

# Citizen Science: *Project FeederWatch*

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I have been participating in the Cornell University Ornithology Lab *Project FeederWatch* for several years. *FeederWatch* is a winter backyard birdwatch program that goes from November to April.

Of note this year was a very small number of Goldfinches and a much larger-than-usual number of winter hummingbirds. GCBO reported this in a newspaper article in February, and offered to come out and band birds in one's backyard if there were a large number of hummers visiting the feeders.

I was filling my two feeders several times a week, and seeing Rufous and Black-chinned hummers feeding regularly, so I called GCBO and ask for banding. On Sunday, February 5, Susan Heath, GCBO licensed bird bander, and Tad Finnell, GCBO volunteer, came to my backyard to band hummers.

Tad put up the metal cages around my two feeders, and Susan set up her equipment on my kitchen bar area. Todd delivered the birds in the net sacks, and Susan did the banding and recording. In one hour, Susan banded six Rufous and two Black Chins. Todd said there were many more than he captured, and he was sure that he saw at least one Calliope. It was a delightful experience to watch Susan at such close range examining the hummers, recording each one's weight, the amount of fat on the breast, the sex, whether adult or juvenile.

Nature always rewards us with beautiful and interesting experiences right in our own backyards if we take the time to look!



Susan Heath, GCBO Licensed Bird Bander, bands a rufous hummingbird. Feb. 5, 2012.

## What is *Project FeederWatch*?

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a world leader in the study, appreciation, and conservation of birds. Our hallmarks are scientific excellence and technological innovation to advance the understanding of nature and to engage people of all ages in learning about birds and protecting the planet.

Founded in 1915, the Cornell Lab is a nonprofit organization supported by 45,000 friends and members. Our vibrant community includes 200,000 citizen-science participants from all walks of life and 5 million bird enthusiasts of all ages who connect with us online at All About Birds.

*Project FeederWatch* is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to *Project Feeder-Watch*. *FeederWatch* data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

*Project FeederWatch* is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada

Source: Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>