

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (RTHU)

Flower Visit Protocol Field Guide (U.S. and Canada)

Task

To count the number of times RTHUs visit flowers in 45 minutes

What You Need

- Pencil or pen
- Clipboard
- Bird identification guide
- Schoolyard Hummingbird Habitat, flower garden or wildlife patch
- Camera (optional)
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird Flower Visit Data Sheet*
- Binoculars (optional)

In the Field

1. Fill out the top of the *Ruby-throated Hummingbird Flower Visit Data Sheet*. Record date and time period that observations are made.
2. For each RTHU seen, identify its sex and age if possible.
3. Record each visit to flowers on the *Ruby-throated Hummingbird Flower Visit Data Sheet* during the 45 minutes. Record by the following categories:
 - Red-throated adult male (March through October)
 - Adult female (white-throated, March and April only)
 - Undetermined sex (if throat is not observed)
 - Undetermined sex (adult female/young female/young male, May through October, if throat is unmarked)
 - Young male (if throat is heavily streaked in green or black and/or has one or more red feathers)

Note 1: If an individual bird enters the garden and feeds on several flowers—even different flower species—it counts as only one visit. If a bird perches within view and returns to the flowers, it still counts as one visit. Only if the bird leaves the field of view and returns can it be counted again, and then it should be counted again even if you think it may be the same bird.

Note 2: If you see a color-marked or unusual RTHU, other species of hummingbirds (vagrants), or ANY hummingbird from mid-October through mid-March, describe the color markings and shape of beak. Record your observations on the *Ruby-throated Hummingbird Sighting Data Sheet*. Contact Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History at research@hiltonpond.org or (803) 684-5852 as soon as possible.