



**The Katharine Ordway  
Natural History Study Area**

Box 216  
Inver Grove Heights, Minn. 55075  
(612) 455-6204

ORDWAY BULLETIN  
No. 95

**MACALESTER  
COLLEGE**

located at 9550 Inver Grove Trail (Dakota County Road 77), Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

**HUMMING-BIRDS at ORDWAY.**

In late spring they will appear, these tiniest of birds with their spearlike beaks and their blurry vibrating wings. As they move effortlessly from one bright flower to another it is easy to find one's self thinking of tiny avian helicopters flitting about picking up invisible cargo at small, brightly-colored heliports.

There is only one species of hummingbird in Minnesota; indeed, from the Great Plains eastward it is the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Archilochus colubris) which one encounters. It would be an interesting thing to have a closer look at these little summertime denizens of the wildflowers; hence the initiation of a study of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Ordway about three years ago.

In the course of studying other birds I have captured one or two hummingbirds by accident. I decided to include these captures in the data which are being gathered on the bird population at Ordway. Since this calls for special arrangements I took steps about three years ago (1978) to collaborate with a well-established bander of humming-birds, Mr. James C. Johnson. He is located in the Ozarks of south-central Missouri and I have spent time with him during the past two summers, learning correct techniques and cooperating with him in the study of this interesting bird. It is our hope that we may be able to prove a migrational connection between the birds at Table Rock Mountain (MO) and Ordway (MN). Thus far our efforts have not been crowned with success. It does seem, however, that there may be a direct-line correlation between the many birds which fill the air at Mr. Johnson's homesite and the comparatively few which show up at Ordway. These latter spend much of their time during the late days of summer in foraging at the stands of Jewelweed down near the River. Here they fiercely guard the area, often driving off larger birds and making this their very own "happy humming grounds".

What we need now are more solid data in the form of recaptured specimens which have been banded at either of the two banding-sites. Mr. Johnson has already established that some of the birds return to his establishment year-after-year; thus far we have no firm proof of that at Ordway although it is fairly logical that such is the case.

Now I would welcome a re-encounter with one of these tiny morsels of beauty! Somehow it makes the ardors of winter a little easier to bear when one contemplates these tiny spits of feathered flame flying far south into Mexico and Central America only to make the long return trip next spring.

R. J. CHRISTIAN,  
Naturalist.

25 Sept. 1981.  
crg/rjc