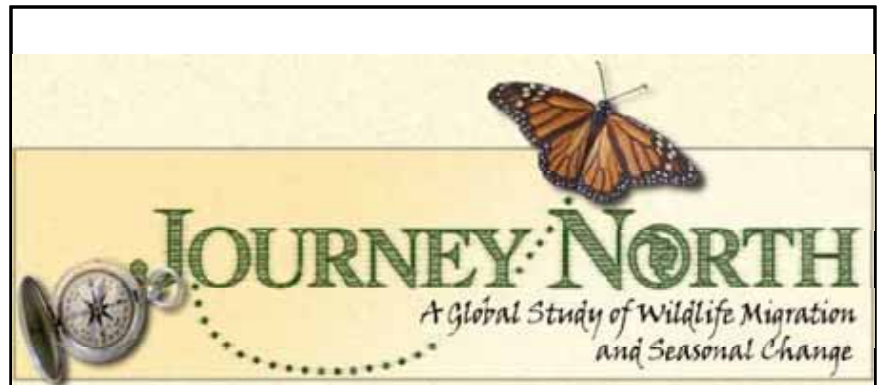




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Habitat and Survival: How a Backyard Rufous Got Through the Winter

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The number of Rufous hummingbirds reported spending the winter in the United States is growing — especially along the Gulf Coast. (They *usually* spend the winter farther south in Mexico.)

How do these winter hummers survive? *You* be the judge!

1. **Read** this booklet about a female Rufous who hangs around a backyard in Houston, Texas. (Map on front of booklet.)
2. **Think.** What do hummingbirds need to survive? How can the Rufous meet her needs in that backyard habitat?

February 14: On the cover is a picture of my wintering Rufous hummingbird. She has been a visitor to my backyard (in Houston, TX) since before Christmas.



All Photos © Deborah Rapasz

I knew that she was still here a few days later because the sugar water level in my feeder went down. I hope to see her just before dark. I have a friend who has an adult Rufous that is not very skittish. Her Rufous goes to the kitchen window and looks in when the food level goes down!

Next to my feeder, the buds on my red honeysuckle are growing rapidly after a couple of days of warmer weather.



My fish pond has running water all winter, along with blooming sage and red honeysuckle.



I have lots of passion vine she can hide in. (She roosts across the street in an oak tree.) My Rufous is camera shy; whenever I even think about taking her picture, she flies out of range.



3

Now she is sitting outside my bathroom window. She's preening, swooping after small insects, watching for predators, and, of course, partaking of the sugar water. Can you find the shy hummingbird in the mist?



The Abutilon (pronounced *a-BEW-tih-lon*) is blooming now. How might this help the tiny visitor survive?



4

No dogs can get in our yard. Can you guess why? The one cat in our neighborhood does not normally get in my yard. We do get a hawk from time to time. My yard and the yards around it are very quiet. The feeder she likes is located where there is normally no human motion.



My agave (pronounced *ah-GAH-vay*) plant is starting to bloom. I think part of my success is having something blooming all the time.



In the winter, she hides in the passion vine. (This was before a cold snap.) In warmer weather, she uses it to meet another basic need. Can you guess what it is?



This is what warm weather will bring!

