



Hummingbirds are tiny marvels. They are the smallest birds in the world, and are among the most gaily colored. Their flight is wonderful, too. Their tiny wings move so fast they can scarcely be seen. Hummingbirds can balance themselves in midair. They can even fly backwards.

Over four hundred different kinds of Hummingbirds are known. Most live in the tropics, but about fifteen kinds come into the United States, mainly to the Southwest. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the most common, and the only one that is found in the East. It is fairly common in spring and summer in gardens and open woods.

The Ruby-throat makes its tiny nest on top of a branch. The nest is made of rootlets and bits of plant material held together with spider web and plastered with saliva. The outside of the nest is covered with bits of lichen. The female lays two tiny white eggs, each less than a half inch long.

With their long bills, Hummingbirds feed on the nectar of flowers, and also on ants, small flies, and other tiny insects.