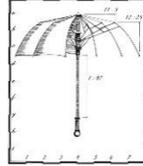




Mini-Blossom on Hanging Hooks -- a PARASOL bestseller MBHASST8 (8 Pk)



PAR•A•SOL®

**The
FLYING
JEWEL**

Hummingbird Feeders

September 2014

Edition No. 9

Migrating Hummingbirds

- it's time to carbo-load!

Heading South!

Migration is building as more and more hummingbirds head south. Summer residents are moving on and new visitors are stopping briefly at flowers and feeders. The first report from Mexico of a Ruby-throated migrating through came just this week.

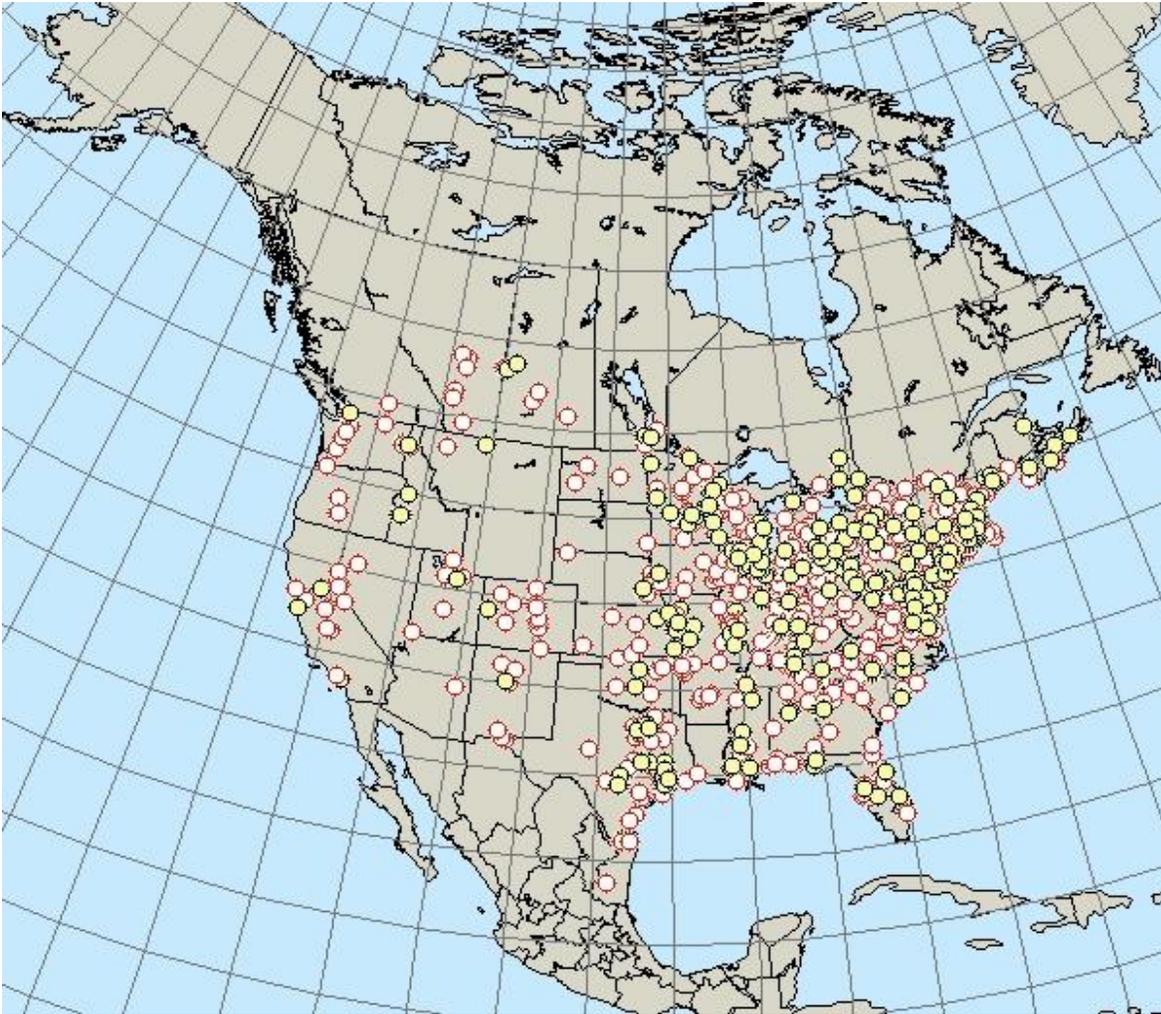
As the time of migration approaches, the hummingbird starts to pack on fat, which will fuel its journey. And then it gets an overwhelming urge to migrate. The biological rhythms run automatically, but they are synchronized and fine tuned by the changing day length.

Birds leave their summer home while food is still plentiful. That way, they are reasonably assured of finding more food along the way. Along migration routes, flowers that contain lot of nectar bloom and are pollinated by these travelers. Two famous flowers are honeysuckle and trumpet vine.

A great hummingbird GPS!

The following map shows sightings of hummingbirds in August and now early September. You can watch these maps change at learner.org which maps hummingbird spring and fall migrations throughout the United States. They also have very interesting maps for butterflies, birds, fall colors... a lot of fun things to track.

Late Summer Hummingbird Sightings



Map by learner.org

Of the 14-17 species of hummingbirds which can be seen in the United States and Canada, almost all of them return to Mexico and Central America in fall to spend the winters in warmer climates. Exceptions are the Anna's hummingbird and some Costa's hummingbirds in California, and some over-wintering Ruby-throated and Rufous in the Gulf Coast.

The Hummingbird Highway

While hummingbird migration occurs on the same common fly zones, they do not travel in flocks. The best analogy is that hummingbirds are like commuters on a freeway, all going the same way on the same road, but doing so alone to get to their own individual homes. One reason hummingbirds will migrate alone might be they are so small that most predators have difficulty seeing them. If they flocked together, they would be a larger, more readily seen, target. Also, a hummingbird must stop frequently to feed at a flower or feeder, even during migration. To have a flock of hummingbirds waiting in line for a flower to refill doesn't work.

When hummingbirds are migrating, they usually do not stay very high off the ground. They have been reported to fly just above treetop level over land or pretty much skimming the top of the water ways. It is believed they do this to keep an eye out for a food or nectar opportunity on their long journey.

Hang your hummingbird feeders NOW!

This is a perfect time to hang a hummingbird feeder - the birds will love it as they try to build up the body weight for their big journey South. It is best to keep them up for one week after you've seen the last one in order to take care of the late-season stragglers.

And don't worry: it is a myth that hummingbird feeders will discourage hummingbirds from migrating. They LOVE finding a feeder to pack on some more calories on their way to Mexico. They know when to leave. Just ask anyone who has a lot of hummingbirds this time of year: one week, they just start taking off further South, no matter how many feeders you have up for them.

Hummingbird Migration in Central Mexico

We just saw our first black-chinned hummingbirds arrive last week from their summer homes in the southwestern USA.



We would like to share some information from Sheri L. Williamson, one of the foremost experts on hummingbirds.

Feeding Hummingbirds

If you have an urge to get fancy with how you feed hummingbirds, do it with the feeder itself, not with the contents.

We now present an article posted on August 31st, 2014, with answers to the most common questions on the theme of what to put in hummingbird feeders:

"Can you make hummingbird food with brown sugar?"

Please don't try this. Brown sugar contains molasses, which are rich in iron, and excess iron can be deadly to hummingbirds. Use that brown sugar to make some delicious chocolate chunk blondies or pineapple upside-down cake instead.

"Can you make hummingbird nectar out of organic cane sugar?"

-organic evaporated cane juice hummingbird nectar-

Again, the light beige color of semi-refined sugars, including organic sugar and "evaporated cane juice,"* indicates the presence of molasses and therefore potentially toxic iron (though at a lower concentration than in brown sugar). Until some company comes out with a fully refined white organic sugar, it's safest to stick with non-organic white sugar. GMO sugar is a non-issue, but some people report that hummingbirds prefer pure cane sugar to either beet sugar or blends of the two (which are usually just labeled "sugar").

"Should you feed hummingbirds high fructose corn syrup?"

No. HFCS is made up of two simple sugars, glucose and fructose, which are components of sucrose, the most abundant sugar in the nectars of hummingbird-pollinated flowers. Hummingbirds get all the glucose and fructose they need by digesting sucrose, and HFCS has a greater likelihood of contamination during the manufacturing process.

"How much orange extract can I put in hummingbird nectar?"

NONE. That product appealingly labeled "Pure Orange Extract" is 79% alcohol plus a little water and orange oil squeezed from discarded orange rinds, not the good part of the fruit. It's not

nutritious, it won't attract the birds, and it may harm them. At best it will probably attract bees. Seriously, don't do this.

"Can I use vanilla in hummingbird feeders?"

sigh... "Pure" vanilla extract also contains alcohol-not as much its orange counterpart, but still the equivalent of 80-proof booze. Hummingbirds don't pollinate vanilla orchids, nor do they need flavored sugar water to encourage them to visit feeders. Again, you're more likely to increase your bee problems, which won't be popular with your hummingbird clientele.

"Is koolaid safe for humming birds?"

NO. Kool-Aid contains petroleum-based synthetic dyes, artificial flavorings, preservatives, and other things that are at best useless and at worst harmful to hummingbirds. A glass of Kool-Aid every now and then won't kill you or me, but what do you think would happen if we ate 100+ packages of the dry mix every day? That's the equivalent of a hummingbird's daily intake, minus the water and sugar (the only ingredients in prepared Kool-Aid that hummingbirds actually do need).

More than a century of backyard experience and scientific research into hummingbirds and their flowers has established beyond doubt that a fresh solution of white sugar in good-quality water served in clean feeders is all you need. No dyes. No flavors. No "supplements."

*All cane sugar is produced by evaporating water from cane juice. This is just a snake-oil name for cane sugar that still contains a lot of its original contaminants.

Extracted from the Blog: Life, Birds, and Everything

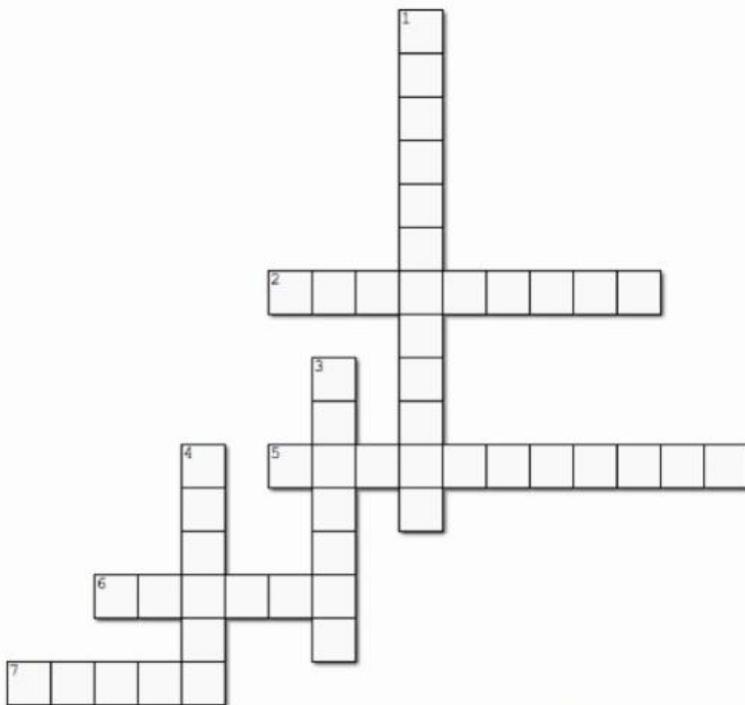
By: Sheri L. Williamson

Sheri L. Williamson is a naturalist, ornithologist, conservationist, writer, speaker, artist, and author of A Field Guide to Hummingbirds of North America in the Peterson Field Guide Series.

<http://fieldguidetohummingbirds.wordpress.com>

MIGRATION

Fill in the crossword with the correct word in the sentence



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Horizontal

2. Hummingbirds can double his/her weight before _____.
5. Two famous flowers for hummingbirds are _____ and trumpet vine
6. Each time before a hummingbird starts migration, they need to fuel up on _____ and insects .
7. Almost all hummingbirds migrate to Mexico and Central America. Exceptions are the _____ hummingbird and the Costa 's hummingbird in California

Vertical

1. _____ hummingbirds have been known to travel 500 miles over the Gulf of Mexico to their spring and summer breeding grounds
3. Along migration routes, _____ that contain a lot of nectar bloom and are pollinated by hummingbirds.
4. Hummingbirds are known to travel alone, they do not travel in _____.