

may 2021

COMMITMENT // HUMMINGBIRD // TANGERINE

Known as “flying jewels” (joyas voladoras in Spanish), hummingbirds are nothing short of amazing. The “humming” in this bird’s name doesn’t refer to vocalization. These miniature marvels beat their wings more than 50 times a second, making a distinctive humming sound. (And making their wings look like a blur to us.)

Their wings can actually make a vortex like a tornado, allowing them to hover in place, and their tails can act as a rudder for super-sharp turns. They can even fly backwards. You won’t see hummingbirds hopping or walking, though – their tiny feet are used only for perching.

These little wonder-birds are omnivores. They use their long,

slender beaks and long tongues to get nectar from flowers (slurping it up at 13 licks per second!), but they’re also known to eat insects and spiders, even grabbing these from spider webs.

The most recognizable hummingbird in the United States, and the only one to breed in the East, is the ruby-throated hummingbird. One of these adults might eat twice its body weight in food each day, needed to maintain its high metabolism.

In fact, a ruby-throated hummingbird might double its weight before migrating to Mexico or points south. It’s a long, long journey. Some birds apparently fly across the Gulf of Mexico – around 500 miles! Others stick more to the coastline, skirting around Texas. Older, more experienced birds seem to arrive in better shape, and in better time, than younger birds that are still learning the tricks of the trade.

COMMITMENT:

Making a plan and putting it into practice



Hummingbirds have to time things just right for long migration journeys.