U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Hummingbirds

- Hummingbirds are found only in the Americas, which are home to more than 300 different hummingbird species. Most are found only in Central and South America, but Arizona is a hotbed of hummingbird variety, with many Central American species reaching the northern limits of their range there. One species, the rufous hummingbird, summers in southern Alaska.

- Unique shoulder joints, wing bones and musculature allow hummingbirds to hover and even fly backwards. When hovering, their wings beat about 55 times per second. In flight, that rises to 75 beats per second or more. Their wingspans range from about 2½ inches for the bumblebee hummingbird, a Central American species seen in Arizona, to 4½ inches for the ruby-throated hummingbird of the Eastern U.S.

- It takes a lot of energy to power all those wing beats. Hummingbirds weigh about a tenth of an ounce – about the same as a U.S. penny – and consume about half that amount of sugar, in the form of flower nectar, every day.

- Hummingbirds often conserve energy by going into a state of torpor on cool summer nights or during unseasonable cold spells. They become motionless, their bodies cold to the touch, but they'll revive when temperatures rise.

- The Eastern United States' only breeding hummingbird, the ruby-throated hummingbird, builds a nest the size of a walnut, lined with soft mosses and held together with spider webs. The female lays two pea-sized eggs and tends them alone. The males have multiple mates and begin their long migration to Central America in August, with the females following a few weeks later.

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