

# Animals of the World: Birds



## THE HUMMINGBIRD



Hummingbirds are small, colorful birds that live exclusively in the American continent, from North America to South America. There are 343 species of hummingbirds, making it the family of birds with the second largest number of species in the world.

The name, hummingbird, comes from the humming sound of their wings when they fly. Their wings flutter approximately 80 times per second; they move so fast that it is hard to distinguish their wings.

It is a small bird; most species of hummingbird measure up to 15 cm and weigh up to 20 grams. Its offspring are no bigger than the size of a penny.

Its beak is also unique among birds since it is thin, long, and curved. Inside the beak, it has a long, tubular tongue. Because of its beak and tongue, hummingbirds can feed on the nectar of flowers and the sap of trees.



In most species of hummingbirds, the plumage is mainly green or light gray, decorated with colored patches on its throat or back. Its feathers are so bright they reflect sunlight. This makes some people think of jewels or fairies when they spot a hummingbird.



The diet of hummingbirds consists mainly of sucking the nectar of flowers or the sap of trees, but they also consume pollen and small insects. In spite of its tiny size, hummingbirds eat a lot. They eat eight times an hour and visit more than 1000 flowers a day. Although it seems incredible, they eat three times their body weight during a day of feeding.

Hummingbirds usually live 3 to 4 years, but some hummingbirds have lived 12 years.

In the reproductive period of hummingbirds, the male tries to get the attention of the females with their flight, fluttering up to 200 times per second. They usually lay two white eggs the size of a pearl. The young begin to fly by their third week of life.



Hummingbird nests are built with small twigs and leaves. All the nests are unique because each hummingbird designs its home to its taste and appropriate size.

Hummingbirds are extremely important for the environment because they are an animal pollinator. They carry pollen when they fly from one flower to the next, which allows the plants to reproduce.

All hummingbirds are small, but some are much smaller than others. The hummingbird, Cuban Bee, is the smallest bird in the world. It is the size of a bumblebee, barely measuring 5 cm high.



On the other hand, in the southern parts of Chile and Argentina lives the largest hummingbird in the world, known as giant hummingbird, measuring up to 22 cm.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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Answer the questions.

1. Hummingbirds live primarily on \_\_\_\_\_

- a. the Asian continent.
- b. the African continent.
- c. the European continent.
- d. the American continent.



2. Hummingbirds are known for \_\_\_\_\_

- a. their rapid flutter.
- b. the great distances that fly.
- c. the number of offspring they have.
- d. the huge nests they build.

3. When hummingbirds flutter, the color and shape of their wings is easily recognizable.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Hummingbirds feed primarily on \_\_\_\_\_

- a. flower and fish nectar.
- b. meat and small insects.
- c. fruits and vegetables.
- d. flower nectar and tree sap.

5. Solve the mathematical problem: If hummingbirds can eat up to 8 times per hour, how many times will they eat in 5 hours?

- a. 3 times.
- b. 13 times
- c. 40 times
- d. 1000 times



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

6. Hummingbirds are not long-lived animals because \_\_\_\_\_
- a. they usually live an average of 3 to 4 years.
  - b. they live 12 years.
  - c. they live 200 years.
  - d. they live 2 years.
7. During the collection period, the male tries to get the attention of the females with his flight.
- a. True
  - b. False
8. Hummingbirds help with the pollination process because \_\_\_\_\_
- a. they carry pollen from one flower to another.
  - b. they eat insects that spoil plants.
  - c. they feed on the leaves of the plants.
  - d. they move the air with their wings.
9. The word sap appears in the text. Sap is the liquid part of flowers.
- a. True
  - b. False
10. What is the largest hummingbird?
- a. The Cuban Bee.
  - b. The Algerian.
  - c. The Chinese.
  - d. The Giant.

