

The World's Tiniest Bird

One of the most amazing birds in the world is also the tiniest—the **incredible** bee hummingbird. This **minuscule** bird is a native of Cuba and the Isle of Pines, where it is called “el zunzun.” Its scientific name is *Mellisuga helenae*.

Appearance and Size

A bee hummingbird is about two inches long—about the length of a house key. About half that length is in its beak and tail. The bee hummingbird is about 1.7 grams. That's less than a dime weighs!

Food

The bee hummingbird, like all hummingbirds, has a large **appetite**. Its food of choice is the nectar of brightly colored flowers. The hummingbird is able to digest its food very quickly, so it's ready for a new meal in a hurry. It has to eat almost constantly because it is so tiny and needs calories to create energy. It needs lots of energy, since its heart beats about 1,200 times each minute! The total amount that hummingbirds eat—about three to seven calories per day—may not seem like much, but that's actually a lot when you consider how tiny hummingbirds are. If humans ate the way hummingbirds did, they would have to eat more than 225 hamburgers each day!

Flight

Hummingbirds like the bee hummingbird fly about 25 to 30 miles per hour, although some can fly up to about 60 miles per hour. Plus, they can **hover** in one place. They're also the only birds that can fly backward. Their wings beat as fast as 100 times per second. Try tapping your pencil 100 times on your desk and see how long it takes you. You'll realize why the hummingbird is so amazing.



The name “hummingbird” comes from the sound made by the **rapid** beating of the bird's tiny wings.

MONDAY

Choose the definition that matches the bold word in the sentence.

- A helicopter can **hover** above the freeway.
 - Ⓐ fly quickly
 - Ⓑ remain in one place in the air
- The **minuscule** bee hummingbird is the tiniest bird in the world.
 - Ⓐ very small
 - Ⓑ unattractive
- An athlete may have a larger **appetite** than someone who does not exercise much.
 - Ⓐ desire for food
 - Ⓑ desire for sleep
- The **incredible** hummingbird is the only bird that can fly both forward and backward.
 - Ⓐ extraordinary
 - Ⓑ enormous
- The **rapid** beating of a hummingbird's heart uses lots of energy.
 - Ⓐ very fast
 - Ⓑ weak

TUESDAY

How do the headings help you understand this article?

WEDNESDAY

Choose the correct answer.

- Imagine that the author wants to add information about the colors of the bee hummingbird. Under which heading should this information be placed?

Ⓐ "Appearance and Size"	Ⓒ "Flight"
Ⓑ "Food"	Ⓓ none of the above
- Which of these would be a good heading for the first paragraph of the article?

Ⓐ "Name"	Ⓒ "Nest Building"
Ⓑ "Beak Shape"	Ⓓ none of the above
- The hummingbird's name comes from _____.

Ⓐ the way it breathes	Ⓒ the way it sings while in flight
Ⓑ its heart rate	Ⓓ the rapid beating of its wings

THURSDAY

Write the number on the left next to its matching detail on the right.

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| 1.7 | _____ | approximate length in inches of a bee hummingbird |
| 2 | _____ | approximate top speed in miles per hour that a bee hummingbird can fly |
| 60 | _____ | approximate number of beats per minute of a bee hummingbird's heart |
| 100 | _____ | approximate mass in grams of a bee hummingbird |
| 1,200 | _____ | number of times that a hummingbird's wings can beat in one second |

FRIDAY

The largest living birds are ostriches. Research these birds and compare them to hummingbirds.
