

Hummingbirds

Crown Jewels of the Bird World



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Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Estes Park, Colorado

Introduction

The first time you see a hummingbird up close, the sight steals your breath away. For many people, this experience happens every time they see a hummingbird. Pure magic! Perhaps it's the vibrant plumage colors, or the rapid wing beats, or perhaps the amazing flight patterns, even the hum. It's no exaggeration to say that hummingbirds are the marvels of the bird world. For all these reasons and more, they have captured the hearts and imaginations of a great many bird watchers, the world over.

Expert ornithologists have determined that there are over 338 different types of hummingbird species, the majority of which reside in South America. Central and North America are also home to this tiny-winged creature, but this gem of the birding world is found nowhere else on the planet. In 2020, a new species was discovered in South America, and it's possible there may be a few more to discover as well. Time will tell.

While some hummingbirds migrate, there are many that don't. Moreover, there are some rare hummingbirds that can only be found in one or two specific valleys in the cloud forests of Ecuador, Peru, or Columbia.

Ecuador hosts nearly one third of all the hummingbirds in the world, many of whom don't migrate. If you want to see those birds, you must travel to them, and it is worth it!

Here in the United States, only the Ruby-throated Hummingbird can be seen east of the Mississippi. West of this landmark, there are over 14 species that can be seen from Arizona and California to Alaska and back through the Rocky Mountain region. Islands in the Caribbean region are also home to many different species including the tiniest of them all, the Bee Hummingbird found only in Cuba.



Rays of sunshine breaking through the cloud forest of Costa Rica, where many species of hummingbirds live.



Violet Sabrewing Hummingbird, Cloud Forest, Costa Rica



Snowcap Hummingbird, Cloud Forest, Costa Rica



Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Cloud Forest, Costa Rica



Lesser Violetear Hummingbird, Cloud Forest, Costa Rica



Snowcap Hummingbird, Cloud Forest, Costa Rica