



(Scott Weidensaul)

ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD
Selasphorus sasin

Banded 11/7/10
1001 E. Oregon Rd.
Lititz, PA 17543 (Lancaster Co.)
40 06' 40.64"N, 076 16' 02.71"W

Band number: L04178
Age: HY (hatching year)
Sex: M

Submitted by:
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Wing chord: 39.69 mm
Tail: 24 mm
Exposed culmen: 17.37 mm
Percent grooving on maxilla: 0%
Iridescent gorget feathers: 6
Weight: 3.52 g
Fat: 2 (scale 0-5)
R5 width: 2.30 mm

First obs.: Oct. 28, 2010
Last obs.: still present 11/9/10

Sandy Lockerman
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Overview: The bird was first observed Oct. 28 at a patio feeder and sage plantings by Mrs. Edith Bailey, a resident of the Landis Homes assisted care facility. Mrs. Bailey, a former Lancaster Bird Club member, realized it was an unusual hummingbird, and reached me Nov. 6 through the help of Eric Witmer, who tentatively identified it as an HY male *Selasphorus*.

The next day I arrived at 1:30 p.m. and set up a cage trap, and quickly captured the bird, which was banded by my subpermittee Sandy Lockerman under my supervision (and with me doublechecking a few critical measurements). When we removed the bird from the holding bag for banding, we both immediately noticed the very narrow R5 tail feathers, and suspected it might be an ALHU. The absence of any significant notching/emargination on R2 further strengthened this suspicion, and one R5 and R2 were pulled as voucher specimens, which I have retained under BBL permit #22918. (Photos below.)

Measurements and plumage characteristics confirmed that this was Pennsylvania's second state record ALHU, which averages smaller than the more commonly observed rufous hummingbird (RUHU), with narrower R5 and little or no notching on R2, all of which were seen in this bird. Except as noted, all age/sex and ALHU/RUHU measurements are from P. Pyle, *Identification Guide to North American Birds*, vol. 1, 1997, and F.G. Stiles, "Age and sex determination in rufous and Allen's hummingbirds," *Condor* 74 (1972) 25-32. Measurements were taken in accordance with Russell and Russell, *North American Bander's Manual for Banding Hummingbirds* (2001) North American Banding Council.

Age and sex: The plumage was fairly ratty and dull, typical of an HY male in autumn. The iridescent green was most pronounced on the upper and middle back, with scattered green feathers in the primarily dull rufous rump. A diffuse cluster of six iridescent copper gorget feathers were present on the heavily stippled throat. The gorget cluster was similar enough to an adult female to be undiagnostic, but the tail was typical of an HY male, with R1 rufous exhibiting a restricted black tip with small green spots (not the large area of green a female would show), no white tip on R2, but white tips on R3-5, which an adult male ALHU would lack. (See *Hummingbirds of North America*, Williamson 2001, pl. 24 and 25) Measurements were consistent with an HY-M Allen's.

Maxilla grooving: A seeming anomaly was the lack of any bill striations ("grooving") on the upper maxilla when viewed through a 20X loupe, typically a characteristic of HY hummingbirds of all species. Most RUHU seen in Pennsylvania in autumn and early winter show such striations.

However, given that ALHUs may produce young as early as March (Mitchell, 2000, *Birds of North America* #501), a chick from an early brood would likely show little or no striations this late in the year.

Wing chord: The wing was measured with a digital micrometer (.00mm) from bend to tip of P10. Male ALHU range from 36.2–43.3 mm, but there is considerable overlap with RUHU (38.1–46.6 mm in males). The wing chord range for HY–M ALHU is generally 38.9–41.4mm, so this bird was actually at the lower end of the range for ALHU, making it even less likely to have been a rufous, which for that age ranges from 40.5–43.4mm.

Tail: Tail was measured with a thin plastic millimeter rule, insert to the base of the central rectrices and measured to the tip. Tail range in HY–M ALHU is 22.3–24.9mm, while similar age/sex RUHU is 22.5–26.9. The tail, though consistent with Allen's of this age and sex, is not diagnostic for species ID.

Exposed culmen: Culmen was measured with a digital micrometer (.00mm) on the dorsal surface of the maxilla, from the front edge of feathers to the tip of the bill. The culmen measurement of 17.39mm is slightly high for an HY–M Allen's of the widespread migratory *sasin* race (14.6–17.0mm) but it is also high for an HY–M rufous (14.9–17.3mm). Interestingly, the nonmigratory *sedentarius* race of ALHU, restricted to the Channel Islands, CA, has a longer exposed culmen than the *sasin* race (16.0–19.4mm in HY–M *sedentarius*). Differences between *sasin* and *sedentarius* are so subtle that identification can be very difficult, but there is one specimen record of *sedentarius* in Louisiana in 1976 (Newfield 1983, "Records of Allen's Hummingbird [*Selasphorus sasin*] in Louisiana USA and possible Rufous X Allen's hummingbird hybrids," *Condor* 85:253–254), suggesting this race may move more widely than believed. We intend to consult further with experts about this possibility, but consider the likelihood of resolving the question remote.

Gorget feathers: Both male and female *Selasphorus* hummingbirds exhibit iridescent gorget feathers. The cluster of six copper gorget feathers was typical of both an immature male and an adult female, although the cluster was more ragged than on many adult females.



Weight and fat score: 3.52g is a very good, healthy weight for a male *Selasphorus*. while a fat score of 2 indicates the bird may be entering pre-migratory condition, since fat is usually only laid on in significant amounts (fat score >3) before departure.

R5: The width of R5 is considered the gold standard for distinguishing ALHU and RUHU. The width of R5 was measured with a digital micrometer (.00mm) at its widest point, in accordance with Russell and Russell; extreme care was taken not to compress the feather while measuring. Before measuring, the feather was removed from the bird, held by the base and "flicked" with a finger several times, which snaps the feather to its natural shape.

In ALHU, R5 is very narrow, although this varies with age and sex class, becoming narrower in adults, and always narrower in males vs. females. In an immature male ALHU, the width is 1.7–2.6mm, vs. 2.7–3.6mm in RUHU – thus, the 2.30mm width is well within the ALHU range, and too narrow for a RUHU.

R2: Another characteristic used to help distinguish ALHU and RUHU is the latter's usual emargination (also referred to as "notching" or "nippling") of the tip of R2. The presence of significant emargination usually indicates RUHU, although adult Allen's may exhibit some slight emargination, especially on the outer web of the feather. (Stiles 1972). The Lititz bird exhibited essentially no emargination on the outer webbing of R2, a diagnostic field mark for ALHU.

Photo of tail. No emargination can be seen on R2 (fourth feather from left). Also visible is the extensive rufous and limited black (with small green



spot) on R1. (Scott Weidensaul)



Close-up of R2 and R5 from the ALHU 11/7/10, showing absence of any emargination or notching on R2, and very narrow R5. (Scott Weidensaul)

Molt: The hummingbird had retained all of its rectrices, which showed substantial wear on the white tips of R4-3. On the wing, all PP and SS were scored as "old" except for PP2, which was in sheathe and three-quarters grown, and PP3-4, which were new but fully grown. This is in keeping with an HY age.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS



Head (Scott Weidensaul)



Profile head (Scott Weidensaul)



Dorsum (Scott Weidensaul)



Underside (Scott Weidensaul)



Mrs. Bailey releasing the ALHU (Scott Weidensaul)

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Allen's Hummingbird Selasphorus sasin

Date of Sighting: 28 October 2010 to 13 November 2010

County : LANCASTER

Location : LITIZ

Observer(s): Edith Bailey, Eric Witmer, Scott Weidensaul, Sandra Lockerman, m.obs

Date of Submission: 2010

Submitted by: Scott Weidensaul, Sandra Lockerman

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
D. DeReamus	X							
A. Guarente	X							
T. Johnson	X							
B. Coulter	X							
C. Rutt	X							
J. Heller	X							
G. Malosh	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary) Nick Pulcinella

Date: 1/30/11