

#1: True or False

Hummingbirds fly on the backs of geese when migrating.



#2: True or False

The ruby-throated is the only hummingbird in the eastern United States.



#3: True or False

Hummingbirds can fly backwards.



#4: True or False?

The patch of red on a male hummingbird is used to attract female hummingbirds and defend territory.



#5: True or False

Hummingbirds live entirely on nectar, both from people and from flowers.



#6: True or False

You need to add red food color to your nectar early in the summer to bring the hummingbirds in to your feeder.



#7: True or False

Take down your hummingbird feeders in late August, so the birds don't stay too late in the season and freeze.



#8: True or False

I've had about nine generations of hummingbirds at my house over 28 years.



#9: True or False

Both male and female ruby throats guard their “personal space”.



#10: True or False?

Hummingbirds can chatter and hum at the same time.



#11: True or False

Female hummingbirds don't eat while they are nesting.



#1: False

Hummingbirds make the long journey north and south completely on their own power. For Ruby-throated hummingbirds, this means a 500-mile, 18 hour journey across the Gulf of Mexico! Hummingbirds fly at speeds of about 27 mph.

The idea that hummingbirds fly on geese was brought about due to the unbelievable stress the long journey must have on these small birds. Before the trek across the Gulf, hummingbirds really “tank up” on nectar---people living on the Gulf shores receive an incredible hummingbird display each season.



#2 Both True...and False!

The ruby-throated is the only hummingbird commonly found in the eastern United States, and the only hummingbird that nests east of the Mississippi River. However, we do see other varieties of hummingbirds come thru on rare occasion, including black-chinned hummingbirds.

There are hundreds of species of hummingbirds in the Americas. Hummingbirds do not exist in Europe, Africa or Asia.

In South America, there are 338 species of Hummingbirds. Move north to Central America, and you'll find 120 species. In Mexico, there are 32 species of Hummingbirds. In the United States, there are 16 species of hummingbirds, and only one species of hummingbird east of the Mississippi. That is our Ruby-throated.



#3: True

Hummingbirds are the only birds who can fly backwards. They are amazing aerialists....when flying forward, they beat their wings 72 times a second. Yes, 72 times a second. **Try to wave your arms around that fast! It's impossible.**

When flying backward, they speed it up to 78 beats a second and hover at about 83. They have a dive-bomb mode as well, and can hit almost 200 beats a second. If you ever hear a very deep buzzing sound near your feeders, that is the hummingbird at full speed.



#4: True

The red gorget on a male hummingbird is used to both attract mates and to defend territories. Watch the hummingbirds on your feeder---sometimes, people think that they have black-chinned hummingbirds because this chin patch looks black. It's actually the ruby-throated in a non-aggressive posture. The red shows up only when the bird catches the light just right.

The bird knows just how to hold his chin and direct the color for the purpose of showing off or defending his territory.



#5: False

Though hummingbirds spend a lot of time at the nectar feeders (both plants and human-made), they also get their flying power from protein. What do hummingbirds eat? Bugs---mosquitos, gnats, midges.

Young hummingbirds depend almost entirely on protein when they are on the nest to build their flight muscles.



#6: False

This is an on-going discussion about red color. Hummingbirds are attracted to red, and you do need red ON your feeder to ensure a hummingbird visit. However, the sugar water should be clear. Adding red food coloring does nothing and may, in fact, cause problems for the hummingbirds.

Your best recipe is still 1 cup of sugar, 4 cups hot water. That's it! Boiling the water initially helps dissolve the sugar and kill off any bacteria. Let the mix cool and fill your feeder!



Hummingbird Recipe:

1 cup white sugar

4 cups boiling water

Stir. Cool. Serve.



Yummy!

#7 False

Remember Question #1. Hummingbirds need all the energy they can get to travel from summer to winter habitat. They have thousands of miles to fly and the nectar in your feeder is an important step. Keep the nectar out at least one week after the last hummingbird has come through.

The adult males are always the first to arrive in the spring and first to leave in August. The adult females are next, usually September, and finally the young of the year. They know when to leave, which can sometimes be as late as October. Other birds from farther north may also be stopping by. So, keep the feeders out!



#8 True

I've had hummingbirds at my feeders for the 28 years I've lived at my house, and that actually makes up about nine generations of hummingbirds. These little dynamos live only about three years.

Hummingbirds have such an intense life, eating every three minutes. To keep pace, people would have to drink about ten gallons of sugar water a day. They move fast and their metabolism is even faster! Hummingbird hearts beat 1,280 times a minute (compared to our 72) and they breathe 250 times a minute (compared to 12 times a minute for people.)

It's a lot of work to be a hummingbird.



#9: True!

The females are just as territorial as the males, both on their nests and around their food sources. If you spend any time at all around feeders, you'll see the lead female and the lead male both chasing off their competition.



#10: True

Hummingbirds do chatter and hum, but the humming is the wing beats. The chattering is most often heard during territory disputes and when the male is trying to attract mates.

Hummingbirds nest two or even three times in a season. This time of year, the hummingbird males are doing their aerial acrobatics to attract mates, and it's a flight sound that's easy to pick out. A sort of back and forth "zip zip" that comes from the shuttle flights a male will do to attract his mate.

Watch for the "shuttle dance" in May and again in late June or July.



#11: True

Hummingbirds do not mate for life, and males have to court the females for each brood. After mating, the female builds the nest, tends the nest and feeds the young. They aggressively defend their nesting territory, looking for areas close to nectar and protein sources.

The closer to a food source, the faster the young, usually two nestlings, get out of the nest. If the food source is good, the females may raise three broods in a summer. The average, though, is two broods.



Hummingbird Flowers!

Native Species

Shrubs/Trees:

- Red Flowering Currant
- Gooseberry
- Salmonberry
- Honeysuckle
- Basswood

Flowers:

- Columbine
- Wood Lily
- Fireweed
- Blue Giant Hyssop
- Blazing Star
- Spotted Touch Me Not
- Alyssum

- Downy Phlox
- Wild Bergamot

Horticultural Species

Shrubs/Trees:

- Horsechestnut
- Locust
- Catalpa
- Butterfly Bean
- Lilac
- Flowering Quince

Flowers:

- Scarlet Runner Bean
- Trumpet Vine
- Nasturtium
- Fuchsia
- Petunia
- Gladiolus
- Delphinium
- Sage



Delicious!

Hope you enjoyed our Hummingbird Trivia!

Now, get outside and watch these amazing birds!
Plant a pollinator garden this spring.
Teach others and enjoy the outdoors!

