

BEST PRACTICES



Puget Sound's Year Round Resident: Anna's Hummingbird

Anna's hummingbirds (*Calypte anna*) are a common western resident and may be found in Puget Sound year round. Anna's hummingbird is a medium sized (4 inches or 10 cm) hummingbird with a straight bill and sloping forehead. It's brilliant iridescent colors make it most distinguishable from others. Both males and females are bronze-green above, and gray below. The males' entire head and throat are bright sparkling rose pink-red and their bodies an iridescent emerald green. The females have green heads, with a small amount of red on their throats. Females also have black tails with white tips, while the males' tails are solid blackish-gray.

Range

Abundant in coastal lowlands and Puget trough. Found from British Columbia to Baja California. The first recorded breeding pair in Washington was in Tacoma in 1976. It is now found breeding throughout the lowlands of Puget Sound.

Habitat

Found in a variety of habitats including coastal scrub, oak savannahs and open woods, common in urban environments. Its traditional habitat was chaparral but it is now more frequently found in suburban gardens where exotic flowering plants and hummingbird feeders provide it with a year-long food source. Anna's Hummingbirds eat nectar from many flowering plants, including currant, gooseberry, manzanita, and many introduced species such as eucalyptus as well as hummingbird feeders. It also eats a variety of small insects and spiders including the insects that feed on the sap found in sapsucker holes.

Behavior

One of the most distinctive behaviors of the Anna's Hummingbird is the male's courtship flight dive. The male flies up to 130 feet in the air and then swoops to the ground. At the bottom of the dive he makes a loud noise thought to be produced through his tail feathers. Both males and females defend feeding territories, although males defend them more diligently and for a longer period of time. Males and females do not form pairs, they mate with more than one individual per season.

Nesting

Females build the nest out of plant down from cattail, willow, thistle, feathers and spider webs. They form the interior of the nest with lichen. A female will sit in the nest cup and build the nest up around her. Nests are tiny, 1 inch by 1.5 inches in diameter and they take approximately 1 week to build. A female incubates two eggs for 14-19



days and feeds the nestlings on her own until they become independent at 18-23 days. A female may have 2-3 broods a year.

Conservation

Currently Anna's hummingbird is the most common hummingbird on the west coast. Historically it was limited to western California and Baja California. Due to the widespread use of backyard feeders and the introduction of eucalyptus trees in California, as well as exotic garden flowers that provide it year round food sources, Anna's hummingbird has expanded its range northward as far as British Columbia. It is currently very common across much of its range, and because it adapts well to suburban areas it is expected to continue to thrive in the future.

Source: Stream Team News, Winter 2015