

DAVIS EXPEDITION FUND

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT

Expedition/Project Title: The effect of artificial flowers on the feeding behaviour of Rufous Hummingbirds

Travel Dates: May-July 2008

Location: Newcastle, Alberta, Canada.....

Group Members: Jenny Sturgeon, Sandra Goded

Aims:

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

Food selection in Rufous Hummingbirds

Implementing this behavioural project allowed me to gain valuable field experience and gave me practice designing and following through a project from beginning to end.

The project included an initial observation period in which I spent two weeks watching the birds and training them to feed from artificial flowers, which would be used in my experiments. During this time I designed the experiment which ran 9 days for each of the birds in my study. I decided to concentrate my experiment on six territorial male rufous hummingbirds in the area, each of which I helped catch, band and mark so that they were individually identifiable. I ran the experiment with all six birds and also gathered data on six species of wild flower on which the hummingbirds are known to feed. This included working out the most successful way of measuring nectar concentration and volume.

Despite the birds not doing exactly as I expected, there is high significance in the results showing that birds use a combination of time of day and order in their flower selection. I am currently analysing data from throughout the experiment and analysing the choices made by the birds.

I learnt a great deal preparing for the trip to Canada, and whilst I was there, including logistics of travel and managing expenses. The study was a perfect chance to experience science, put what I have learnt through my degree to use and carry out my own project. I got to know the other people I was working with very well and overall had a rewarding experience which was made possible due to the funding that was made available to me.

I have been encouraged to produce a paper as a result of the findings I have collected.

I wish to thank The Davis Fund for granting the money which enabled me to do this.

Kind Regards
Jenny Sturgeon