

HUMMINGBIRDS – JEWEL OF THE BIRD WORLD

U.S. hummingbirds range in size from the Calliope Hummingbird which is smallest at about 3 1/4 inches to the largest which is the Magnificent Hummingbird which is up to 5 1/4 inches.

Flower nectar is the main source of energy for hummingbirds, supplemented with protein from small insects. A garden filled with nectar-rich flowers is the best way to attract hummers.

Hummingbirds can be very territorial and provide hours of interesting observations.

Five species of hummingbirds can be found in Utah. The southwest corner of the state is the most productive area when looking for hummingbirds.

- Black-chinned Hummingbird
- Costa's Hummingbird
- Anna's Hummingbird
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird
- Calliope Hummingbird

Most species are migratory, although at least one, the Anna's hummingbird, is a permanent resident and does not migrate or migrates only short distances. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird, on the other hand, migrates 600 miles across the Gulf of Mexico twice a year.

Many places have hummers who stay all year round. When the weather turns cold, they have the ability to go into torpor, which is a state of partial hibernation. Then if the area has a few warm days, the hummers will wake up, buzz around and eat until the next cold spell.

Your feeders should empty in 3-4 days. If the empty sooner, you need larger feeders, or more of them. If they last longer than that, the feed can start to go bad, so just don't fill them so full.

Contrary to popular belief, leaving your feeder up past a certain time in the fall will NOT interfere with the natural migration of your hummers.

George Harrison, the bird expert for Birds & Blooms Extra magazine, says hummingbirds migrate according to the length of the days, and will not hang about because there is still food available. In fact, if there happens to be a straggler in your area, he or she will really appreciate an extra meal before taking off.



Watch for an article on our Mule Deer in July

