

# Hummingbird Photography

By Jean Kuns



# Hummingbird facts

- There are 325 species of hummingbirds, only 12 species breed in the US and only one, the ruby-throated hummingbird breeds in the eastern U.S. There are no hummingbirds outside of the Americas.
- Hummingbirds cannot walk or hop on their feet
- The average hummingbird weighs 3 grams, less than a nickel
- Hummingbirds can fly at 30 mph but can reach 60 mph in a dive
- The hummingbird egg is smaller than a jelly bean, the nest is the size of a walnut
- Hummingbirds flap their wings from 50-200 times per second
- The ruby throated hummingbird migrates to Mexico and Central America, they can fly non stop across the Gulf of Mexico.
- Hummingbirds eat nectar but also mosquitoes, gnats, fruit flies, small bees and spiders.

# Hummingbird facts

- Hummingbirds typically arrive in SW Ohio in mid to late April, with the males arriving first – start watching for them when the redbuds and honeysuckle start blooming.
- They begin to migrate south in late August, with the adult males migrating first.
- August and early September is when you will see the most activity in the garden, the fledglings are active and the adults are fattening up for migration.

# Equipment

- Lenses that I have used
  - Canon 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS II – minimum focusing distance is 4 feet
  - Canon 300mm f/2.8 L – minimum focusing distance is 10 feet
  - Canon 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 L IS II – minimum focusing distance is 3.2 feet
  - Canon 180mm L Macro lens – minimum focusing distance is 1.5 feet
- Tripod
- Manfrotto Gimbal Head
- Hunting blind -
- Camouflage leaf blind material
- Use of flash

# Equipment



# Camera Settings

- Optimal settings
  - Shutter speed of 1/3200+
  - Aperature f5.0+
  - ISO 800
- Use AF range selector on your lens, set to closest setting
- Back button focus
- AI Server – continuous focusing
- Spot metering
- Single AF point
  - Tracking sensitivity -1
  - Accel/decel tracking +1
- High speed continuous shutter
  - Silent shooting when needed

# Shutter speed comparisons



# Attracting hummingbirds to your yard

- Feeders
  - No red nectar!

- Plants

<b>Shrimp plant</b>	<b>Hostas</b>
<b>Firecracker plant, also known as Cigar plant</b>	<b>Coral bells</b>
<b>Cardinal vine</b>	<b>Fuchsia</b>
<b>Bee balm/ Monarda</b>	<b>Begonia</b>
<b>Royal Catchfly</b>	<b>Million bells</b>
<b>Mexican Sunflower</b>	<b>Hanging Geranium</b>
<b>Penstemon</b>	<b>Lantana</b>
<b>Agastache</b>	<b>Liatris</b>
<b>Salvias</b>	<b>Phlox</b>
<b>Penstemon</b>	<b>Sages / Salvias</b>
<b>Poker Plant</b>	<b>Zinnia</b>
<b>Lucifer</b>	<b>Honeysuckle</b>
<b>Cardinal Flower</b>	<b>Mexican firebush</b>
	<b>Cypress Vine</b>

- Water features – fountains and sprays



# Shooting in the garden

- More natural setting
- Other photo opportunities
- Typically use a longer lens and the blind



# Using potted plants

- Hanging planters or potted plants can be moved around
- More control over the lighting
- More control over the background
- Easier to get close to the birds
- When the flowers fade, perennials can be planted in the garden

# Agastache also known as hyssop or hummingbird mint

- Native perennial for full sun
- Easy to grow from seeds



# Silene regia also known as Royal Catchfly

- Native prairie perennial for full sun



# Cuphea ignea also known as Cigar Plant or Firecracker plant

- Annual for full sun
- Does well in a pot



# Honeysuckle

- Perennial vine
- Full sun



# Crocosmia 'Lucifer'

- Tender perennial for full sun



# Hamelia patens also known as Mexican Fire bush

- Tropical annual
- Does well in a pot and easily overwinters inside





# Justicia brandegeana also known as Shrimp plant

- Annual for part to full sun
- Does well in pot or hanging basket
- Overwinters well, can be propagated from cuttings



# Zinnias

- Annuals for full sun
- Easy to grow from seeds



# Fuschias

