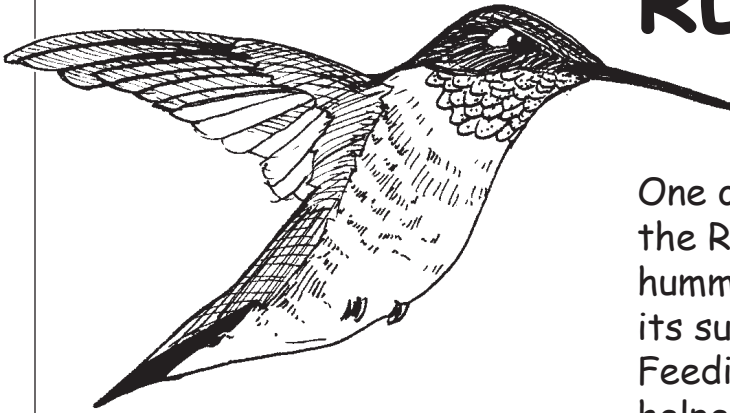


How to Help

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds



One of the smallest birds in North America, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the only hummingbird normally found over much of its summer range in eastern North America. Feeding mostly on nectar, this tiny flier can be helped by planting native plants that attract hummingbirds, maintaining hummingbird feeders, and by protecting it from cats and collisions with window glass.

What Ruby-throated Hummingbirds Need

Food: Hummingbirds prefer nectar from red tubular flowers. Favored plants include red buckeye, jewelweed, columbine, trumpet creeper, red morning-glory, wild bergamot, bee-balm, scarlet painted-cup, trumpet- or coral-honeysuckle, fly-honeysuckle, cardinal flower, royal catchfly, round-leaved catchfly, and fire-pink. They also eat small insects picked from the leaves or bark of trees or caught in mid-air.

Nesting: Hummingbirds breed in mixed woodlands and eastern deciduous forest, including yards, gardens, and orchards. Nests, woven together with spider webs, are usually built 15 to 20 feet up in trees, near the ends of hanging branches sheltered from above by leaves.

Shelter: Hummingbirds sleep and roost on sheltered tree branches.

Other: These tiny birds are susceptible to predation by house cats, and to collisions with plate glass windows.

How You Can Help

- Put up and maintain a hummingbird feeder filled with fresh uncolored sugar water (one part sugar to four parts water). Since this mixture can spoil rapidly in hot weather feeders should be cleaned thoroughly (without soap, which can sicken birds) and refilled every two days when the temperature rises.
- Plant a hummingbird garden with native and non-invasive flowering plants, especially those with red tubular flowers, including native honeysuckles, salvias, and bee-balm.
- Avoid using pesticides in your flower garden, as this depletes the insect supply for hummingbirds and other birds, and can lead to direct poisoning of birds.
- Plant native shade trees to provide nesting sites for hummingbirds.
- Protect spiders from pesticides.
- Provide landscape trees for roost site.
- Keep cats indoors to protect them from the elements, and to protect hummingbirds and other native birds from their hunting activities.
- Screen windows or make them visible so hummingbirds can avoid colliding with them (www.audubonathome.org/SafeWindows.html).