



Average Weight
3 grams, the same
as a single penny!

Slightly downcurved
bill for drinking nectar.

Distinctive iridescent
ruby throat of a male.

Male, Actual Size

Actual
Size

2 eggs per clutch is typical.
Eggs are pale, and average
13mm in length.
That's the size of
a jellybean!

Lichen covers the
exterior of the nest

Nests are constructed in
6-10 days solely by the
female and measure
45-50mm wide.

Average Length
3.5 inches

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Archilochus colubris

Illustrated by Zoe Finney

Female

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is beloved by many, from birders, to gardeners, to the very young, and nature enthusiasts in between. They captivate us with their bold ruby throats and incredible flight maneuvers, while charming us with their tiny size. Keep reading to learn all about their species, as well as tips on how to attract these bright, agile flyers to your yard!

Feeding Hummingbirds

Putting up a nectar feeder from late April through September is a simple way to bring hummingbirds to your yard. Hummingbird feeders are bright red, and come in different varieties: saucers like the one illustrated here or bottles. Hang the feeder in a shady spot at least 4 feet above the ground, and at least 10 feet from windows to prevent window collisions. Hummingbirds return to Milwaukee as early as the last week in April, so hang your feeder around that time!

Nectar Recipe & Feeding Tips

Making your own nectar takes
5 minutes or less!

1 Cup of White Cane Sugar
4 Cups of Warm Water

Completely dissolve the sugar into the water. Fill your feeder, and store the rest in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Do not add red dye or any fruit juice to the mixture, as they are unnecessary and can be harmful to the birds.

Switch out nectar every 3-5 days, or every 1-2 days if it is steadily 85° or above

Replace nectar if it becomes cloudy, or if insects get into the nectar

Clean feeder with warm dish soap & water between each filling

If you have space, hang more than one feeder to help lessen territorial disputes

Females lack a ruby throat. Instead, their throat is pale.

Males may appear to have a dark or even black gorget (throat) depending on the direction of the sun, & how light is being refracted. If the angle is perfect though, their feathers will appear to shimmer & glow like rubies!

Flight Facts

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are incredible flyers. Besides their ability to hover mid-air, their normal flight speed is around 30mph and their wings beat an average of 53 beats per second! The resting heart rate of a hummingbird is 250 beats per minute, but can soar to 1200bpm when feeding. For comparison, the resting heart rate of an average human is 60-100bpm.

Migration & Range

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds migrate around 1,000 miles round trip every year, beginning their journey in Central America in early spring. They make their way north to their breeding grounds in the United States, reaching into Canada. Before beginning migration, they put on more weight to fuel their journey. Most Ruby-throated Hummingbird migration routes include flying directly over the Gulf of Mexico. Their journey back south to their wintering grounds is triggered by shortening daylight periods as well as the search for abundant food sources.

Distribution in Wisconsin

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

- WINTER
- MIGRATION
- BREEDING

Cardinal Flower
Lobelia cardinalis

Wild Bergamot
Monarda fistulosa

Butterfly Weed
Asclepias tuberosa

Diet & Native Plants

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird's diet mainly consists of floral nectar, and small insects including bees, spiders, mosquitoes, and gnats. So planting tubular, native flowers is a great way to attract these birds to your yard.

Hummingbirds are attracted to bright orange and red flowers. Butterfly weed, wild bergamot, cardinal flower, royal catchfly and spotted jewelweed are native to our region and can be incorporated in a hummingbird garden. Not only will you attract hummingbirds, you will provide habitat for other native pollinators and native wildlife as well!

Able to hover while drinking nectar.

Strictly limited to flying due to small feet. Can occasionally shuffle along along a perch.