

	<h2>Hummingbirds in Kansas</h2>
	<h3>Get Ready for Hummer Season!</h3>
	<p>Chuck Otte Milford, KS</p>

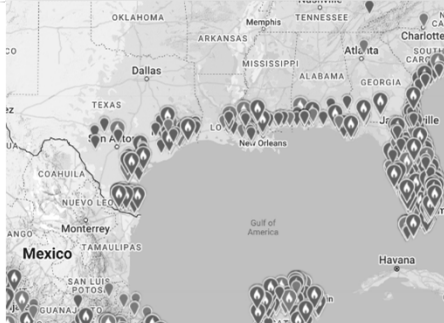


	<h2>Hummingbirds are fascinating</h2>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ They are only found in the Western Hemisphere.</li> <li>■ They can be found at sea level or high in the Andes of South America in limited and very specific ecosystems.</li> <li>■ There's approximately 360 species between North and South America.</li> </ul>

	<h2>Hummingbird migration -</h2>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some migrants cross the Gulf of Mexico, others follow the coast.</li> </ul>
	<p>TheCornellLab  Data provided by eBird</p>



**eBird Ruby-throated Hummingbird sightings as of March 9, 2025**



**Chuck's Philosophy on Hummers**

- Good selection and placement of plant materials will certainly improve the attractiveness of your yard to hummingbirds and all wildlife
- BUT
- To really bring in the hummers, you need plants AND feeders (in the plural!)

**What do hummingbirds need/want?**

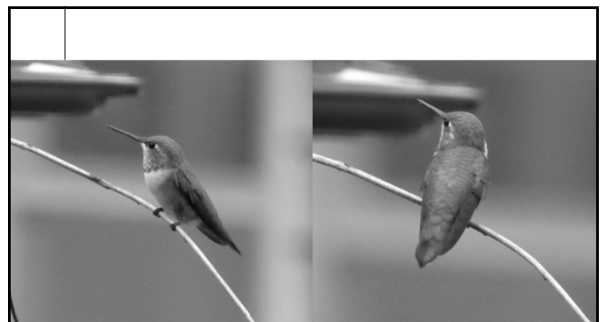
- Water/Nectar
- Food – it's not just sugar water
- Cover
  - Shelter from weather/predators
  - Safe resting/roosting locations
  - Nesting and brood rearing
    - Nesting is limited and in the eastern third to half of the state.

**Hummingbird habits**

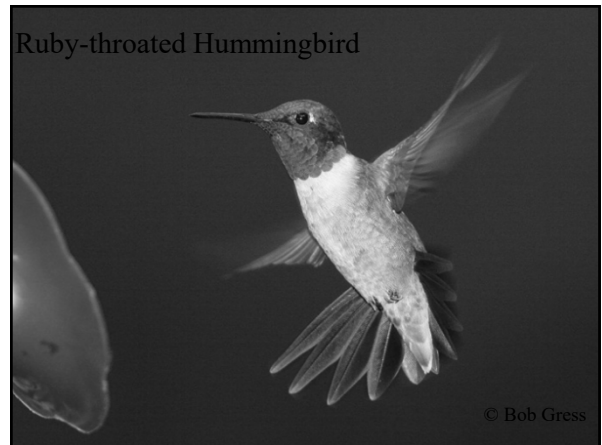
- In the eastern US, (east of the central Great Plains) 99.99% of all hummingbirds will be the Ruby-throated Hummingbird.
- But always be on the lookout for that one in a thousand!
- Mexican Violetear, Black-chinned, Anna's, Calliope, Broad-tailed, Broad-billed, Rivoli's, Costa's, Rufous, Allen's or ?



Rufous Hummingbird



Immature Rufous Hummingbird



<b>Hummingbird Season</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A brief but furious spring migration in late April and early May and then the residents settle into nesting mode. Single purpose!</li> <li>■ The real action starts in mid-summer and continues to early fall.</li> <li>■ Emphasize food and roosting plants, also those that will provide nesting habitat.</li> </ul>	

<b>Hummingbird Season</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Starting in mid to late July, hummingbirds are through breeding and they start a post-breeding dispersal and a leisurely southbound migration.</li> <li>■ Species that breed in the Rocky Mountains will move east and south out onto the plains and beyond.</li> <li>■ Maximize food plants available at this time.</li> </ul>	

	<b>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Length: 3.4 inches</li> <li>■ Wingspan: 4.5 inches</li> <li>■ Weight: 0.1 ounce (3.2 grams) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A penny weighs 2.5 g, a nickel 5 g</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Life span: Record is 12 years, on average 3 to 5 years</li> <li>■ Memory: Excellent!!!!</li> </ul>

	<b>Ruby-throated Nesting</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In Kansas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Nest building June 4 to July 2</li> <li>■ Eggs June 14 to August 10</li> <li>■ Nestlings June 26 to August 27 <i>(from Birds of Kansas, Thompson, et. al.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Nest site: female determines, exclusively</li> </ul>

	<b>Ruby-throated Nesting</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Often near tip of downsloping branch with fairly open area below and canopy above.</li> <li>■ Oak, hornbeam, yellow birch, <i>populus</i> sp, hackberry and pine.</li> <li>■ Generally prefer deciduous over conifer</li> <li>■ 1.5 to 50 feet up, generally 16 – 23 feet</li> <li>■ Availability of nearby nectar and insects</li> </ul> <p><i>From Birds of the World</i></p>

	<b>Ruby-throated Nesting</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Construction Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Begun by building flat base of thistle (<i>Cirsium</i> sp.) and dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i> sp.) down, saddled on upper side of branch and attached with spider web. Stamps down base with feet. Bottom stiff, unlike nest walls. White plant down used for side walls, along with bud scales and spider webbing (Bent 1940). Laces plant material together with spider webbing using figure-8 motion of bill; also uses pine resin when available (RRS). Forms nest lip by pressing material between bill, chin region, and chest with body rotation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ <b>Dimensions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Outside diameter 45–50 mm at base with slight constriction at top; height 40 mm. Inside diameter 28 mm, depth 25–29 mm; nest wall thickness 10 mm (RRS).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## A Few Hummingbird Plants

## Hummer food sources

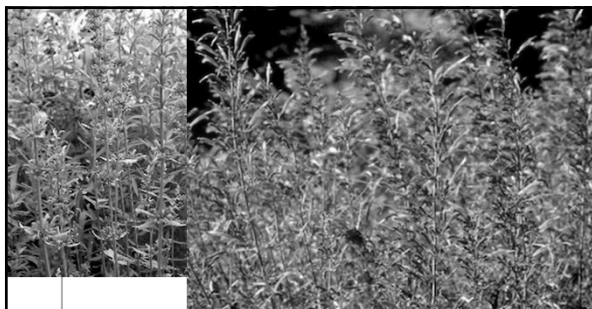
- Hummingbirds will feed on more than just red flowers.
- Quality and quantity of nectar is important.
- But the color red is a flashing neon sign for hummingbirds.
- Put on a red cap or red shirt and sit quietly near your feeder. They will check you out!



Traditional Red Salvia *Salvia sp.*



Lady-in-Red Salvia *Salvia coccinea*



Agastache *Agastache sp.*



Trumpet Creeper *Campsis radicans*



**Scarlet Runner Bean *Phaseolus coccineus***



**Cardinal Climber *Quamoclit sloteri***



**Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis***



**Beebalm *Monarda didyma***



**Butterfly Bush *Buddleia davidii***



**Hollyhock, *Alcea rosea***



**Rose of Sharon *Hibiscus syriacus***



**Cannas *Canna* species**

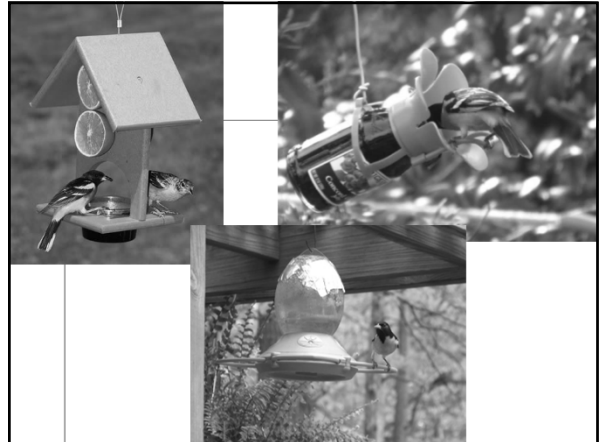
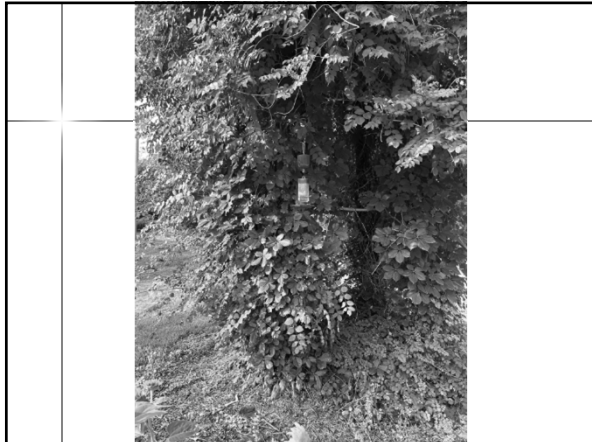


**Zinnias, *Zinnia* species**

### **Remember some basics**

- Masses look better and are more likely to attract hummingbirds.
- Use the right plant in the right place (sun/shade/wind/soil).
- Over-care the annuals, under-care the perennials.





	<h2>Orioles!</h2>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Orioles will be attracted to nectar (and jelly and some of the same plants) just like hummingbirds will.</li> <li>■ While they may be regular in May and June, late summer activity may be limited.</li> <li>■ Southbound migration a little earlier than hummingbirds in September.</li> <li>■ Mockingbirds, catbirds and thrashers, too!</li> </ul>

	<h2>Right Now.....</h2>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Make sure feeders are clean and ready to be put up.</li> <li>■ Put at least one feeder up around April 15.</li> <li>■ Change nectar and clean every 2 – 3 days.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Every day or two if really hot and sunny</li> <li>– <b>Don't fill them clear full unless they empty the feeder.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<h2>Feeder-scaping</h2>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ You don't need red dye in the water.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Some recent evidence shows that the dyes may be detrimental. (BWD – May/June 2010)</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ The red dye concentration exceeds the recommended daily limit of red dye #40 for humans (.12 mg/kg vs .007 mg/kg)</li> <li>■ Just a small amount of red <b>ON</b> the feeder is all you need!</li> </ul>

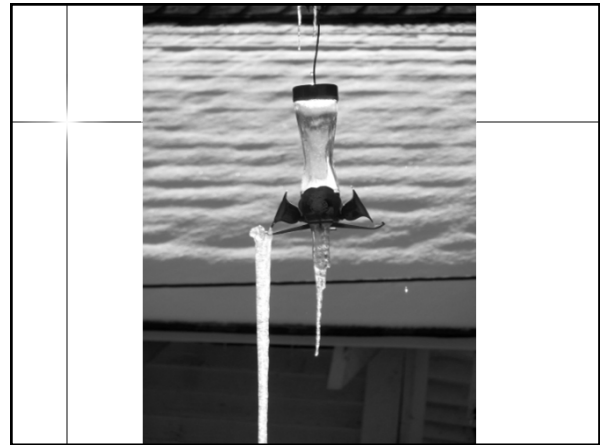
	<h2>Feeder-scaping</h2>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ You CAN'T have too many feeders (unless you're going broke buying sugar!)</li> <li>■ You don't have to fill them completely full!</li> <li>■ 4 parts water, 1 part sugar</li> <li>■ Clean the feeder at each filling             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hot tap water and brush. Soapy water cleaning every few weeks.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<b>Feeder Management</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NO high fructose corn syrup!</li> <li>■ NO honey or artificial sweeteners</li> <li>■ NO organic cane sugar or brown sugar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Too much iron</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ May prefer cane sugar over beet sugar</li> <li>■ NOTHING but PWGS and water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– If an in house water softener, bypass</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<b>Feeder-scaping</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ One 8 ounce feeder will fulfill the daily energy needs of 40 to 60 hummingbirds.</li> <li>■ More feeders will allow them to feed more easily with less stress. Use more feeders to defeat territoriality.</li> <li>■ Avoid dyed commercial mixes and go with water and sugar.</li> </ul>

	<b>Feeder-scaping - summary</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hummingbird appropriate plant material along with multiple feeders will greatly enhance your opportunity to attract hummingbirds.</li> <li>■ Get feeders out by April 15<sup>th</sup>, prepare to gear up around August 1<sup>st</sup>.</li> <li>■ Leave feeders up well into early winter and look for the hummingbird that arrives late in the fall.</li> </ul>



	<b>Feeder Issues</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Moats</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

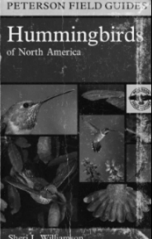
	<b>Feeder Issues</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Moats</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ No hummers at the feeder</li> <li>■ Bees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Get rid of dripping feeders</li> <li>– No yellow</li> <li>– Straws/extensions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<b>No Hummers?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Every year people report no summer hummingbirds. Others report normal numbers.</li> <li>■ NFS – Neighborhood Feeder Saturation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The number of feeders within a geographic area exceeds the biological needs of the hummingbirds present which spreads the birds out: less competition = less stress.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>No Hummers?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Populations of birds can be cyclical. You can have hummers for several summers and then those birds go elsewhere or don't survive the winter.</li> <li>■ In a year or two, it'll probably cycle back around.</li> </ul>

<b>Myths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hummingbirds migrate on backs of other birds.</li> <li>■ Finch feeders should not be near hummingbird feeders as the finches will kill the hummingbirds.</li> </ul>

<b>Hummer Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Predation not much of a threat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>Cats</u>, small raptors, shrikes, Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Kingbird, <u>praying mantises</u>, dragonflies, frogs, large spider webs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Accidents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Spiny or hooked plants, window collisions, cars, radio towers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Because of small size, hard to find mortalities.</li> </ul>

<b>Recommended Reference</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hummingbirds of North America – Peterson Field Guide Series, Sheri Williamson</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Remember - it's all about having fun!</b></p> 

<b>Additional Interests?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="https://ksbirds.org">https://ksbirds.org</a></li> <li>■ <a href="https://www.hummingbirdcentral.com/">https://www.hummingbirdcentral.com/</a></li> <li>■ <a href="http://www.hummingbirdsociety.org/">http://www.hummingbirdsociety.org/</a></li> <li>■ <a href="http://gearycountyextension.com/NRMW.htm">http://gearycountyextension.com/NRMW.htm</a> (Backyard Birding Guides)</li> </ul>



White-necked Jacobins - Panama

	<b>Chuck Otte</b> <b>Retired (but always birding)!!!!!!</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <a href="mailto:cotte@twinvalley.net">cotte@twinvalley.net</a></li><li>■ <a href="http://gearycountyextension.com/NRMW.htm">http://gearycountyextension.com/NRMW.htm</a></li><li>■ 785-223-1403</li></ul>