

Title of Session: Operation RubyThroat: The Hummingbird Project Meets Globe

Moderator: Bill Hilton Jr.

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Room: Tree House Conference Room

DianneA: Welcome to the TappedIn 2 Inaugural Festival

BillHi: Bill shakes his body dog-like to get rid of the abundance of rainwater that accumulated on him in the thunderstorm that has just abated.

BillHi: Then he hugs BJ warmly.

BJ hands Bill a towel

BillHi: Do you also have a squeegee?

DianneA: hands Bill and Bj a brandy

BillHi: Sorry, don't drink. My only vice is TappedIn.

DianneA: that's a problem Bill

DianneA: there is no cure

BJ smiles.

BillHi: Dianne, if you're not aware, BJ has officially been crowned the "Queen of Multitasking."

DianneA: If I could, I'd put stars in her crown for that one

BJ: we're waiting a couple more minutes to see if any others will join us.

BretBi: Hi BJ; can't believe I've been on since 6 a.m. PST; How 'bout you? As a guru once said, "What a long, strange trip it's been."

RachelGuest14: hi everyone

BJ: before we begin, a couple of notes...

BJ: Click on the Actions drop down menu in the upper right of your chat window and scroll all the way down to DETACH to make the chat window larger and easier to read.

BJ: URLs in the chat text are hyperlinked. Click on the hyperlink in the chat text to open a new window for the URL.

BJ: Bill Hilton is our discussion leader. As always, let's start with brief introductions to let Bill get an idea of who his audience is...

BJ: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

BretBi: Bret Biornstad 4th Grade teacher Vancouver, WA

DianneA: I am Dianne, from Australia, my area is staff development

AdamGuest10: I'm a mat students from Concordia University in Portland OR studying Health and PE

CherylC: Cheryl, 4th Grade teacher in the Caribbean

DianneA: o O (and helpdesk volunteer for TappedIn, assisting BJ and Bill tonight)

AllancGuest9: concordia student

AllancGuest9: mat program

DianneA: thanks Allan

AllancGuest9: we all are

AllancGuest9: Allan, Rachel, Justin
AdamGuest10: thanks Allan for your input
JustinGuest3: thats right
JustinGuest3: thanks Allan
BillHi: Any more introductions?
AllancGuest9: think we are good
AllancGuest9: perhaps Sarah
SarahSa: Sarah in Boston - I teach tax
DianneA: OK, Bill, sounds like it might be time for your intro, and to make a start
BillHi: I'm Bill Hilton Jr., an educator-naturalist with 30 years of teaching experience in high school, college, and the great outdoors. I'm executive director of Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History and principal investigator for "Operation RubyThroat: The Hummingbird Project."
BillHi: May I add one disclaimer. York, South Carolina, where I'm based has just undergone a spectacular 45-minute thunderstorm complete with half-inch hail, 50 mph gusts, and on-site lightning strikes. Another less violent wave is following, but the chance remains that I will again lose my cable service during the discussion. If that happens, just chat among yourselves until I come back. :-)
DianneA: will do Bill
BJ wonders if it's a good idea to be in a tree house!?
BillHi: In keeping with the theme of this year's festival, I'd like to introduce you to Operation RubyThroat and GLOBE.
BillHi: First, how many of you have heard of THE GLOBE Program?
DianneA passes
AdamGuest10: not Adam
SarahSa: x - new to me
AllancGuest9: nope
CherylC: no
BretBi: a little
JustinGuest3: not I
BillHi: A little is better than none. And who had heard of "Operation RubyThroat: The Hummingbird Project" before tonight?
BretBi: nada
SarahSa: just the program listing
AllancGuest9: same
DianneA passes again .. this is getting passe
JustinGuest3: ditto
AllancGuest9: lol
BretBi xerox
AllancGuest9: passes...passe
AdamGuest10: pass
BillHi: Well, this is actually good because it gives me something to teach you about. :-)
DianneA: indeed
SarahSa: like the idea of many observations coordinated via internet

BillHi: GLOBE has been in existence since the mid-1990's. The acronym originally stood for "Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment," but for political reasons was changed simply to "The GLOBE Program."

BillHi: Established under NOAA, GLOBE began as an international network of student observers who reported data about various aspects of climate and atmosphere: min/max temperatures, rainfall, snow cover, etc. Over the years other protocols were added, including hydrology, soils, and phenology (the study of changes over time).

BillHi: So Sarah was right in her guess. :-)

SarahSa: next guess - too much info about warming for the flat-earthers?

BillHi: You're correct. :-)

BillHi: Obviously, "Operation RubyThroat: The Hummingbird Project" is NOT a weather-based protocol.

BillHi: Instead, Operation RubyThroat (ORT from now on) focuses on observations of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*.

BillHi: This hummer is probably the most common species, being found in 38 central and eastern U.S. states, Canada, Mexico, and all seven Central American countries.

DianneA: so it is out of my field Bill ..

BillHi: Hummers are native only to the Western Hemisphere . . . but that's okay.

DianneA: so I can learn

AdamGuest10: What does this research prove to us?

BillHi: There are Australian birds--honeyeaters, for example, that fill a similar ecological niche. (I know that because I studied them on Kangaroo Island!). :-)

DianneA: thanks

BillHi: Hold on, Adam. :-)

BillHi: Anyway, I submitted ORT to GLOBE back in the mid-90's as a possible collaborative protocol, but at that time they saw no relationship between hummingbirds and weather.

SarahSa: are they like crickets - faster wingbeats related to temperature increases?

DianneA: weather is part of any ecosystem is it not?

DianneA: one of the possible change variables

SarahSa: and range determinants

DianneA nods

BillHi: Finally back in 2001, I visited GLOBE HQ in Washington and the new Chief Scientist immediately saw that it would be a great idea to collect hummingbird data about behavior and migration and to see if students could find correlations with weather data-- which was my original idea!

SarahSa: AHA

BillHi: So to bring us to the TI Festival theme, GLOBE and Operation RubyThroat are now an on-line COLLABORATIVE venture in which kids in ten countries can participate.

DianneA . o O (Steve Bill is briefing us on his involvement with the GLOBE and Hummingbird Project)

AdamGuest10: what can the kids do ?

BillHi: So, although you jumped the gun, a little, what are some possible atmosphere/climate/hydrology/landcover/soils variables that might affect hummingbird behavior (including migration)?

SarahSa: blossoms?

DianneA: honey production?

BretBi: destruction of habitat (i.e. flowering plants along pathways?)

BillHi: Bees make honey. Flowers make nectar.

AdamGuest10: deforestation

SarahSa: you mean all hummers don't eat sugar water out of a garden feeder???

DianneA: nectar production (that's the problem of having honeyeaters
- bad terminology!

BillHi: No, Sarah, hummingbirds actually existed before Perky-Pet
invented the hummingbird feeder. ;-)

SarahSa 's eyes widen in wonder

BillHi: How about atmosphere/climate variables?

DianneA: no rain, no water, no nectar

BillHi: Good. More?

BretBi: It seems that our climate in the PNW has warmed since the late 70's

SarahSa: more hummers in thePNW?

AllancGuest9: I have plenty

AllancGuest9: always have had them

BillHi: Excellent, Bret. So what's the correlation with hummingbirds.

BretBi: could it confuse them as far as when to migrate?

AllancGuest9: I now see hummers at the timberline of Mt. Hood

AllancGuest9: never had until 5yrs ago or so

SarahSa: are there still only 38 states with them?

BillHi: Okay, this is good. Maybe changing distribution of
hummingbirds correlated against distribution range and temperature
(which affects flower production(CAN INDEED tell us something about
global warming. :-)

AllancGuest9: oh yeah

AllancGuest9: there isn't snow anymore either...like there was

SarahSa: you sound like my grandad

BillHi: Sarah, actually, ruby-throats haven't extended their range, but we're getting more
and more species of WESTERN hummingbirds
showing up in the eastern U.S. in WINTER. :-)

AllancGuest9: been a rapid change

SarahSa: all A.colubris?

AdamGuest10: Being such a dry time of year, how is the hummer affected?

BillHi: No, different species.

BillHi: Drought probably does affect hummers (fewer flowers), as does TOO MUCH
rain, which affects nesting success.

BillHi: Other comments from anyone before we look at a Web site?

SusanR: Haven't seen any in eastern Ontario this year, Bill. Usually see one or two at this
time of year.

SarahSa: predators?

AllancGuest9: never seen one attacked

AdamGuest10: cycle of the food chain

AllancGuest9: Loggers?

BillHi: The following eat hummingbirds: cats; bullfrogs; praying mantises; sharp-shinned hawks, etc.

SarahSa: so the rapid decrease in frogs is good for hummers?

AllancGuest9: ahah

BillHi: You are SO warped.

AllancGuest9: many raptors around

BretBi: I have landscape that attracts butterflies and bees but I don't see any hummingbirds

BillHi: What's your locale?

BretBi: Portland, OR

BillHi: You have a couple of species there.

BillHi: Okay, lets look at the Web site for "Operation RubyThroat: The Hummingbird Project." Click on <http://www.rubythroat.org> and don't go any further. ;-)

AllancGuest9: I have found that when I hang a feeder on the mtn, the hummers still prefer the flowers

AllancGuest9: love the pointer

SarahSa: Hilton Pond = your turf?

BretBi: cute hummingbird animated graphic

BillHi: Thanks, Allan & Bret. Yes, Sarah.

BillHi: This is the main (default) page for the site and project.

DianneA: Canada? is that an indication of the global warming effect?

BillHi: Maybe, Dianne. Note the funding sources; I'm especially proud to have money from the National Science Foundation. :-)

SarahSa: Canada, or at least most of it, actually gets pretty warm in the summer - don't bring skis

BillHi: The NSF funding is through GLOBE.

SarahSa: very prestigious

BillHi: Let's go into the second default page by clicking on the blue arrow.

BretBi: I heard a scientist on NPR that has a theory that we are still in an ice age, just a temporary warming trend, that could reverse within 1-2 generations

AllancGuest9: hmm

SusanR: We are having both a hot, dry and rainy summer here in Eastern Ontario. Can I expect to see a hummer. I did last year, Bill.

BillHi: Thanks, bret. let's stay on task. :-)

BretBi: ok

BillHi: This page has a long list of subcategories on the ORT Web site, which is set up for students AND for the general public, many of whom have burning questions about hummingbirds.

AdamGuest10: Are hummers going to be extinct

BillHi: Scroll down to the fifth category "Ruby-throated hummingbirds", and click on the link.

BillHi: That's <http://www.rubythroat.org/RTHUMain.html> .

DianneA: thanks Bill

BillHi: Here you see a list of everything you ever wanted to know about Ruby-throated hummingbirds (RTHUs).

SarahSa: leave off the ending period

MiguelB: It didn't work for me either.

BillHi: Please try again, Dianne at <http://www.rubythroat.org/RTHUMain.html>

DianneA: so Miguel try <http://www.rubythroat.org> and then the blue arrow

BillHi: The server may be overloaded.

DianneA: then Miguel it is the fifth category

DianneA: all you need to know about ruby throated hummingbirds

BillHi: Now click on Summer & Winter Distribution, which is

<http://www.rubythroat.org/RTHURangeMapMain.html>

BillHi: There's that list of 38 states and the other nine countries I mentioned.

CindyC: good website.

AdamGuest10: this web site is spectacular with all the information on it.

BillHi: Thanks, Cindy. So for deep background about RTHUs, students (and teachers) can visit this part of the site.

BillHi: Let's now look at the part that deals with GLOBE. Go to

<http://www.rubythroat.org/GLOBEMain.html>

SarahSa: Geography AND ecology!

BillHi: Yes, Sarah!!!!

CindyC: I like this website.

BillHi: Scroll down halfway to the list of ORT/GLOBE activities (it's beside the photo of the RTHU with the green color-mark on its throat).

BillHi: Here you'll find the specific kinds of data that students are collecting this year for submission to the GLOBE Web site, where they can look for those correlations between hummingbird behavior and the other GLOBE variables.

DianneA: We have about seven minutes to go .. Thanks Bill for this introduction to GLOBE and Operation Ruby Throat Hummingbird Project.

BillHi: The goal of our NSF grant is for ORT to work through GLOBE so that student observers can generate data and look at correlations that are of publishable value in the scientific literature.

SarahSa: "vagrant" hummingbirds sound more ominous than romantic - not packing a swag, either

MiguelB: I saw something that I have never seen prior to this year. I actually saw a hummingbird holding steady on a wire.

BillHi: An publication is an achievable goal because almost no one--include post-docs--has looked at the kinds of correlations that ORT and GLOBE can provide. :-)

MiguelB: Most hummingbirds I see are flapping away around some flower.

SusanR: They appear to hover, Miguel and Bill

SarahSa: this is meaningful work that the kids and their sharp eyes can really contribute to

BillHi: Are you still with me, folks?

DianneA: yes Bill

NancyHe: << is here

AdamGuest10: still here Bill

DianneA: all the quiet ones put their hands up I see

StevenFe: yep

DianneA: we still have time for more questions

BJ: a reminder before we lose anyone, Bill leads the monthly Nuts About Nature discussion in Tapped In...second Tuesday

SarahSa: do you have counterparts in the Spanish-speaking countries to coordinate this?

BillHi: Bottom line: the ORT Web site at <http://www.rubythroat.org> is the most comprehensive one about hummingbirds on the Web AND it is also a place where students can participate in an international, crossdisciplinary science-enhancing mind-bending exciting project that uses hummingbirds as the hook.

DianneA: thanks BJ, I didn't know that either

CindyC: Thank you, Bill.

DianneA: So thanks again Bill

BillHi: Bookmark this site and spread the word: <http://www.rubythroat.org> .

BJ: Thanks so much, Bill for a fascinating discussion!

StevenFe: thanks

BillHi: Questions?

DianneA: Its been an eyeopener for me

BJ: thanks for helping, Dianne

StevenFe: thanks

CherylC: Thank you bill.. this experience has been truly educational :-)

SusanR: I am gaining a wider appreciation of the Hummingbird, Bill. Thanks

BillHi: <http://www.rubythroat.org>

BillHi: And <http://www.hiltonpond.org>

SarahSa: Thank you, Bill - you are doing some really interesting work, both for hummers and for kids - and for us all

BillHi: Thanks, Sarah. I appreciate your perceptions of what I'm trying to do. :-)

DianneA: Have you been with this GLOBE all this time Bill?

CindyC: Thank you everyone.

BillHi: Nope. they didn't want hummingbirds originally.

SarahSa: What were you doing on Kangaroo I., and where is it??

DianneA: so your interest passion is the hummingbirds

BillHi: I'm actually independent of them anyway. They're quasi-governmental and I'm a non-profit.

BillHi: Kangaroo Island is off Adelaide.

DianneA: Kangaroo Island is off the coast ...

DianneA: as Bill said

DianneA: I haven't been there

BillHi: My passion is nature education; hummingbirds are an excellent hook to pull it off. :-)

SarahSa: is it a place like the Galapagos for study?

DianneA: I have honeyeaters in my garden

BillHi: Sarah, there is a field station there.

DianneA: and yes the distribution is changing in Australia too

BillHi: Danged rabbits.

SarahSa: Penguins? Like on Philip I, near Melbourne?

BillHi: There are penguins, and emus, and platypuses, etc.

SarahSa: WOW

DianneA: rabbits unfortunately

BillHi: Okay, Sarah, I forget. What do you teach and where are you?
SarahSa: tax, Boston (by way of Canada)
DianneA: wherever angloisaxon australians went rabbits have come
AllancGuest9: I just saw a few in my yard!
AllancGuest9: hummers that is
BillHi: Tax = taxonomy?
SarahSa: more dreary - as in income tax and sales tax
BillHi: So your interest in nature is avocational.
SarahSa: yes - frustrated scientist - but VERY committed to improving science education, hence my participation here at Tapped In
DianneA: Bill, I need to take a break, thanks for your session, it was great
BillHi: Hey, Dianne, before I forget: a great big THANKS!
DianneA: I'll leave you to chat some more to Sarah
DianneA: you're welcome
SarahSa: Thank you, Dianne
BillHi: Sarah, do you have time to look at my other Web site?
DianneA: bye Sarah and Bill I enjoyed your company
SarahSa: Sure URL?
BillHi: <http://www.hiltonpond.org>
BillHi: Got it?
SarahSa: Yes - ambitious range of programming!
BillHi: It's a full-blown/education/research/conservation Web site.
BillHi: Scroll down to "This Week at Hilton Pond" and click on "Lizard-Head"
SarahSa: I look forward to exploring it. I just bookmarked it for return
BillHi: That's <http://www.hiltonpond.org/ThisWeek030701.html>
SarahSa: Heh Heh Heh!! I see - poor gal needs a wig
BillHi: I write one of these photo essays every week. If you want a free e-mail reminder when I post it, send a blank e-mail to thisweek@hiltonpond.org
SarahSa: Thanx - And I was just following your segue to mites, too!
Not as engaging as hummers, cardinals, and monarchs, but pretty wide-spread
SarahSa scratches her neck
BillHi: I knew you'd scratch! And please do spread the word about BOTH Web sites and especially about the potential for student/ teacher participation in "Operation RubyThroat: The Hummingbird Project". :-)
SarahSa: I surely will, Bill. Thank you again. I am heading off now for KimFo's piece, but I will no doubt encounter you again here & at your sites.
BillHi: Great, and if you have questions; education@hiltonpond.org
BillHi: Have a good summer. :-)