 2012). That bird was presumed to have perished. Here I present data on a Rufous Hummingbird banded in east-central Ohio that tolerated similar conditions and survived to return in at least one subsequent fall/winter season. I also correct one erroneous statement and clarify details of another made by Yunick (2012) and provide a listing of additional Rufous Hummingbirds lingering beyond the winter solstice in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Ontario.

OBSERVATIONS

On 20 Nov 2003, I banded a hatch-year (HY) male Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) that had first been noted at the home of Marcella and Wayne Wise in Salt Creek Township near Zanesville, Muskingum County, OH (39°55' 30" N, 81°54' 51" W), on 5 Nov 2003. This bird remained on site until 27 Dec 2003 (Whan 2003a published the last date as 26 Dec), thus remaining on site for 52 days. Temperatures in the morning, beginning on 2 Dec 2003, were recorded upon the hummingbird's first visit (typically ~30 min before sunrise) by Marcella Wise by referring to an outdoor thermometer mounted within a few feet of the feeder the bird was using and also recorded rain and snowfall. Night-time low temperatures were not recorded. These data are shown in Table 1 and indicate that the bird endured temperatures as low as 16°F (17°F on its final day) and several snow events.

Table 1. Morning temperatures (° F) and weather conditions at a Rufous Hummingbird site near Zanesville, OH, during Dec 2003. Bird was last seen on 27 Dec.

Date	Temperature	Weather
02 Dec 2003	25	
03 Dec 2003	29	
04 Dec 2003	28	
06 Dec 2003	-	Snow
09 Dec 2003	30	
13 Dec 2003	16	
14 Dec 2003	27	Snow
15 Dec 2003	28	Snow
17 Dec 2003	29	Snow
20 Dec 2003	25	Snow
22 Dec 2003	-	Sunny
23 Dec 2003	50	Rain
24 Dec 2003	33	Light Snow
27 Dec 2003	17	Light Snow

The bird that Yunick banded in Vermont is presumed to have perished between the afternoon of 15 Jan 2012, when the temperature was 4°F, and the morning of 16 Jan, when the morning low temperature was -8°F, as it was last seen on the afternoon of the 15th (Yunick 2012). Yunick also cites another winter record of a Rufous Hummingbird, confirmed to have perished, reported (erroneously) from Niagara Falls, NY. I am personally familiar with this record, as I banded that bird in Niagara Falls, ON (Bain 2005, Currie 2005,

Chartier 2006) on 2 Dec 2004. That hatch-year female Rufous Hummingbird was first noted by the homeowner on 2 Sep 2004. Unfortunately, it was found dead in a coniferous tree (a purchased Christmas tree) in the homeowner's back yard on 18 Dec 2004. Weather data were not collected at this location, but I suspect that other factors may have contributed to its inability to survive. From 2001 - 2012, I have banded about 90 Rufous Hummingbirds in Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio (Chartier, unpubl. data), and the majority of these birds have turned up at feeders of homes in mainly rural areas, and sufficient stands of coniferous trees for well-sheltered night-time roosting, as well as nearby wooded streams where insects can remain active throughout the winter and are frequently present (pers. obs.). The Niagara Falls, ON, location (43° 06' 21" N, 79°06' 14.8" W, elev. 636 ft) was in a more urban area than most, with little cover (the Christmas tree was purchased to provide this) and, while the large Niagara River was within a mile of this site, there were no nearby small wooded streams. Also, this bird had a very low mass (3.03 g) compared with an average of 3.4 - 3.8 g in this region (Chartier, unpubl. data.), so may not have been finding sufficient protein in the form of insects to build up fat reserves. It seems likely this bird may have succumbed due to a lack of resources in the area where it took up residence more than weather conditions, which were not particularly severe at that time (pers. obs.).

The 2003 Zanesville, OH, Rufous Hummingbird did not perish, but returned to the same site on 1 Oct 2004. I confirmed through recapture that this was indeed the same bird on 3 Nov 2004, now an after-hatch-year (AHY) male, and it remained on site until 17 Jan 2005 (Whan 2005a published the last date as 17 Dec), for a total of 109 days. The homeowner once again kept track of morning temperatures and weather conditions beginning in December through the day after the bird's departure. And again, night-time low temperatures were not recorded. These data are presented in Table 2 which shows that the bird endured temperatures as low as -4°F.

Table 2. Morning temperatures (° F) and weather conditions at a Rufous Hummingbird site near Zanesville, OH, during Dec 2004 and Jan 2005. Bird was last seen on 17 Jan.

Date	Temperature	Weather
01 Dec 2004	40	
02 Dec 2004	28	
03 Dec 2004	32	
04 Dec 2004	18	
07 Dec 2004	67	Windy, rain
13 Dec 2004	32	Snow
14 Dec 2004	19	
15 Dec 2004	23	
20 Dec 2004	-4	
23 Dec 2004	3	
24 Dec 2004	11	
25 Dec 2004	22	
26 Dec 2004	22	
27 Dec 2004	11	
28 Dec 2004	18	
29 Dec 2004	42	
30 Dec 2004	37	
31 Dec 2004	51	Rain
02 Jan 2005	50	
03 Jan 2005	55	
04 Jan 2005	41	
05 Jan 2005	35	Rain
06 Jan 2005	37	Rain
07 Jan 2005	31	
08 Jan 2005	35	
09 Jan 2005	31	
10 Jan 2005	41	
11 Jan 2005	37	
12 Jan 2005	56	
13 Jan 2005	61	
14 Jan 2005	33	
15 Jan 2005	20	
16 Jan 2005	19	
17 Jan 2005	6	
18 Jan 2005	-6	

While it could be inferred that this individual did not survive the -6°F temperatures of 18 Jan 2005, it likely had departed the previous day; because on 9 Oct 2005, Marcella Wise reported an adult male Rufous Hummingbird back at her feeder in Zanesville. Unfortunately, the bird was not consistently visiting the feeder and was last seen on 18 Oct 2005, so it could not be confirmed that this was the same bird present in 2003 and 2004, but it seems very likely.

Yunick (2012) notes one additional record of a Rufous Hummingbird north of 42°45' N, and lingering after the winter solstice, in Genesee County, MI, until 29 Dec 2009 (Byrne 2010). This is another individual that I have personal experience with, having banded the bird (an AHY-F) on 6 Dec 2009. The arrival date (late September) exact location (near Flushing; 43 04' 48" N, 83°50' 50" W), and departure date was published in Chartier and Wuepper (2010) and Wuepper (2010).

While most do not meet Yunick's criterion of being north of 42°45' N, there have been at least 69 Rufous Hummingbirds in Michigan, Ontario, Ohio, and Indiana that have lingered past the winter solstice. These are listed in the Appendix at the end of this paper. Data are based on a review of all known records in these states from 1972 - 2013. It may be notable that none lingered past the solstice until 1994 (though records of Rufous Hummingbirds prior to that year are sparse). Thirteen were north of 42°00' N. Actual coordinates are known for birds that I personally banded, while coordinates are estimated for all others, indicated with a tilde "~".

CONCLUSIONS

Banding efforts of what had long been considered "vagrants" to the east, including Rufous Hummingbirds, have allowed us to begin to unravel their patterns of movement and document various aspects of their life history including population dynamics, site fidelity, longevity, cold tolerance, and molt strategies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank all the homeowners who have generously given access to their properties over the years to allow me to band their Rufous Hummingbirds. And thanks also to Don Gorney from Indiana and Bill Whan from Ohio for meticulously keeping track of all records of Rufous and Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds in their respective states. I would especially like to thank Marcella Wise, of Zanesville, OH, for keeping weather records during the stay of her Rufous Hummingbird in 2003 and 2004. And thanks to Bob and Martha Sargent and Nancy Newfield for being so generous with their knowledge and support over the past several years.

This is contribution No. 004 of the Great Lakes HummerNet:

<http://www.amazilia.net/MIHummerNet/>

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APPENDIX: Rufous and Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds (designated as *Selasphorus* sp.) lingering past the winter solstice in Michigan, Ontario, Ohio, or Indiana. Banders are Susan Campbell (SC), Allen Chartier (AC), Cathie Hutcheson (CH), Terry Johnson (TJ), David Okines (DO), Brainard Palmer-Ball (BP), and Mark Shieldcastle (MS). All records north of 42° N latitude are in bold.

	Arrival	Departure	Location	Coordinates	Source
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	26 Nov 1994	3 Jan 1995	Jeffersonville, Clark Co., IN	~38°17'N, ~85°45'W	Gorney 2004
AHY-M	26 Oct 1996	11 Jan 1997 ¹	Loudonville, Ashland Co., OH	~40°38'N, ~82°13'W	B. Wham (pers. comm.)
AHY-M	8 Oct 1997	12 Jan 1998	Ludington, Mason Co., MI	~43°57'N, ~86°27'W	Granlund 1998, McWhirter 1998, Chartier 2002
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	10 Nov 1997	24 Dec 1997	Owen Sound, Grey Co., ON	~44°34'N, ~80°56'W	Chartier 2006
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	31 Dec 1997	11 Jan 1998 ²	Holland, Ottawa Co., MI	~42°47'N, ~86°06'W	Granlund 1998, McWhirter 1998, Chartier 2002
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	15 Oct 1999	26 Dec 1999	Indianapolis, Marion Co., IN	~39°49'N, ~86°08'W	Gorney 2004
AHY-M (banded in NC in Dec 2000-SC)	26 Oct 2001	31 Dec 2001	Ortonville, Oakland Co., MI	42°49'54"N, 83°23'39"W	Chartier 2002, Grunlund 2002
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	15 Oct 2001	2 Jan 2002	Daviess Co., IN	~38°43'N, ~87°05'W	Gorney 2004
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	31 Oct 2002	22 Dec 2002	Bloomington, Monroe Co., IN	~39°10'N, ~86 30'W	Gorney 2004
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	5 Nov 2002	23 Dec 2002	New Washington, Clark Co., IN	~38°33'N, ~85°32'W	Gorney 2004
AHY-M (banded - AC)	15 Sep 2002	14 Jan 2003	Kidron, Wayne Co., OH	40°15'12"N, 83°32'56"W	Whan 2003, Whan 2003a
AHY-F (banded - AC)	19 Sep 2002	18 Jan 2003	Zane Twp., Logan Co., OH	40°15'12"N, 83°32'56"W	Whan 2003, Whan 2003a
HY-F (banded - AC)	15 Oct 2002	4 Jan 2003	Wooster, Wayne Co., OH	40°50'04"N, 81°55'10"W	Whan 2003, Whan 2003a
AHY-F (banded - AC)	31 Oct 2002	28 Dec 2002	Batavia, Clermont Co., OH	39°04'00"N, 84°11'07"W	Whan 2003, Whan 2003a
AHY-F (banded - AC)	15 Nov 2002	8 Jan 2003	Manchester, Adams Co., OH	38°41'22"N, 83°36'50"W	Whan 2003, Whan 2003a
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	17 Nov 2002	29 Dec 2002	Madeira, Hamilton Co., OH	~39°11'N ~84°21'W	Whan 2003, Whan 2003a
AHY-M (banded -AC)	15 Aug 2003	26 Dec 2003	Newton Twp., Calhoun Co., MI	42°14'23"N, 85°08'23"W	Chartier 2004, Granlund 2004, Murphy 2004
HY-F (banded - AC)	20 Oct 2003	26 Dec 2003	St. Joseph, Berrien Col, MI	42°05'11"N, 86°29'18"W	Chartier 2004, Granlund 2004, Murphy 2004
AHY-M	15 Sep 2003	5 Jan 2004	Bloomington, Monroe Co., IN	~39°10'N, 86°30'W	Gorney 2004
HY-F (Banded - CH)	3 Nov 2003	31 Dec 2003	Evansville, Vanderburgh Co., IN	~37°58'N, ~87°32'W	Gorney 2004
AHY-F (banded - CH)	11 Nov 2003	8 Jan 2004	Bloomington, Monroe Co., IN	~39°10'N, ~86°30'W	Gorney 2004
HY-F (banded - AC)	21 Nov 2003	19 Jan 2004	Indianapolis, Marion Co., IN	39°46'26"N, 86°19'25"W	Gorney 2004
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	13 Oct 2003	5 Jan 2004	Mitchell, Lawrence Co., IN	~38°43'N, ~86°28' W	Gorney 2004
HY-F (banded - AC)	5 Sep 2003	23 Jan 2004	Wayne Lakes, Darke Co., OH	40°01'48"N, 84°40'01"W	Whan 2004, Whan 2004a

APPENDIX (continued)					
	Arrival	Departure	Location	Coordinates	Source
AHY-M	25 Sep 2003	1 Jan 2004	Bath, Summit Co., OH	~41°11'N, ~81°38'W	Whan 2004, Whan 2004a
HY-F (banded - AC)	15 Oct 2003	16 Jan 2004	Middletown Butler Co., OH	39°31'17"N, 84°20'43"W	Whan 2004, Whan 2004a
SY-F (banded - AC) ³	17 Oct 2003	22 Jan 2004	Leesburg, Highland Co., OH	~39°20'N, 83°33'W	Whan 2004a
HY-F (banded - AC)	27 Oct 2003	25 Dec 2003	Blendon Woods, Franklin Co., OH	40°04'14"N, 82°52'23"	Whan 2004, Whan 2004a
HY-M (banded - AC)	5 Nov 2003	27 Dec 2003	Salt Creek Twp, Muskingum Co. OH	39°55'30"N, 81°54'51"W	Whan 2004, Whan 2004a. This paper
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	5 Nov 2003	6 Jan 2004	Massillon, Stark Co., OH	~40°47'N, ~81°31'W	Whan 2004, Whan 2004a
Imm. Male (photos)	21 Nov 2003	7 Jan 2004	Kingston, Frontenac Co., ON	~44°14'N, ~76°30'W	Chartier 2006
AHY-F (banded - CH)	25 Oct 2004	23 Dec 2004	Boonville, Warrick Co., IN	~38°03'N, ~87°16'W	Murphy 2005, Found dead, D. Gorney (pers. comm)
HY-F (banded - AC)	31 Oct 2004	24 Dec 2004	Indianapolis, Marion Co., IN	39°54'03"N, 86°00'49"W	Chartier (unpubl. data) Found dead on snow, D. Gorney (pers. comm.)
AHY-M (banded in 2003 - AC)	1 Oct 2004	17 Jan 2005	Salt Creek Twp., Muskingum Co., OH	39°55'30"N, 81°54'51"W	Whan 2005, Whan 2005a, This paper
AHY-F (banded in GA in 2003-TJ)	5 Oct 2004	15 Jan 2005	Montgomery, Hamilton Co., OH	39°14'50"N, 84°20'17"W	Whan 2005, @Whan 2005a
AHY-F (banded - CH)	30 Sep 2005	26 Jan 2006	Elizabeth, Harrison Co., IN	~38°07'N, ~85°58'W	Murphy 2006
HY-F (anded - CH)	28 Oct 2005	15 Apr 2006	Poseyville, Posey Co., IN	~38°10'N, ~87°47'W	Murphy 2006
AHY-F (banded - CH)	4 Dec 2005	9 Jan 2006	Evansville, Vanderburgh Co., IN	~37°58'N, ~87°32'W	Murphy 2006
HY-F (banded - AC)	25 Aug 2005	8 Jan 2006	Ironton, Lawrence Co., OH	38°33'55"N, 82°38'09"W	Whan 2006
HY-M (banded - BP)	5 Oct 2006	5 Feb 2007	Henryville, Clark Co., IN	~38°32'N, 85.46'W	D. Gorney (pers. comm.)
AHY-F (banded - CH)	24 Oct 2006	29 Jan 2007	Bloomington, Monroe Co., IN	~39°10'N, ~86°30'W	D. Gorney (pers. comm.)
AHY-M (banded - BP)	1 Aug 2006	15 Feb 2007	Lanesville, Harrison Co., IN	~38°14'N, ~85°59'W	D. Gorney (pers. comm.)
AHY-M	13 Nov 2006	27 Jan 2007	Lafayette, Tippecanoe Co., IN	~40°20'N, ~86°53'W	D. Gorney (pers. comm.)
HY-M (banded - AC)	28 Oct 2007	22 Dec 2007	Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Co., MI	42°15'23"N, 85°36'02"W	Byrne 2008, Dombroski 2008, Wuepper 2008
HY-M (banded - BP)	15 Dec 2007	5 Jan 2008	Sana Claus, Spencer Co., IN	~38°07'N, ~86°55'W	D. Gorney (pers. comm.)
HY-M (banded - AC)	23 Oct 2007	10 Jan 2008 ⁴	Bluffton, Allen Co., OH	40°53'55"N, 83°53'30"W	Whan 2008, McCormac 2008, Cartier (unpub.data)
AHY-F (banded - AC)	15 Nov 2007	31 Dec 2007	Mansfield, Richland Co., OH	40°44'51"N, 82°33'42"W	McCormac 2008, Chartier (unpubl. data)
AHY-F (banded - AC)	30 Sep 2009	29 Dec 2009	Hartford, VanBuren Co., MI	42°12'12"N, 86°10'08"W	Byrne 2010, Chartier & Wuepper 2010, Wuepper 2010
AHY-F (Banded - AC)	30 Sep 2009	29 Dec 2009	Flushing, Genesee Co., MI	43°04'48"N, 83°50'50"W	Byrne 2010, Chartier & Wuepper 2010, Wuepper 2010
AHY-M (banded - AC)	4 Nov 2009	2 Jan 2010	Carmel, Hamilton Co., IN	39°59'16"N, 86°04'04"W	Chartier (unpubl. data)

APPENDIX (continued)					
	Arrival	Departure	Location	Coordinates	Source
AHY-F (banded - AC)	14 Oct 2011	2 Jan 2012	Millersburg, Holmes Co., OH	40°33'05"N, 81°51'33"W	Fazio & Wiltraut 2012, Chartier (unpubl. data)
AHY-F (banded - AC)	10 Nov 2011	3 Jan 2012	Damascus, Mahoning Co., OH	40°54'26"N, 80°57'17"W	Fazio & Wiltraut 2012, Chartier (unpubl. data)
HY-M (banded - AC)	1 Nov 2011	17 Apr 2012	Fort Wayne, Allen Co., IN	41°09'12"N, 85°10'07"W	Hengeveld et al. 2012, Chartier (unpubl. data)
HY-F (banded - AC)	15 Sep 2011	12 Jan 2012	Blake, Medina Co., OH	41°03'42"N, 81°48'04"W	Fazio & Wiltraut 2012, Chartier (unpubl. data)
HY-F (banded DO)	28 Sep 2011	24 Dec 2011	Eganville, Renfrew Co., ON	~45°32'N, ~77°06'W	Bain 2012, Mann 2012, C. Cartwright (pers. comm.)
HY-F (banded - AC)	30 Sep 2011	11 Jan 2012	Lowell, Kent Co., MI	42°56'06"N, 85°21'05"W	Byrne 2012, Chartier & Wuepper 2012, Wuepper 2012
HY-F (banded - AC)	28 Nov 2011	20 Feb 2012	Canfield, Mahoning Co., OH	41°03'52"N, 80°47'30"W	Fazio & Wiltraut 2012, Chartier (unpubl. data)
AHY-F (banded in 2009 - AC)	1 Nov 2011	14 Jan 2012	Mansfield, Richland Co., OH	40°44'57"N, 82°31'59"W	Fazio & Wiltraut 2012, Chartier (unpubl. data)
HY-F (banded -AC/MS)	13 Sep 2012	21 Jan 2013	Black Swamp Bird Observatory, Ottawa Co., OH	41°36'18"N, 83°11'35"W	Chartier (unpubl. data), K. Kaufman (pers. comm.)
Adult Male (photos)	~1 Oct 2012	21 Jan 2013	North Olmsted, Cuyahoga Co., OH	~41°26'N, ~81°53' W	B. Whan, K. Kaufmann (pers. comm.)
AHY-M (banded - AC)	2 Oct 2012	28 Dec 2012	White Lake Twp., Oakland Co., MI	42°37'37"N, 83°29'16"W	Chartier (unpubl. data)
AHY-F (banded - AC)	15 Oct 2012	3 Jan 2013	Bloom Twp., Fairfield Co., OH	39°47'50"N, 82°46'20"W	Chartier (unpubl. data)
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	15 Oct 2012	31 Dec 2012	Marysville, Union Co., OH	~40°15'N, ~83°28'W	Chartier (unpubl. data)
AHY-F (banded - BP)	~25 Oct 2012	8 Jan 2013	Plainfield, Hendricks Co., IN	~39°44'N, ~86°24'W	D. Gorney (pers. comm.)
HY-F (banded - AC)	27 Oct 2012	1 Feb 2013	Circleville, Pickaway Co., OH	39°36'44"N, 82°56'20"W	Chartier (unpubl. data)
HY-M (banded - AC)	29 Oct 2012	1 Jan 2013	Findlay, Hancock Co., OH	41°01'36"N, 83°38'50"W	Chartier (unpubl. data)
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	10 Nov 2012	04 Feb 2013 ⁵	Fairborn, Greene Co., OH	~39°48'N, ~84°02'W	Chartier (unpubl. data)
AHY-F (banded - AC)	21 Nov 2012	4 Jan 2013	Lewis Center, Delaware Co., OH	40°10'37"N, 82°59'06"W	Chartier (unpubl. data)
HY-F (banded - AC)	22 Nov 2012	23 Jan 2013	Williamsburg, Clermont Co., OH	39°00'41"N, 84°01'38"W	Chartier (unpubl. data)

¹ Found dead - cat kill?

² This bird was taken into captivity on 11 Jan 1998 to "overwinter" and was released in May 1998. It may have been on site earlier than it was reported.

³ This bird was taken into captivity, to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, on 22 Jan 2004, banded on 22 Mar 2004, and released on 25 Mar 2004 in Cincinnati, OH. Coordinates provided for this record are approximate for Leesburg, Hiland Co., OH.

⁴ McCormac (2008) published the departure date of this bird as 11 Jan 2008.

⁵ This bird was taken to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator by the homeowner on 04 Feb 2013 after showing physical signs of distress.