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SEPTEMBER: RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*ARCHILOCHUS COLUBRIS*)

This diminutive yet spirited bird spends its summers in Wisconsin before flying south for the winter. As vibrant as the flowers from which it feeds, Wisconsin's only breeding hummingbird species plays an important role in the ecosystem by serving as a pollinator. Fortunately, ruby-throated hummingbirds are doing well throughout their range. Homeowners can attract ruby-throated hummingbirds by planting native flowers such as cardinal flower or bee balm, or by putting out hummingbird feeders. While hummingbirds are tolerant of suburban habitats, preservation of meadow habitat near woodlands is beneficial to hummingbird populations.

- Hummingbirds were specifically protected as a migratory insectivorous bird under the original Migratory Bird Treaty.
- Though best known for their penchant for nectar, hummingbirds also consume tiny insects, including mosquitoes
- Hummingbirds can fly in any direction (including backwards!) as well as hover for extended periods, their wings beating more than 50 times per second
- A hummingbird's resting heart rate is nearly 10 times that of humans at an amazing 615 beats per minute!
- Despite being small enough to send up to 10 in the mail with a single first class stamp, each fall many ruby-throated hummingbirds migrate 500 miles non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico to Central America on only their fat reserves. Contrary to popular myth, they do not hitchhike on the backs of Canada Geese.