



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:

Dottie Head, dottie@atlantaaudubon.org or (678) 973-2437 (office) or (404) 388-8538 cell

HUMMINGBIRDS RETURN TO METRO-ATLANTA

(Atlanta, Ga.) May 30, 2017—Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have returned to Georgia from their wintering grounds in Central America, and Atlanta Audubon Society is encouraging homeowners to put out feeders and plant native flower to help eastern North America's only breeding hummingbird. Feeding hummingbirds is a great way to watch these tiny birds up close.

Weighing less than a penny, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds beat their wings 50 times per second and must consume more than their weight in nectar each day to maintain energy stores. Their tiny hearts can beat as often as 1,260 beat per minute.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will readily feed on hummingbird feeders available at local retailers and birding stores, and it is easy to mix up a hummingbird solution at home. Mix one-part white sugar to four-parts water in a pot and bring to a boil. Let it cool before filling your hummingbird feeder. Do not place red food dye in the mixture as the birds don't need it, and it could be harmful. Leftover solution may be stored in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Hummingbird feeders should be placed at least 15 feet away from windows and near shrubs or bushes. During the hot summer months, it is important to clean and refresh the solution in feeders regularly to prevent molding.

Gardeners can also attract hummingbirds by planting brightly-colored, tube-shaped plants like red honeysuckle, trumpet creeper, cardinal flower, red columbine, rhododendron, jewel weed, and others. For a complete listing of native, bird-friendly plants for your zip code, visit the Plants for Birds website at www.atlantaaudubon.org/plants-for-birds.

Adults and children alike will enjoy watching Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at the feeder with their bright, emerald green backs and gray-white underparts. Male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have a bright red iridescent throat patch that can appear dark in dim light. The aerial acrobats will fly straight and fast, but can stop and hover too, adjusting their position up, down, or backwards with great control. The birds will readily visit hummingbird feeders and tube-shaped flowers, but they may also eat tiny insects.

May is a busy nesting month for hummingbirds in Georgia. Females are busy nesting and raising their young, while the males are busy guarding their territory. As summer approaches, activity at the feeders

will pick up significantly, and males will aggressively guard their favorite feeders. From mid-July through October, the tiny birds are busy adding fat stores in preparation for their migration to Central America. For more information, visit the Atlanta Audubon website at www.AtlantaAudubon.org. If you have questions about hummingbirds or other birds, send them to ask.chippy@atlantaaudubon.org.

Atlanta Audubon Society is committed to building places where birds and people thrive. We create bird-friendly communities through conservation, education, and advocacy.

Please note: A photo of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird and an MS Word version of this press release are available for download at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y3l9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>

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Ruby-throated hummingbird by Robert Johnson