

# 2013–14 Project FeederWatch

## End-of-Season News Note

Thank you for another successful FeederWatch season! See inside this letter for initial news about the 2013-14 season, including a shift in Anna's Hummingbird distributions, a look at Rose-breasted Grosbeak reports, and an introduction to our new project leader. As we begin to analyze the data from the 27th season, you can see initial results online in the Explore Data section of our website. Look for more details in *Winter Bird Highlights*, which will be sent to all project participants in October.

### Time to renew

Please take a moment to renew your participation for next season. With each additional year in the project, your counts become more valuable to researchers studying the distribution and abundance of feeder birds. Thank you for your continued support! **Please renew your FeederWatch membership today by following the instructions on the back page of this letter.**

### Why renew so early?

Renewing now will allow us to save resources on future reminders and will help us better plan for the upcoming season. Further, postage costs are greatly reduced if you renew early so that we may send your research kit via bulk mail in September. We are doing our best to limit expenses. **Renewing today will help us keep the FeederWatch fee at the same rate it has been for more than 15 years.**

### Renew through our online store

Save postage and time by renewing through our online store. Click the Join or Renew button on our home page and select whether or not you would like to receive a kit. Note that you must renew by mail or phone to order paper data forms.

### Save paper—skip the forms, or skip the kit

All renewing participants receive a kit—either one with paper forms or one for submitting data online—unless you choose the “no kit” option. **If you can submit data online** but would still like to receive a calendar and a tally sheet, please choose the kit for online data entry on the enclosed renewal coupon.

If you would like to forego the kit altogether, please select the “no kit” option on the enclosed renewal coupon. You will still receive the Lab's quarterly newsletter, *All About Birds* (quarterly) and *Winter Bird Highlights* (in October).

### If you choose the “no kit” option:

- ◆ Please **write down your ID number** (printed near your address on the renewal coupon) and save it, as you will need this number to enter data next season.
- ◆ Please **note that next season starts on November 8**. Unless you are subscribed to our electronic newsletter, **you will receive no reminders by email**.
- ◆ Be sure to **maintain your electronic newsletter subscription** to get the latest updates and reminders. If you think the newsletter may not be reaching you, subscribe by clicking the “Sign up for eNews” link in the top right corner of our home page (there's no risk of double subscribing) or learn more about the newsletter on our website: [feederwatch.org/about/enews-archive](http://feederwatch.org/about/enews-archive). Note that spam blockers may prevent you from receiving this newsletter. Set your spam filter to allow email from [feederwatch@cornell.edu](mailto:feederwatch@cornell.edu).

### Submit your counts

April 4 marked the end of the 2013–14 FeederWatch season. If you have already submitted your counts, thank you! If you still have data to submit, you may report your counts online through the end of August or via paper data forms at any time. We will use data submitted prior to May 31 in analyses to be published in this fall's *Winter Bird Highlights*.

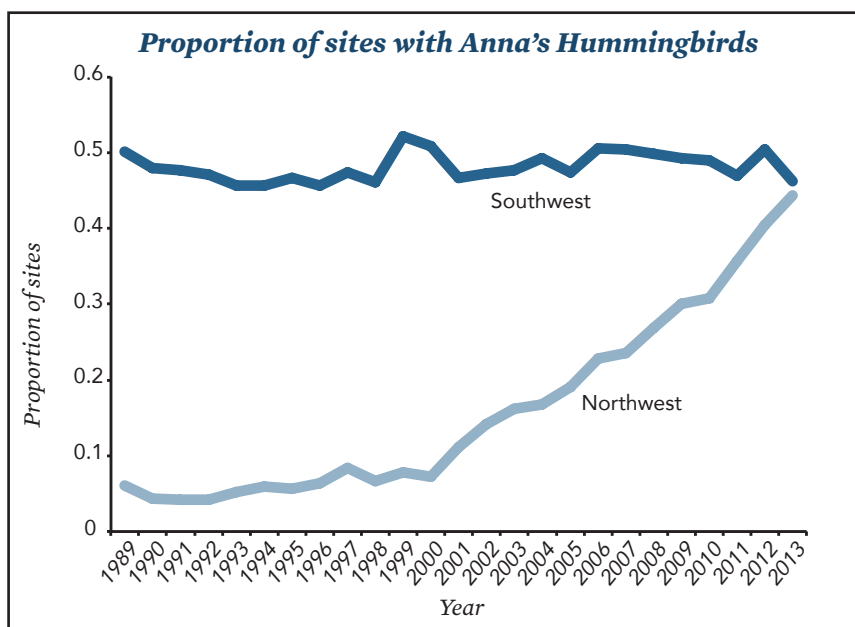


## FeederWatch data at work: Tracking Anna's Hummingbirds

You may not expect to see hummingbirds in winter, but across North America there are increasing participant reports of hummingbirds staying later into the winter and staying farther north. On the West Coast, the best example of this is seen in Anna's Hummingbirds, and we are using FeederWatch data to help understand if this winter range expansion is associated with changes in climate, changes in habitat, or changes in how hummingbirds associate with people.

The first step is documenting the expansion, and you can see from our Trend Graph that in the Northwest Anna's Hummingbirds have become almost as common as in the Southwest. That is an amazing pattern documented entirely by FeederWatchers!

Now, we are pairing the FeederWatch range expansion data with climate and urbanization data to figure out which is a better predictor of hummingbird sightings. Ultimately, we



want to learn why this nectar-feeding species is able to survive so far north all winter. We'll keep you updated!

## Rose-breasted Grosbeaks reported at several FeederWatch sites

Early in the winter season, many migratory birds stick around a little longer than we might expect. That seemed to be the case with several Rose-breasted Grosbeaks this winter. One individual showed up in Manitouwadge, Ontario, at Tammie Hache's feeders. Tammie, who hosts our FeederWatch Cam, said that she had not seen a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in a couple of years when this one showed up on November 24. Tammie wrote that before the grosbeak left on December 12, "I had three types of grosbeaks—Evening, Pine, and Rose-breasted—on my platform feeder at the same time!"—a spectacle enjoyed by FeederWatch Cam observers.

Tammie observed what appeared to be a mite infestation in the legs of the grosbeak at her feeder. Similarly, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak rested at the feeders of Elaine Radiss in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, for about a week in early December. Elaine observed

that the bird never flew into trees but always stayed in low bushes, and one of his wings seemed to hang lower than normal. It's possible that ailments prevented these two birds from migrating on time.

Other individuals, however, did not show signs of ailments. Kirsten Holmes observed a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at her feeders in Blackstone, Virginia, from December 13 to 22, and Ruth Sailor of Three Rivers, Michigan, had a grosbeak from December 20 to January 1.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks breed throughout North America, but they are *supposed* to migrate to Central

America in the winter! As the season progresses, most "late stayers" eventually fly south. Nevertheless, it appears that two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks decided to skip migrating altogether. Kathy and Mark Haas in Jackson, Missouri, hosted one individual at their feeders from January 13 through February 26, and then it appeared again in mid-March. Similarly, a grosbeak arrived at the feeders of Michelle Devine in O'Fallon, Illinois, on January 4 and stayed all winter. Michelle wrote, "After each storm or drop in temperature, she would be at the feeder.... As soon as I thought she was gone, she would reappear again."

### Rose-breasted Grosbeaks...



... at Tammie Hache's site in Manitouwadge, ON.



... at the home of Kirsten Holmes, Blackstone, VA.



... in the yard of Elaine Radiss, in Great Barrington, MA.

## Project FeederWatch welcomes a new leader



We are very excited to welcome our new project leader, Emma Greig. Prior to joining the FeederWatch team, Emma was a postdoctoral associate in the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology where she studied behavioral ecology and evolution in Australian fairy-wrens. Emma holds a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and has studied birds in Australia, Malaysia, and Hawaii.

After nearly 11 years with FeederWatch, former project leader David Bonter has now taken on a broader supervisory role in the Lab's citizen-science program and is teaching more courses at Cornell University. He's looking forward to enjoying FeederWatch from the perspective of a participant and is thrilled to welcome Emma to the team. According to David, "Emma brings a wonderful combination of a sharp, scientific mind, endless enthusiasm, and a keen interest in helping others learn about the natural world. FeederWatch could not be in better hands!"

## BirdSpotter contest grand prize winner

Congratulations to Melissa Penta of East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, whose House Finch photo won the grand prize in this season's BirdSpotter contest! Melissa won a prize package and a trip to Oregon to visit contest sponsor Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods. The second-place prize went to Roberta Pharis of Parsons, West Virginia, and third place went to Eileen Chorba, of Beach



Lake, Pennsylvania. Thanks to everyone who voted and entered photos for this fun contest. To see all the weekly BirdSpotter winners, visit the website at [www.feederwatch.org/birdspotter2013](http://www.feederwatch.org/birdspotter2013).



## Website redesigned

As those submitting data online have seen, FeederWatch staff were busy last summer giving the website a long overdue facelift. Special thanks to our citizen-science designer, Kevin Ripka, who created the beautiful designs and interactive features, including a photo upload tool that allows participants to share their photos instantly, an interactive tool to see what to feed your favorite birds, visualization tools to see data over time, and more!

We wish we could show you some of the great designs, but there is no way to do justice to the colorful graphics and interactive features. You have to see them for yourself at [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org).

*I want to tell you how much I like the new website, especially the data entry. I was skeptical about the "new & improved" site, but it really is much better. Thank you.*

—Mary Braley, Limington, ME

*The change to the website is great! I love the "dashboard" look/feel. Great job!*

—Mark Morgan Beckley, WV

*The new Project FeederWatch website is very "cool." Data entry is actually a pleasure to use. Congrats for a well thought out site.*

—Clark Ganshirt, Dundee, IL

## Sign up a friend

Give FeederWatch to a friend by clicking the Join or Renew button on our home page and following the instructions for giving FeederWatch as a gift. You can also call the Lab's membership office toll free at (866) 989-2473.

***Look for Winter Bird Highlights, a summary of the 2013–14 FeederWatch season, mailed to all project participants in October.***



# Three easy steps for renewing your FeederWatch participation

## Step 1. Select a renewal option

- ◆ **Receive a kit for online data entry.** This kit contains a welcome letter, Bird-Watching Days calendar, and tally sheet and will be delivered in the fall.
- ◆ **Receive no kit.** With this option, you need to **keep track of your ID number** (printed above your address on the enclosed return coupon) in order to submit data, and you need to maintain your eNews subscription to receive project updates and reminders via email. (See electronic newsletter information on the front page of this letter.)
- ◆ **Receive a kit with paper data forms.** This kit contains a welcome letter, instruction booklet, paper data forms, and Bird Watching Days calendar. Please only select this option if you are unable to submit data online. To order this kit, you must renew by mail or phone. Your kit will be delivered in the fall.

**Note:** *Renewing FeederWatchers do not receive the FeederWatch Handbook & Instructions or the Common Feeder Birds poster, so be sure to save them from your first kit. All FeederWatch participants receive the Lab's quarterly newsletter, All About Birds News, and the FeederWatch year-end report, Winter Bird Highlights, published in October.*

## Step 2. Send \$15 (\$12 for Lab members) annual fee

- ◆ **Over the Internet.** Sign up using a credit card (VISA, Mastercard, DISCOVER, or American Express) over our secure server at [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) by clicking on the Join or Renew button on our home page. If you have a new name or address, please renew by mail and include your name or address change with your renewal to assure that you are not assigned a second ID number. If you would like to receive paper forms, you must renew by mail or phone.
- ◆ **By mail.** Indicate your renewal option on the enclosed renewal coupon and return the coupon with your personal check or credit card information in the enclosed envelope.
- ◆ **By phone.** Call our membership office toll free at 866-989-2473 to renew over the phone.

**Note:** *A tax-deductible contribution to FeederWatch above your \$15 renewal fee will help fund bird research and conservation at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Thanks for your support!*

## Step 3. Renew by May 31

Your early renewal helps us plan how many kits to print and saves us the cost of sending another reminder. We will transfer the savings into research and project improvements.

