

The Joy of Birding



By H D Overholt

With Easter approaching and the joy of springtime in the air, the sound of our friends fill the air and treetops with melodies. Some of the indications of spring we notice are robins flitting around on the yard looking for a nice juicy meal. The mockingbird saluting the sunshine with various imitations of the vocal cords as they guard their respected territory.

The arrival of the smallest marvel in the kingdom of avian are humming birds.

Many hummingbirds spend the winter in Central America or Mexico, and migrate north to their breeding grounds in the southern United States as early as February, and to areas further north later in the spring. The first of April in southern Kentucky area is the expected date of the sightings of humming birds.

Hummingbirds are small birds (weighing 2–20 grams (0.071–0.705 oz)) with long, narrow bills. Hummingbirds have compact bodies with relatively long, blade like wings having anatomical structure enabling helicopter-like flight in any direction, including the ability to hover. Particularly while hovering, the wing beats produce the humming sounds, which also may function to alert other birds. In some species, the tail feathers produce sounds used by

males during courtship flying. Hummingbirds have extremely rapid wing-beats as high as 80 per second, supported by a high metabolic rate dependent on foraging for sugars from flower nectar.

Hummingbirds have low-volume songs that resemble scratches or squeaks. The sexes are

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