

Backyard bird watching with Harry: by Harry Johnson

Hummingbird Q & A

If you've been reading this article over the years, you'll know one of birds Cheryl and I love to watch every spring and summer are the hummingbirds. They're a real source of entertainment for us. Hummingbirds range in size from the two inch long bee hummingbird of Cuba, to the giant cardinal sized hummingbird of the Andes. They come in varying shades of vivid color, from the fiery feathers flashing in the light as they fly in every imaginable direction. Yes, they are fascinating creatures, but how well do you know them? Let's test your knowledge of hummingbirds with this quiz.

Q: True or False: Hummingbirds occur only in the western hemisphere.

A: True) This unique family of birds is found only in the New World, with the majority of species occurring in South America.

Q: How many hummingbird species exist worldwide?

- A: About 70
- B: About 150
- C: About 330
- D: About 500

A: C) About 330. Of the 300 plus hummingbird species that exist worldwide, only about a dozen are commonly found in North America north of Mexico.

Q: Why do hummingbirds hum?

- A. To navigate and find food.
- B. Because their wings beat as fast as 80 times per second.
- C. To ward off predators.
- D. Because they don't know the words.

A: B) Because their wings beat as fast as 80 times per second. WOW! The birds are

named for the humming sound made by those rapidly flapping wings.

Q: Which of these is NOT acceptable hummingbird food?

- A. Flower nectar
- B. Small insects
- C. Sugar water
- D. Honey water

A: D) Honey water. Honey, molasses, and artificial sweeteners must never be offered to hummingbirds. The chemical composition of honey is different from that of cane or beet sugar, so it is not the same kind of sugar hummers get when they sip nectar from flowers. Honey is not a natural food for hummers and it spoils quickly when dissolved in water.

Q: Which hummingbird is the smallest North American bird species?

- A. Ruby-throated hummingbird.
- B. Anna's hummingbird.
- C. Broad-tailed hummingbird.
- D. Calliope hummingbird.

A: D) Calliope hummingbird. The Calliope hummingbird is just over three inches long and is our smallest North American bird species, but it can survive the very cold nights in the Rocky Mountains, where it nests in the summer.

Q: True or False: Hummingbirds won't migrate if you fed them too long into the autumn.

A: False. Birds are genetically programmed to migrate when their internal clocks tell them to do so. They will depart when the time is right whether your feeders are up or not. However, leaving your feeders up in the fall and getting them up early in the spring

may help late or early migrants that are passing through your area. Over the last ten years or so, we've seen a number of Rufus hummingbirds spending the winter in the Illinois Valley. Why do they stay?

Q: What materials do most hummingbirds use to make their nests?

- A. Mud and grass.
- B. Spider web and lichens.
- C. Twigs and bark strips.
- D. Hummingbirds don't use nests.

A: B) Spider web and lichens. Female ruby-throated hummingbirds, for example, construct a walnut sized, thick walled cup of plant down and spider silk, bound tightly with spider web and encrusted with lichens. This well insulated nest protects the eggs when the hummingbird must leave to forage.

Q: Two truths and one lie: Which of these statements is false?

- A. Hummingbird tongues are forked at the tip, with feather like edges.
- B. Hummingbirds require more energy to live than any other worm blooded animal.
- C. Hummingbirds hitch rides on the backs of other birds during migration.

A: C) Hummingbirds hitch riders on the back of other birds during migration. This is an old but persistent myth. Hummingbirds are strong flying migrants, perfectly capable of traveling hundreds of miles all on their own.

Q: Which hummingbird species breed as far north as Alaska?

- A. Rufous hummingbird
- B. Calliope hummingbird
- C. Black-chinned hummingbird
- D. Ruby-throated hummingbird

A: A) Rufous hummingbird. Rufous hummingbirds breed as far north as Alaska where late spring snows can make finding flower nectar difficult.

Q: Which of these will help to lure hummingbirds into your backyard?

- A; Sugar water feeders
- B. Native nectar producing plants
- C. Fresh supply of water
- D. All of the above.

A: D) All of the above. No matter where you live in the Illinois Valley, these

Three essentials (feeders, plants and water) are the best way to lure hummingbirds into your backyard.

I hope you enjoyed doing this quiz. For the record I missed the second question.

If you have any questions or comments you can contact me at www.birdwatching@frontiernet.net.

The above is from Harry Johnson in O'Brien and birdwatchersdigest.com.



Allen's hummingbird



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To join contact us at kimberlielehman@yahoo.com

Church News

Community Bible Church

Poison Oak

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled." *Hebrews 12:14-15*

The last place where I lived, I spotted a corner of the property that I thought would be a good place to have as a garden space. The only problem was that it was covered with some kind of plant that had these shiny leaves in groups of three. Not being familiar with the type of plant it was, I thought I would pull it up and dispose of it to make way for my garden. So I did. The length of the roots on those plants was amazing, and every so often a new plant would appear along that root. So my youngest son and I chopped and pulled and dug to clean up that garden

spot. At the end of the day, we would drop our dirty clothes by the washer before we cleaned up. A few days later, my wife, who did the washing, began to break out in a rash and get bumps on her wrists and arms. Poison oak – it didn't have much effect on my youngest son or me, but it sure made my wife break out! That's what bitterness is like. When it takes over a person's life, it has a poisoning effect on you and those around you. It could be your children, your co-workers, or anyone. Some people spread bitterness like, well, like poison oak! Jesus said, "Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yep, even rest from a bitter heart.

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Pastor Dave

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