



Ruby Throated Hummingbird

Archilochus colubris

The ruby throated hummingbird is the most common hummingbird in North America seen east of the Mississippi River. It spends its winters in Florida, Mexico and Central America, before migrating north for the summer.

This bird is 3-3.5 inches long. They are metallic green on top with whitish-gray underparts. The wings are almost black. They are sexually dimorphic, meaning that the males and females look different. The males will have a ruby red throat patch, called a gorget, with a black upper rim. The male's tail is forked and black in color with a slight violet sheen. The female's tail is notched and edged in green, black and white. The female throat is white or may be faintly streaked with gray. They do not have a red throat patch.

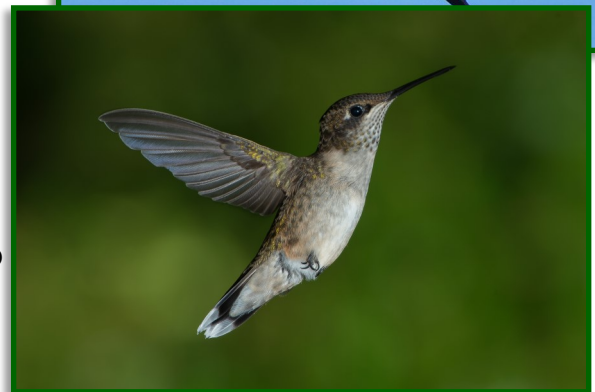
Their beak is long, straight and narrow and is used to sip nectar from flowers, along with their long tongue.

The breeding habitat of these birds is in deciduous and pine forests. They can also be found on forest edges and in orchards and gardens.

Nests are tiny. They are often found on downward sloping branches. Nests are made up of lichen on the exterior and are lined with soft fibers like dandelion and thistle down. They are well camouflaged. Females will lay an average of 2 white eggs, twice a summer.

Hummingbird predators include fast flying hawks like merlins and kestrels.

Hummingbirds vocalize using rapid, squeaky chirps, mostly when they are in danger.



Ask A Naturalist

Fun Facts:

- They can beat their wings more than 50 times a second.
- These tiny birds can fly forwards, backwards and even hover in place.
- They are the smallest migrating bird.
- You can hear their wings beating. Its sounds like a hum. That's where the name hummingbird came from.