

Hummingbirds: Small and Special



Kelly Hunt/Photos by MK

Hummingbirds are very special for many reasons. For one, they are very, very small. The smallest kind of hummingbird weighs less than 2 grams. That's less than half the weight of a sheet of paper!

Hummingbirds are also special for the way they fly. They are the only birds that can hover. That means they can stay in one place while flying. Plus, they can fly backwards and even upside down!

All of that flying is supported by a hummingbird's wings. These birds normally beat their wings up to 70 times per second. They can beat their wings much faster when they dive quickly.

How does a hummingbird get all the energy it needs to beat its wings and fly? It gets energy from the food it eats! Hummingbirds get a lot of their food

from flowers. They drink nectar from flowers using their long, thin beaks and tube-like tongues.

When hummingbirds get their food from a flower, they also help the flower. How? By pollinating it! When hummingbirds put their beak into a tube-like flower, some of the flower's pollen can get on them. Then, when they go to sip nectar from another flower, they move the pollen to that new flower. If the pollen lands in the right place in the flower, the plant will grow new seeds. So hummingbirds help lots of plants survive and grow. These birds are truly special!