

## Hummingbirds for Beginning Backyard Birders

09/29/09

Hummingbirds make great introduction birds for new backyard birders, said Trevor Cole, owner of Across the Pond in Huntsville, Ala. "Hummingbirds are very easy to attract," he said. "Just hang out a feeder filled with solution."

Hummingbirds offer beginning backyard birders easy success. Simply hang out a feeder with solution, and they generally will come. (Courtesy of Parasol) Cole said backyard birders need a durable, easy-to-clean hummingbird feeder. One option, he said, is a birdfeeder with a shepherd's hook placed in a potted plant. "They make such a fleeting visit as they move through the garden feeding from flowers," Cole said. "If you don't have a feeder, they will move on."

Much of the country must say goodbye to hummingbirds in October, but backyard birders who live along the West Coast and in Arizona can enjoy the energetic backyard birds year-round, said David Horn, Ph.D., director of the National Bird-Feeding Society and associate professor of biology at Millikin University in Decatur, Ill. "There are two species, Costa's and Anna's, that remain due to the temperate climate of these areas," Horn said.

"Anna's Hummingbirds are found year-round in the West Coast from southern California to Washington," Horn said. "Costa's Hummingbirds are found in southern California and western Arizona. The temperate climate means there is a constant supply of nectar and insects."

These tiny backyard birds require thousands of calories each day to live, Horn said. "Their wings can beat up to a hundred times a second," he said. "You can imagine the amount of energy that is required to do that."

Horn said pond and water garden retailers can sell prepackaged sugar-water powder or liquid food for hummingbirds. Backyard birding customers must understand the importance of cleaning and replacing the nectar a few times a week," Horn said, "to keep mold away."

Many backyard birders recommend using a red feeder or a feeder with red ribbons to draw the hummingbirds' attention. They also prefer to pour uncolored sugar-water into the feeder.

Backyard birding customers might report hummingbirds ignoring the feeder, Horn said, but it might just take patience. "If the feeder is in a hummingbird's particular round, it will find the feeder quickly," he said. "If it's a new territory and the hummingbird is not used to visiting there, it can take some time to find it. Once they've found, they will be frequent visitors."

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