



Texas boasts the most diverse avifauna in the United States and hummingbirds are no exception. Eighteen species of hummingbirds have accepted records in Texas, including the two most common species—Ruby-throated and Black-chinned.

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) is the common species of the eastern half of Texas and the entire eastern United States. In western Texas, you will most likely see the Black-chinned Hummingbird (*A. alexandri*). These two species share much in common. Both members of the genus *Archilochus*, the Black-chinned and the Ruby-throated, are so closely related that they are even considered to be representatives of the same superspecies by some taxonomists.

The typical wintering range of these hummingbirds extends from southern Mexico to Central America, including the islands of the Caribbean. By early March, most of these tiny neotropical migrants have begun their long journey back to their breeding grounds in Texas and the rest of North America, their ranges extending well into Canada.



Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund

In 1983, the Texas Legislature created the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. The Fund supports research, management, habitat acquisition, and dissemination of information pertaining to nongame and endangered wildlife in Texas.

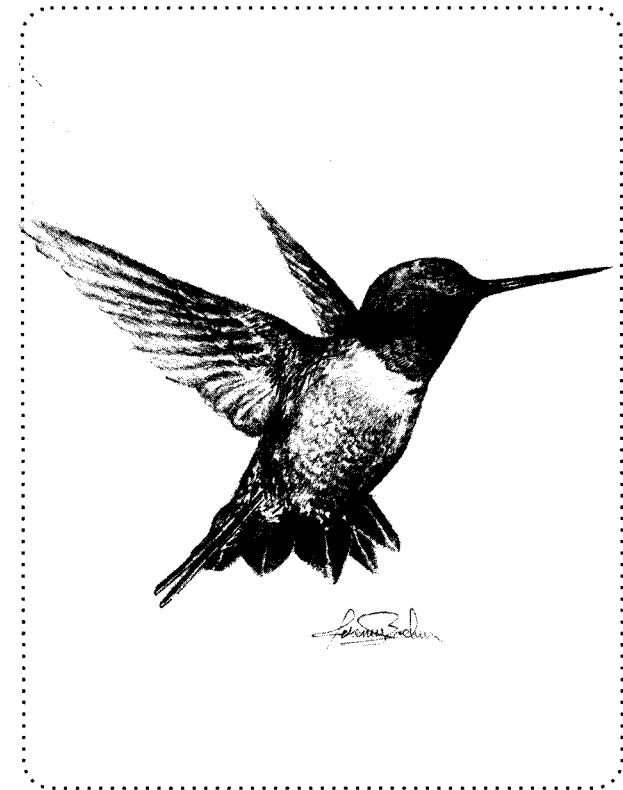
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Austin, Texas 78744

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***Black-chinned Hummingbird
&
Ruby-throated Hummingbird***

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Archilochus colubris*

SPANISH NAME: Mansoncito garganta de fuego – “little fire throat”

DESCRIPTION: *Male* – ruby-red gorget; metallic green upperparts; light gray underparts; forked brownish black tail. *Female* – outer tail feathers with white tips; rounded tail; metallic green upperparts; light gray underparts.

AVERAGE LENGTH: 3 to 3.75 inches

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Black-chinned* – purple band beneath black chin; *Broad-tailed* – rounded tail, distinctively loud buzzing flight; more western distribution

RANGE: In Texas, primarily found in the eastern half of the state with scattered reports from Trans-Pecos to the Panhandle; only common hummingbird species east of the Mississippi River

LONGEST RECORDED MIGRATION DISTANCE: 719 miles from Grove, Oklahoma, to Carlton, Minnesota

PREFERRED PLANTS: Salvia, lantana, cardinal flowers

AVERAGE LIFE SPAN: *Female* – 3.5 years; *Male* – 2.5 years

PREDATORS: Hawks, domestic cats, snakes

COURTSHIP DISPLAY: Pendulum-like flight pattern facing the sun as to enhance the iridescence of gorget; flies upward about 35 feet, then performs sudden high speed dives at 40 miles per hour with sudden stop; repeating pendulum pattern

AVERAGE FLIGHT SPEED: 30 miles per hour, in panic or distress can reach 50 miles per hour

HIGHEST DOCUMENTED FLIGHT ALTITUDE: 300 feet

Black-chinned Hummingbird

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Archilochus alexandri*

SPANISH NAME: Teciopelo barbanegro – “velvet blackbeard”

DESCRIPTION: *Male* – metallic green back and crown with whitish gray underparts, black chin with purple throat band and white collar. *Female* – metallic green back and crown, whitish underparts, and white throat with some black spots; outer tail feathers with white tips.

AVERAGE LENGTH: 3.33 to 3.75 inches

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Ruby-throated* – red gorget; *Lucifer* – decurved bill, without black chin

RANGE: Western United States; common in western half of Texas with isolated reports in eastern half of state

LONGEST RECORDED MIGRATION DISTANCE: 930 miles from southeastern Arizona to near Manzanillo, Mexico

PREFERRED PLANTS: Honeysuckle, ocotillo, Texas buckeye, Texas redbud, Texas mountain laurel, salvia, lantana

AVERAGE LIFE SPAN: *Female* – 3.5 years; *Male* – 2.5 years

OLDEST DOCUMENTED AGE: 4 years and 9 months

PREDATORS: Hawks, domestic cats, snakes

COURTSHIP DISPLAY: Similar to Ruby-throated

AVERAGE FLIGHT SPEED: 30 miles per hour, in panic or distress can reach 50 miles per hour



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