

Rufous Hummingbird

Record Number: 95-69

4 Nov 1995

Classification: A-P

Cedar Rapids, Linn Co., IA

\*Fuller, \*Kent, \*Edwards, \*Petersen

to 25 Nov; P-0474, P-0476, P-0565, IBL 66:22, 96

DOCUMENTATIONS

Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City 52240 [\*3/24/96]

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City 52246

Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty 52317 [3/24/96]

Peter C. Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport 52803

[3/24/96]

PHOTOGRAPHS

Thomas H. Kent, 5 Nov 1995, P-0474

Robert Bradley, 25 Nov 1995, P-0476

Jim Durbin, Nov 1995, P-0565

LETTER

Nancy L. Newfield to Thomas H. Kent, 5 Feb 1996

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 66:22

Records Committee: IBL 66:96

Kent, T. H. 1998. Immature Female Rufous Hummingbird at Cedar Rapids. IBL 68:99-102

VOTE: 2 A-P, 5 A-P *Selasphorus* sp.

A-P *Selasphorus* sp, Let's see what the outside reviewer has to say.

Accepted as *Selasphorus* sp. at present, Only photo showing R2 with any definity has the feather somewhat obscured by wire. Based on what I can see, the appearance more closely resembles Allen's. R2 doesn't look notched enough to the untrained eye. Will be interested in outside review.

A-P *Selasphorus* sp., I used Stiles (1972, *The Condor* 74:25-32) for the following: Probably immature female based on the light stippling of throat and green rectrix #1 with faint buff to rectrix #1 and definite buff tip to retriix #2. Probably Rufous (vs. Allen's) because rectrix #1 mostly green (on left side at least) and lack of rufous in this feather. Also, lateral rectices appear wide.

A-D for *Selasphorus* sp., In plumage present in photos and according to documentations this could be either a young male of either species (Rufous or Allen's) or even a female of either species. Will wait for review from Nancy Newfield to make final judgment on this on.

A-P, I believe that photo from below with tail spread against cage strongly suggests Rufous; outer rectrices are rufous-based; Allen's outer rectrices are entirely black (see Johnsgard 'Hummingbirds of N. America') p 239. Photo also suggests female. Pattern of underside also tends to eliminate Broad-tailed -- strangely, not mentioned by documenters, but very similar to bird in some photos (Records as close as Seward, NE).

RE-VOTE (at meeting of 20 Sep 1997 with photos of specimen):

7-A-S

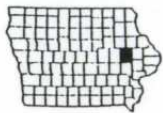
(BE), Des Moines; Peter Ernzen (PE), Ida Grove; Carolyn J. Fischer (CJF), Mason City; James L. Fuller (JLF), Iowa City; Rita Goranson (RGo), Mason City; Robert Gruenewald (RGr), Sanborn; Douglas C. Harr (DCH), Larchwood; Dennis Henrickson (DHe), Estherville; Bill F. Huser (BFH), South Sioux City, NE; Maridel Jackson (MJ), Ankeny; Thomas N. Johnson (TNJ), Mystic; Jack Jones (JJ), Sioux City; \*Tim Julison (TJu), Wapello; Matthew C. Kenne (MCK), Algona; Thomas H. Kent (THK), Iowa City; Fred Leshner (FL), La Crosse, WI; Francis L. Moore (FLM), Waterloo; Wolfgang Oesterreich (WO), Ames; Babs K. Padelford (BKP), Bellevue, NE; Loren J. Padelford (LJP), Bellevue, NE; Marietta A. Petersen (MAP), Walnut; Diane C. Porter (DCP), Fairfield; Beth Proescholdt (BPr), Liscomb; Mark Proescholdt (MPr), Liscomb; Russell Reisz (RR), Missouri Valley; \*John A. Schmitz (JAS), Le Claire; Lee A. Schoenewe (LAS), Spencer; Jim Sinclair (JSi), Indianola; Peder Svingen (PS), Duluth, MN; Ed Thelen (ETH), Spirit Lake; Dennis Thompson (DT), Johnston; John Van Dyk (JV), Sioux Center; Connie Van Ervelde (CV), Grinnell; Robert Van Ervelde (RV), Grinnell; Jan L. Walter (JLW), Mason City; and Hank Zaletel (HZ), Nevada.

211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

### RED-THROATED LOON AT PLEASANT CREEK

CHRIS EDWARDS

On 13 April 1997, John Daniel and Ken Lowder reported a Red-throated Loon at Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area in Linn County. Eager to see this species for the first time, I drove to Pleasant Creek the next morning. After a quick search, I located the bird swimming and diving in a small inlet about 50 yards from shore.



The loon was in basic (winter) plumage. The crown was blackish, fading to a narrow gray strip down the hindneck. The crown and hindneck were noticeably lighter colored than the back, which was black with many small white spots. The face, including the area immediately above the eye, was white. The throat and the front and sides of the neck were white. The division between the dark hindneck and white neck was indistinct and not sharply defined. The sides were mostly white mottled with black. The bill was relatively short and thin, dark gray, had a slightly upturned lower mandible, and was held just above the horizontal. The eye appeared dark, and the legs and feet were black. There were no other birds nearby for a size comparison.

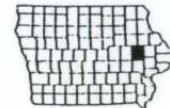
The bird was seen by many observers and was last reported on 10 May. The Red-throated Loon is currently classified as Casual in Iowa. This represents only the sixth spring record and the twentieth accepted record overall. The majority of sightings have occurred from late October to early December. Because of its lengthy stay, this bird was the second earliest and the record latest spring record.

85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317

### IMMATURE FEMALE RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD AT CEDAR RAPIDS

THOMAS H. KENT

This hummingbird first appeared at the feeder of Barbara and Nick Stark at 238 24th Street in Cedar Rapids in Linn County on 27 October 1995 (Stone 1995). It was reported to Weir Nelson on 4 November and reported to the Birdline by Jim Durbin the same day (fide Jim Fuller). From 4 to 25 November it was said to have been seen by at least 150 people (Stone 1995). Documentations were submitted by myself, Jim Fuller, Chris Edwards, and Pete Petersen. Photographs were submitted by myself, Jim Durbin, and Rob Bradley.



This average-sized hummingbird was generally gray below and green above with rufous coloration from the bend of the wing down the flanks to the undertail area. The bill was straight, thin, and black. The face had a small white patch behind the eye. The throat was delineated by fine rows of streaks with a larger central spot that was occasionally perceived as red. The tips of the outer tail feathers were white. The bird made high-pitched metallic chip notes, singly or in series. It spent most of the time sitting in bushes along the edge of the yard with intermittent visits to the hummingbird feeder. During the time the bird was present, temperatures fell into the teens and snow was on the ground.

On 25 November the bird was mist netted and photographed by Rob Bradley and taken to the greenhouse at Kirkwood Community College. These photographs, along with documentations and a photo taken on 5 November in the yard (Figures 1, 2), were sent to an outside expert for evaluation (Newfield 1996).

On 22 April 1996, I learned that the bird had appeared to be doing well in the greenhouse until 22 December 1995, when it was found dead. It was placed in a freezer by Jodeane Cancilla, who later delivered it to me. I had contacted Jim Dinsmore concerning instructions for depositing the specimen at Iowa State University. Before delivering the specimen to Dinsmore, I took the measurements and photographs that would be critical for identification.

The rufous on the sides and undertail coverts easily placed this bird in the genus *Selasphorus*, and the bright rufous undertail coverts excluded two members of that genus: Broad-tailed and Calliope (Newfield 1996). The other two species, Rufous and Allen's, are very similar in appearance to each other and only adult males are readily separated in the field. Adult males have red gorgets and differ in back color (rufous in Rufous, green in Allen's).

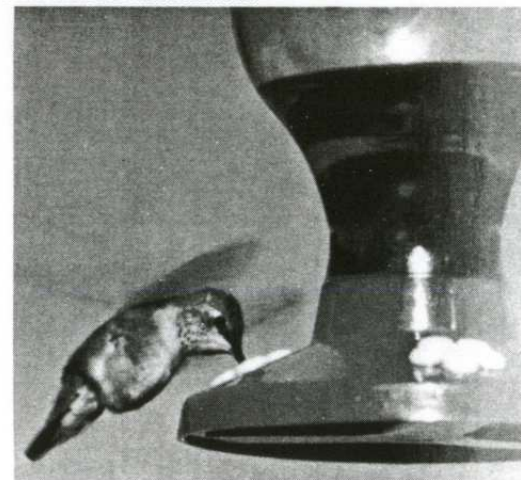


Fig. 1. Rufous Hummingbird at feeder, Cedar Rapids. Jim Durbin

Adult females, immature males, and immature females are distinguished from each other by throat markings and color of central tail feathers (Stiles 1972, Heidcamp 1997). These findings are difficult to impossible to determine in the field. Once age and sex are determined, measurements (length of wing, tail, and culmen, width of first and fifth rectrices) and shape of the tip of the second rectrix are used to separate Rufous and Allen's hummingbirds.



Fig. 2. Resting in bush, 5 Nov. 1995. T. H. Kent.

The photographs taken at the feeder by Jim Durbin and after netting by Rob Bradley show the throat with fine rows of dots, which are finer centrally and toward the chin, and one or more small central spots (Figures 3, 4). This pattern is similar to that in the photographs of immature females published by Heidcamp (1997). The photographs taken at the time of netting, also show a lack of rufous in the central rectrices and rump, which also suggest that the bird is a female. The species identity would require measurements.

I used the tables presented by Heidcamp (1997), which are derived from Stiles (1972), and the black-and-white line drawings in Stiles (1972) to determine the age, sex, and the species represented by the specimen. The lightly stippled throat with a few (hard to determine how many) spots centrally (reported as red in life) suggest immature female (adult females have more red spots centrally and immature males have more evenly distributed red spots).

Rectrix #1 (middle) was mostly green with rufous on outer half of the proximal 40% and a tiny faint bufftip (Figure 5). Immature males have over 66% rufous on this feather and adult females lack the bufftip. Rectrix #2 had a small but distinct white tip characteristic of immature females and lacked emargination (indenting) found in most adult females and immature males. Rectrix #5 was white at the tip (20%), black in the middle (30%), and rufous at the base (50%). This feather is less useful for determining age and sex. One would think that examination of the gonads would be the best way to determine sex, but Dinsmore was not able to locate them when he dissected the specimen, probably because the gonads of an immature hummingbird are very small.



Fig. 3. Throat pattern, 25 November 1995. Rob Bradley.



Fig. 4. Undertail pattern, 25 November 1995. Rob Bradley.

The following measurements were obtained and are compared with those given in Heidcamp (1997) for immature females (Allen's/Rufous): exposed culmen 17 mm (<15.8/>18.4); wing chord 46 mm (<42.8/>43.6); tail 26 mm (<24.2/>25.0); width rectrix #1 9.0 mm (<7.8/>8.2); and width rectrix #5 4.5 mm (<3.2/>3.3). All of the measurements are greater than would be found in Allen's (included adult females and immature males, which are smaller than immature females), and only the length of the culmen falls short of the range for Rufous.

In conclusion, this hummingbird is an immature female based on coloration of the throat and tail and

a Rufous based on measurements. Although late fall *Selasphorus* hummingbirds in Iowa would be expected to be immatures and Rufous, proving that a bird is not the much-less-likely Allen's is exceedingly difficult and probably requires a specimen. A netted bird might be identified with good photographs of the throat, upper tail and rump, and spread tail feathers; measurements of culmen, wing chord, tail, and width of rectrices #1 and #5; and examination of color and shape of plucked rectrices #1, #2, and #5. Sorting through the published data and photographs is very useful, but more easily said than done.

This is the sixth confirmed record of *Selasphorus* hummingbird for Iowa. All were adult males except for the current record and the first bird, which was not identified as to species (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). Rufous Hummingbird is a regular fall vagrant to the eastern United States; the one spring record from Iowa is very unusual. A seventh record is from 1996. Allen's Hummingbird occurs on the West Coast with scattered fall/winter records from the Gulf Coast and an unusual record from Massachusetts (Andrews and Baltosser 1989).

The fact that we have information on this bird is the result of an incredible effort by many individuals, and I would especially like to thank Barbara and Nick Stark, Weir Nelson, Jim Durbin, Jim Fuller, Chris Edwards, Pete Petersen, Larry Stone, Rob Bradley, Jodeane Cancilla, Nancy L. Newfield, Jim Dinsmore, and many others who saw the bird or cared for it.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Andrews, E. F., and W. H. Baltosser. 1989. First record of Allen's Hummingbird east of Louisiana. *American Birds* 43 :429-430.
- Heidcamp, A. 1997. *Selasphorus* hummingbirds. *Birding* 29:18-29.
- Kent, T. H., and J. J. Dinsmore. 1996. *Birds in Iowa*. Privately published, Iowa City and Ames.
- Newfield, N. L. 1996. Letter to Records Committee, 5 February 1996.

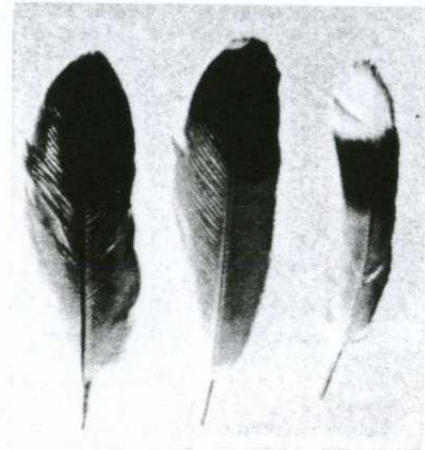


Fig. 5. Rectrices #1, #2, and #5. Rectrix #1 is widest. T. H. Kent.

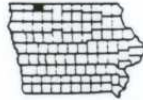
Stiles, F. G. 1972. Age and sex determination in Rufous and Allen hummingbirds. *Condor* 74:25-32.  
Stone, L. 1995. In from the cold for lost hummingbird. *Des Moines Register*, 29 Nov 1995.

211 Richards Street, Iowa City, IA 52246

### RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD IN DICKINSON COUNTY

RUTH WINEBRINNER

On a beautiful summer morning, 21 August 1996, my husband Ed and I were enjoying breakfast on the deck of our home on the north shore of Spirit Lake in Dickinson County. My husband commented that he had seen a funny looking hummingbird that appeared brown. In a few minutes I saw the bird at our feeder and immediately got out my binoculars and field guide. After watching the bird for several minutes, I was sure that I was looking at a male Rufous Hummingbird. The most obvious difference from the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that regularly visit our feeders was that much of its body including its back, tail, and belly were copper orange in color. The throat was a bright iridescent reddish orange with a band of white separating the throat from the copper orange of the belly.



I watched the bird for about an hour that afternoon as it fed at the hummingbird feeder and then flew to a nearby tree where it perched and preened. I called the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and the next morning Ed Thelen came by and photographed the bird. On the 23rd, the bird spent much of its time perched on a barbed wire fence 15 feet from the feeder and challenged any hummingbird that came close to the feeder. My husband raises flowers, and the Rufous Hummingbird took over a bed of red salvia near the feeder. He also visited the grape jelly we had at our feeder station. I last saw the Rufous Hummingbird about 10 a.m. on the 23rd but during the 2 1/2 days he was there, I did little else but watch him. He brought much joy to me and the others who got to see him during this once-in-a-lifetime happening.

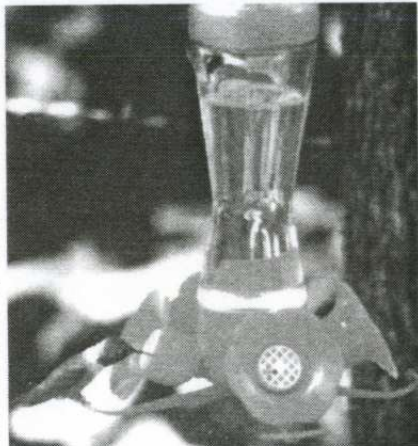


Fig. 1. Rufous Hummingbird at Spirit Lake, 22 Aug. 1996. Ed Thelen.

24535 104th Street, Spirit Lake, IA 51360

### ANOTHER BLACK-HEADED GULL IN DICKINSON COUNTY

MARK PROESCHOLDT

In 1997, for the third summer out of four years, an adult Black-headed Gull appeared in Dickinson County. The first sighting in Dickinson County was August 1994 when two adults and one juvenile were seen. In June and July of 1996, an adult was seen, and in July 1997 an adult was seen.



On the morning of 16 July 1997, Ed Thelen literally tracked me down in my car when he caught up to me with his vehicle and told me that he had just seen an adult Black-headed Gull at the Jemmerson Slough area in Dickinson County. This gull had been seen by others for some days prior to 16 July and had been reported to the Birdline.

I located the gull around 10:20 a.m. It was at a small wet area across the road from Jemmerson Slough where there was land available for gulls to roost. The gull had a noticeable dark brown head similar to the shape of a Bonaparte's Gull's hood that ended higher up on the back of the neck than does the hood of a Franklin's Gull. It had a dull red bill, red inside its mouth, and was smaller than Ring-billed Gulls that were with it. It had a light gray back. From a distance of 130 yards, I could see no white eye crescents with my scope while the eye crescents of nearby Franklin's Gulls were very vivid.

I saw it fly over a nearby pond, and the wings looked long. I could see dark smudges at the ends of the underwings and also white slashes or small wedges (like a Bonaparte's Gulls) at the tips of the upper wings. It also had a bright white leading edge on the upper wings.

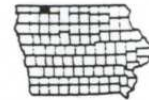
This is the fifth record of a Black-headed Gull in Iowa. The other two sightings were November 1989 at Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County and November 1994 at Big Creek State Park in Polk County.

P. O. Box 65, Liscomb, IA 50148

### SUMMER SABINE'S GULL RECORD

LEE A. SCHOENEWE

On 8 July 1997, the Northern Iowa Prairie Lakes Audubon chapter met at Mini Wakan State Park at the north end of Spirit Lake in Dickinson County. After a picnic supper and meeting, the group discussed doing a little birding. On 4 July, I had found, for the second year in a row, a Black-headed Gull hanging out with about 100 Franklin's Gulls at the swan pen wetland enclosure at the Hogsback WPA area (see note by Proescholdt in this issue). Some people had never seen the gull, and it is always a good spot, so off we went.



We set up the scope and found the Black-headed Gull. As people took turns with the view in the scope, I scanned the other gulls in the area. I then noticed a small gull flying over the water and alighting on the surface to feed. The behavior along with the distinctive black, white, and gray wedge-shaped pattern of the wings and back in flight identified it as a Sabine's Gull.



Rufous Hummingbird P-0476  
Gedar Rapids, Linn Co., IA 95-69  
25 Nov 1995 Robert Bradley

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Rufous Hummingbird P-0476  
Cedar Rapids, Linn Co., IA 9569  
25 Nov 1995 Robert Bradley

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Rufous Hummingbird P-0476  
Cedar Rapids, Linn Co., IA 9569  
25 Nov 1995 Robert Bradley

< >036 43 01 NNNNN+01RU 389

Rufous Hummingbird P-0476  
Cedar Rapids, Linn Co., IA 9569  
25 Nov 1995 Robert Bradley

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Rufous Hummingbird P-0400  
Cedar Rapids, Kirkwood greenho  
22 Dec 1995 J. Cancilla

<No. 13>001 22-01 FINFINN-37AU 327

Rufous Hummingbird P-0400  
Cedar Rapids, Kirkwood greenho  
22 Dec 1995 J. Cancilla

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Rufous Hummingbird P-0400  
Cedar Rapids, Kirkwood greenho  
22 Dec 1995 J. Cancilla

<No. 4>010 22-02 FINFINN-33AU 328







Nancy L. Newfield

95-69



5 February 1996

Casa Colibri  
3016 45<sup>th</sup> Street  
Metairie, Louisiana 70001  
(504) 835-7231

Thomas H. Kent, Secretary  
IOU Records Committee  
211 Richards Street  
Iowa City, Iowa 52246

Dear Tom,

Sorry I could not get to reviewing the record of the *Selasphorus* hummingbird from Cedar Rapids (Linn County), Iowa, in November 1995 more promptly. As I'm sure you know, identification of members of the *Selasphorus rufus/sasin* species complex is difficult, if not impossible, without having a bird in the hand. I have examined the photographs and read the documentations carefully. Three of the documentations describe rufous flecking on the back and wing, characters that would undeniably permit identification of this individual as an immature male *S. rufus*, but I can see no rufous flecking in the photographs.

The photo taken on 5 November 1995 does not appear to be of the same individual as the others that were taken after the bird was captured. Perhaps that is simply an artifact of the photography, but I noted a lack of markings on the throat and auricular area and the paleness of the underparts. From that photo, using those characters, I would conclude that this bird is an immature female, but beyond that, specific identification is not possible, though the rufous color of the undertail coverts eliminates either Broad-tailed *Selasphorus platycercus* or Calliope Hummingbird *Stellula calliope*.

The in-hand photos taken on 25 November 1995 show an individual that seems to be more brightly colored, heavily stippled in the auricular area, and lightly stippled elsewhere on the throat than the hummingbird shown perched in a bare shrub. Again, this could be owing to a difference in the camera equipment or the developing process. The bright rufous undertail coverts eliminates either Broad-tailed *Selasphorus platycercus* or Calliope Hummingbird *Stellula calliope* from consideration. The lack of obvious rufous color in the central rectrices and on the rump strongly suggests that this individual is a female of the *Selasphorus rufus/sasin* complex, though the boldness of the stippling in the auricular area

95-69

and the shape of the outermost rectrix (#5) prevent unequivocal identification as to sex.

So, the ultimate answer is that the individual that was captured on 25 November 1995 is most likely, but not absolutely, a female member of the *Selasphorus rufus/sasin* species complex. It is not possible to be more specific without obtaining the measurements of the exposed culmen, wing chord (folded, but lying naturally in place, not pressed), tail length, and widths (plucked) of rectrices 1, 2, and 5.

As a reference, I use "Age and Sex Determination in Rufous and Allen Hummingbirds" by F. Gary Stiles [The Condor 74:25-32, 1972]. If this bird is still residing in the college greenhouse, efforts should be made to recapture it and obtain the pertinent measurements with a caliper.

Best Regards,

  
Nancy L. Newfield

95-69

May 3, 1996

Nancy L. Newfield  
Casa Colibri  
3016 45<sup>th</sup> Street  
Metairie, LA 70001

Dear Nancy,

The Selasphorus hummingbird found at a feeder in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, from 4 to 25 November, captured, and taken to a greenhouse for the winter died sometime on 22 December 1995. The specimen was saved and I now have it in front of me. It will be kept frozen until I can get it to James J. Dinsmore at Iowa State University in Ames.

I have taken the measurements that you suggested. I have only recently gained some experience in measuring birds, but it seemed straight forward, and I think my measurements are reasonably accurate. I plucked rectrices 1, 2, and 5 as you suggested. I couldn't see how to measure them without doing this. I have taken more photos of the bird and plucked tail feathers.

My observations are as follows:

Exposed culmen: 17 mm.

Wing chord: 46 mm, right and left. I measured from the bend of the wing to the tip with the wing lying gently on a piece of paper.

Tail: 26 mm. I measured from the top with a piece of paper pushed to the point of resistance.

Width of plucked rectrices: #1 (inner) -- 9 mm; #2 -- 8 mm; #5 -- 4.5 mm. I measured the maximum width.

These measurements fit Stiles' measurements for immature female Rufous Hummingbird.

Coloration of rectrices:

#1: Mostly green with rufous on outer half of proximal 40%.

#2: Outer 20% black with tiny buff spot near tip; proximal 65% rufous; middle 15% green diminishing to none on one side.

#5: outer 20% white, middle 30% black, inner 50% rufous.

I cannot detect a notch on rectix #2.

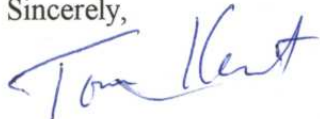
The throat and breast feathers are ruffled, speckled with green-gold spots, no red.

Rufous on under tail coverts and flanks, none on back.

I was excited when I found out the specimen was saved. I was more surprised to find out that I knew the person who was in charge of its care.

We appreciate your willingness to give us further help on this record. I can send you the tail feathers if that would help. After the specimen is prepared, I sure we could arrange to also send it for your inspection.

Sincerely,



Thomas H. Kent, Secretary  
IOU Records Committee  
211 Richards Street  
Iowa City, IA 52246



95-69

July 24, 1996

Professor James J. Dinsmore  
Iowa State University  
Dept. of Animal Ecology  
Ames, IA 50011

Dear Professor Dinsmore:

This letter accompanies a hummingbird specimen that I am delivering to you for deposit in the Iowa State University specimen collection.

This hummingbird, identified as *Selasphorus species*, was at Barbara Stark's feeder in Cedar Rapids from 4 to 25 November 1995 when it was netted by Rob Bradley and taken to the greenhouse at Kirkwood Community College (*Iowa Bird Life* 66:22). It was photographed at the feeder and in-hand at the time of capture.

The photographs and documentations by several observers were examined by Nancy L. Newfield of Louisiana, who has examined previous specimens of Rufous/Allen's hummingbirds, and is considered an expert on identification of these two similar species. She considered the bird to be a probable female and narrowed the identification to Rufous or Allen's (letter Nancy L. Newfield to Thomas H. Kent, 5 February 1996, copy enclosed).

In late March or early April 1996, I called Rob Bradley to try to find out what had become of the bird. He indicated that it had died recently, and said that he would ask what had become of it. I did not hear from him and failed to reach him by phone. On 23 April 1996, I wrote to Bradley and soon received a phone call indicating that the bird was saved in a freezer and that Jodeen Cancilla was to call me. She is in charge of the Raptor Center at the Macbride Nature Recreation Area and works part time at the community college. I called Jodeen, whose father is a retired former colleague of mine. She indicated that the bird was found dead on 22 December 1995, and that she had it in a freezer.

I talked to you on the phone before I talked to Jodeen concerning the procedure for getting it to Iowa State University. Jodeen delivered the specimen to me. I examined, measured, and photographed it. I removed the right rectrices #1, #2, and #5 and measured and photographed them. I sent photographs and measurements to Nancy L. Newfield (letter 3 May 1996, copy enclosed), but I have not received a response as of this date.

As you can see from my letter, I believe this bird to be an immature female Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) based on measurements and coloration. When putting up the skin, it would be helpful if the sex can be verified. I understand that this is not always easy to do.

In addition to the main specimen, I enclose the three rectrices that I plucked and photographs of them.

Thank you for agreeing to preserve this important specimen.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Kent, Secretary  
IOU Records Committee  
211 Richards Street  
Iowa City, IA 52246



## DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD

95-69

SPECIES: HUMMINGBIRD (Selasphorus Sp.)(Immature Male)

LOCATION: Backyard of Barbara Stark, 238 24th Street Dr., Cedar Rapids (Linn County).

DATE & TIME: 4 November (11.00 AM for about two minutes)  
5 November (10:45-11:45 AM)  
9 November (12:05-10 PM)

OBSERVER: Jim Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, 52240

OTHERS: First reported by Jim Durbin. With me was Tom Kent. Others there at the same time were E. & E. Armstrong, R. Allen, T. Schantz, C. Caster, C. Edwards, A. Martin, R. & K. Bradley. There were MOB.

BACKGROUND: A Hummingbird at this location was reported to Weir Nelson at Wildlife Habitat on 3 November. It was verified as a hummingbird by Jim Durbin on 4 November. Tom Kent and I arrived about 10:45 AM, and waited approximately fifteen minutes when the bird appeared at the feeder, and then sat low in a nearby tree for a total of about two minutes. The following day, we also watched the bird for about an hour, and it was visible virtually the entire time, either at the feeder, or in a nearby bush.

DESCRIPTION: The bird was a relatively small hummingbird, which was generally green above and brownish and off-white below. The head was grayish on top, there was a dark eye, and a white area directly behind the eye. The bill was black, long, and thin, and its length was about the width of the bird's head. The back was green, but in the right light, flecks of rufous could be seen. The folded wing was dark. The tail was green. There was a reddish brown wash along the belly and breast under the wing and also under the tail. The rest of the belly and throat were off-white. There was also a rufous area along the back directly above the wing. In the middle of the throat, one gorget feather appeared red in the right light. When the tail was spread, it appeared that the tips of the outer two or three tail feathers were white

VOICE: The bird often made a rather high-pitched metallic chip noise, with single notes strung together in a machine-gun fashion.

SIMILAR SPECIES: I would identify this bird as a member of the Selasphorus complex. Because of the rufous on the back just above the wing it is most likely a Rufous or Allen's, and of those two, Rufous would be more likely from its range.

OPTICS & CONDITIONS: Both the first two days were sunny late morning. Swift Audubon (8.5 X 44) binoculars were used at distances of 12-20 feet, looking southeast on the first day and mostly south the second.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: I have seen only adult birds of this complex, and during the breeding season.

REFERENCES & FIELD NOTES: Field notes were written both the evenings of 4, 5 November, and this form was typed on 17 November. National Geographic Field Guide, and Advanced Birding were seen after the first and second viewings, and during the second viewing.

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## DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

**Species:** Rufous/Allen's hummingbird (*Selasphorus sp.*); **Number:** 1 (probably imm. male)

**Location:** 238 24<sup>th</sup> Street Drive SE, Cedar Rapids, IA

**Date:** 4, 5 November 1995; **Time:** 11:00 to 11:01 a.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup>; 11:00 to 11:45 a.m. (guess) on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Name and address:** Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

**Others before/with/after:** Jim Durbin (earlier), with Jim Fuller and many others

**Habitat and circumstances:** small urban backyard with hummingbird feeder.

**Description of bird:** An averaged-sized hummingbird with straight, thin black bill. Light rufous from bend of wing down flanks and under tail. Also rufous on upper tail and some interspersed in wing and back. Otherwise upper parts greenish and under parts gray. Throat delineated by fine spots. There was a small white patch behind eye. In flight, the tips of the outer tail feathers appeared white. I could not judge the extent of white or the shape of the rectrices. The spotted throat and amount of rufous suggest an immature male (Advanced Birding).

**Voice:** I did not hear any sound.

**Similar species:** The amount of rufous was too much for Calliope or Broad-tailed.

**Any one have reservations?:** There was discussion about whether Rufous females and immatures can be identified in the field.

**Light:** overcast; **Distance:** 15-40 feet; **Optics:** 10x binocular, 400 mm lens.

**Previous experience:** I saw the first *Selasphorus sp.* in Iowa on 25 September 1984. I have seen several Rufous and Allen's hummingbirds in the west.

**References before/after viewing:** looked at several sources after viewing.

**Time of notes:** after first viewing; **Final typing:** 2 days

## DOCUMENTATION FORM FOR IOWA BIRD SIGHTINGS

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Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Avenue, North Liberty, IA 52317

How many? 1

What Species? Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (immature or female)

How many? 1

Location? 238 24th St. Dr. SE, Cedar Rapids, Linn Co.

Type of Habitat? Backyard with lilac bushes and hummingbird feeder.

When? November 5, 1995, 10:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Who? Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317.

Others with you: Chris Caster, Tim Schantz, Tom Kent, Jim Fuller, Reid Allen, Eugene Armstrong, Eloise Armstrong

Others before or after you:

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Small size and shape similar to Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Bill black, thin, long, and straight. Eye dark. Small white area behind eye. Crown and nape dark grayish-green. Back dark green with very small amount of rufous flecking. Sides of back (above folded wing on perched bird) rufous. Rump dark green. Upperside of folded wings blackish. Upperside of central tail feathers appeared all green. Upperside of outer tail feathers not seen well, but patterned with white, black, and rufous from tips to bases. Throat lightly streaked, with one dark central gorget feather. Breast whitish with light gray smudges. Belly white. Sides and undertail coverts light rufous. In flight, axillaries light rufous.

Call note, given singly or in a short series, was a flat "chip". The bird spent most of the time resting in a lilac bush, with occasional visits to a nearby hummingbird feeder.

Similar species; how eliminated: Calliope and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds have less rufous on the sides, back, and undertail coverts.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? No.

Viewing conditions: Overcast, 10-30 feet away, viewed with 8 x 40 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Minimal experience with Rufous Hummingbird; no experience with Allen's Hummingbird.

References and persons consulted before writing description: National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Advanced Birding (Kaufman.)

How long before field notes made? Immediately

How long before this form completed? Six hours.

DOCUMENTATION FORM  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

95-69

What species? Allen's / Rufous Hummingbird (Selasphorus sp.) How many? 1

Location? 238 24<sup>th</sup> St. Dr. SE. - Cedar Rapids, IA.

Type of Habitat? urban yard

When? date(s): Nov. 5 & 9, 1995 time: 2:15 to 3:00 - both days.

Who? your name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Others with you: 1/5 - Wren Nelson, Pam & Reid Allen, Ann Barber, Carol Thompson <sup>others</sup> 1/19 - Corey Stevens, MC Peterson

Others before or after you: mob.

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

White below, sides rufous but <sup>5</sup> back & top of head bright green, some rufous visible along sides above wing when at rest. Bill black. Tail rufous at base, green next with white tips on outermost three on each side. Central tail feathers seemed very wide suggesting Rufous. wings greenish. some throat spots.

Similar species; how eliminated: To distinguish between Rufous + Allen's, bird (now at Kirkwood College) should be carefully measured - see Stiles-Louder V24, p2532. Ruby-thr. lacks rufous sides & tail

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no  
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment. O.C. on 11/5, sunny on 11/9  
within 3m (est), perched & in flight, 10X40 Zeiss Binocs  
Photographed, but photos not definitive

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen both species in the west.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Geo. garde; True-Hb. of N. Am. - Stiles-Louder V24 p25-32, 1974

How long before field notes made? during obs this form completed? 5 hrs started, completed 11/9.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).

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**WINTER QUARTERS: GREENHOUSE**

# In from cold for lost hummingbird

**This species is not normally found in Iowa; how he got here is anyone's guess.**

**By LARRY STONE**  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Just in the nick of time, a wandering hummingbird has found winter quarters in a greenhouse at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids.

Rob Bradley of Cedar Rapids, who is a licensed bird bander, captured the tiny bird Saturday and took it to the greenhouse. It apparently is adapting well, oblivious to the snow and single-digit cold that hit Iowa Monday and Tuesday.

"He's doing fine," said greenhouse technician Megan Diehm. "He just flies around, and we try not to bother him any more than we have to."

A sign on the greenhouse door warns visitors not to let the hummingbird escape into an adjoining shop building, Diehm said.

The bird feeds on commercial nectar supplied by Weir Nelson, owner of the Wildlife Habitat bird supplies

store in Cedar Rapids. Nelson hopes the hummingbird will find insects for additional protein.

The immature hummingbird appeared in Cedar Rapids Oct. 27 at the feeder of Barbara and Nick Stark Nelson. Other bird-watchers confirmed that it was not a ruby-throated hummingbird, which is the only species normally found in Iowa.

The bird was tentatively identified as an immature rufous, which nests in the northwestern United States, or an Allen's, which normally nests in California. There is talk of recapturing the bird to measure the width of its tail feathers, which is one way to distinguish between the two species.

Barbara Stark said at least 150 people came to her home to see the rare bird after it was reported on the Iowa Birdline, a recorded telephone service for birders.

Nelson said he hopes the bird can survive in the greenhouse and be released in the spring.

"We're trying to save the little fella's life is all we're doing," Nelson said. "He probably wouldn't have made it through (Monday) night," when snow and temperatures below 10 degrees hit Cedar Rapids.