

Migration Monday 5/8/2023 Rufous Hummingbird (Initially appeared in MVAS Facebook 5/8/2023
By Dylan Osterhaus

Why do we typically only see Rufous Hummingbirds during fall migration?

In addition to being one of the smallest migrating birds in the world, Rufous Hummingbirds also undertake very unique migrations. You may have noticed that in New Mexico, we see very few Rufous Hummingbirds during spring migration. However, in the fall they are one of the most abundant species we have in the state. This is because Rufous Hummingbirds have a circuitous (circular) migration route. In the spring, birds leave their wintering grounds in Mexico and make their way north along the Pacific Coast (the green arrow). In the fall, instead of retracing this flight, many birds instead will leave their breeding grounds and migrate south along the Rocky Mountains until they reach their wintering grounds (the red arrow). This is all to maximize their access to nectar rich flower resources during the journey! (Photo by Dylan Osterhaus)

