

*A Quick  
Reference Guide  
to*



**TEXAS**  
**Hummingbirds**



4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744



To order the Hummingbird Wheel, send \$11.95 to:  
Texas Hummingbird Roundup  
4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.

## References

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## INTRODUCTION

Hummingbirds are some of our most territorial, charismatic, and entertaining of all Texas birds. They are, however, also some of the most difficult birds to identify in the field. In recognition of the subtle morphological differences that separate our eighteen species of Texas hummingbirds, this guide was developed to aid in the formidable task of calling these beautiful, tenacious animals by their proper name. One problem that amateur birders often have with conventional field guides is that they list too many characteristics, many of which are shared by other species. As a result, quick, simple, identification is often impeded by the volume of information provided for each species in the typical field guide.

This reference guide is not intended to be a comprehensive listing of the distinguishing traits of each species. Rather, this guide should be used as an aid to quickly identify a hummingbird species based on one or two simple characteristics—if and only if those characteristics happen to be readily observable during a particular sighting. It should also be noted that some of the listed characteristics apply only to the *adult male* of the species. As an example, one can make a safe identification of an Anna's by noting red coloration on the crown of the hummingbird's head. However, not *all* Anna's have this trait (e.g., immatures and females). In addition, identification near the Mexican border and near the Texas Gulf Coast can be potentially erroneous due to the slight possibility of stray Mexican or other migrant species. More conventional, comprehensive field guides should also be consulted when the characteristics listed in this publication are not noted in the field. The eighteen species of hummingbirds described in this guide have records accepted by the Texas Ornithological Society's Texas Bird Records Committee.

## FIELD IDENTIFICATION

### Common\* Hummingbirds with Dark Bill (10 species):

1. **Rufous**—only hummingbird with a *rufous* (rusty, reddish-brown) *back*
2. **Blue-throated**—only adult male hummingbird with *white* on tips of retrices (*tail* feathers); *largest* hummingbird in N. America
3. **Anna's**—only hummingbird with *red* on *crown* of head
4. **Lucifer**—only hummingbird with *decurved* (arcs downward) *bill*
5. **Black-chinned**—only hummingbird with black chin and *purple band* beneath
6. **Ruby-throated**—only hummingbird *common* in the eastern half of Texas and the entire eastern United States; red gorget; notched tail
7. **Broad-tailed**—separated from Ruby-throated by its primarily *western* range, *rounded* (rather than forked) *tail*, and *loud buzzing* of wings in flight
8. **Calliope**—only hummingbird with distinctly *streaked throat*
9. **Allen's**—*combination* of rufous tail, green back, and dark bill; difficult to safely separate from immature Rufous
10. **Magnificent**—green throat *and* purple crown; also called Rivoli's Hummingbird

\* or locally common



## Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund

In 1983, the Texas Legislature created the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. The Fund supports research, management, habitat acquisition, and dissemination of information pertaining to nongame and endangered wildlife in Texas. To contribute to nongame and endangered wildlife conservation efforts, send your donation to: Wildlife Diversity Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.



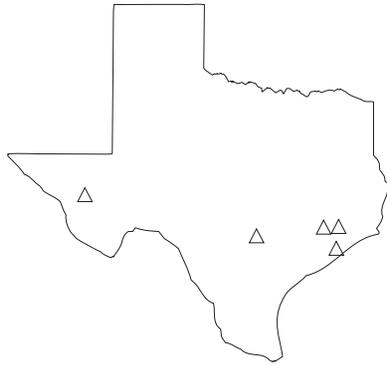
### Texas Hummingbird Roundup

The Texas Hummingbird Roundup is a backyard survey which encourages Texans to get actively involved in the conservation of hummingbirds. Participants receive a survey form, range map, and native wildflower seeds to attract hummingbirds. A newsletter and decal are also sent to participants who return their completed surveys at the end of the year.

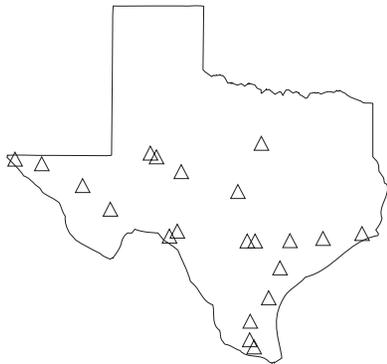
The Hummingbird Wheel is a full-color, 10-inch identification wheel that depicts all sixteen species of hummingbirds that breed in the United States. This reference provides beautiful artwork, characteristics, and the range of each species. To participate in the Texas Hummingbird Roundup and receive the Hummingbird Wheel, send \$17.95 (\$6 for Roundup only) to: Texas Hummingbird Roundup, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.

**Allen's**  
*Selasphorus sasin***County Record**

Jeff Davis  
Bexar  
Harris  
Brazoria

**Broad-billed**  
*Cynanthus latirostris***County Record**

El Paso	San Patricio
Hudspeth	Victoria
Jeff Davis	Colorado
Brewster	Bexar
Midland	Harris
Irion	Jefferson
Val Verde	Bosque
Hidalgo	Llano
Brooks	

**Hummingbirds with Red/Orange Bill (4 Species):**

1. **Buff-bellied**—red/orange bill, cinnamon buff belly, rusty forked tail, typically found in *South Texas*, north to Nueces River
2. **Broad-billed**—red/orange bill, *blue-green* chin and throat
3. **White-eared**—red/orange bill, **rare**; only hummingbird with a *combination* of long white stripe behind eye, red bill, and violet crown
4. **Violet-crowned**—red/orange bill, **very rare**, violet crown *and* white throat

**Other Extremely Rare Hummingbirds (4 Species):**

1. **Green-breasted Mango**—green *malar* (below the eye) stripe; 6 records in Texas
2. **Costa's**—violet head and gorget; 6 records in Texas
3. **Green Violet-ear**—overall green appearance with *violet ear* patch; 23 records in Texas
4. **Berylline**—brilliant green head with mostly purple tail; considered accidental; 3 records in Texas

**Iridescence**

Nearly every beginning birder has been dazzled and intrigued upon first sight of an adult male hummingbird's *gorget* (throat region). The brilliant, laser-like colors that burst from the feathers of this region can, however, be a source of confusion for hummingbird identification. These *iridescent* colors are observed when some wavelengths of light are interfered with and others are reinforced by layers of hollow platelets located near the surface of the feather. If the gorget is viewed in insufficient light, or viewed at the improper angle, however, then the iridescence (which is diagnostic for many hummingbird species) is absent and the throat region appears to be black. As a result, positive identification of many species (e.g., Black-chinned, Ruby-throated) should be reserved until the associated iridescent color is observed. The observer often must be positioned *between the sun and the bird* in order to note this phenomenon.

## RANGE MAPS

Each hummingbird species range map was derived from one of two sources, depending upon whether or not the species is considered locally common or rare in Texas. For locally common species, the maps represent minor revisions to a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department publication, *Texas Ten Most Common Hummingbird Species and Where They Are Known to Occur* (PWD LF W7100-253). The revisions are based upon Texas Hummingbird Roundup data and these maps represent our best estimates of the range of each species. For rare species, the maps indicate locations of records accepted by the Texas Ornithological Society's Texas Bird Records Committee.

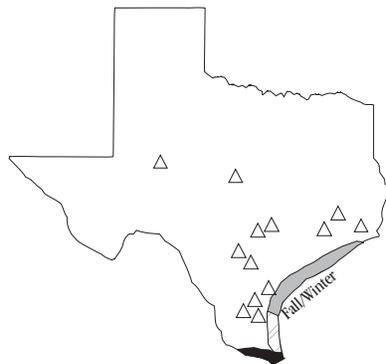
	Breeds in Texas		Rare Winter Visitor
	Migration Route		Isolated Record(s)

**Buff-bellied**  
*Amazilia yucatanensis*

More numerous in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A few inland records in central Texas.

Rare Winter Visitor

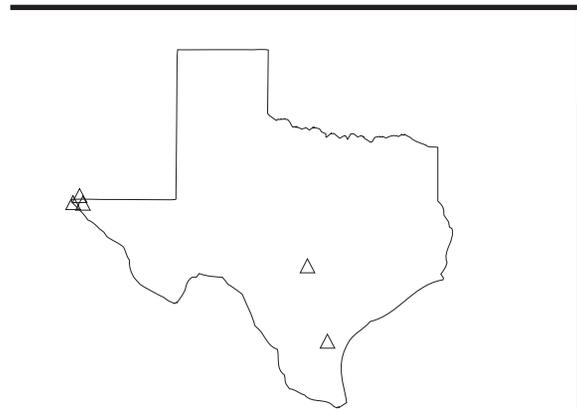
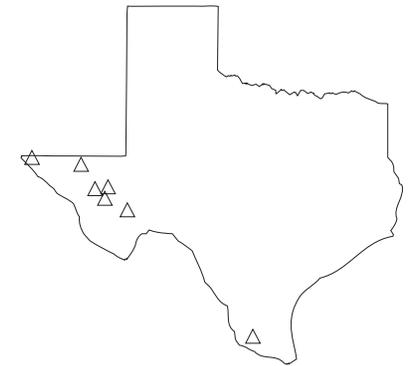
Summer - Breeds in LRGV, rarely up to Corpus Christi.



**White-eared**  
*Hylocharis leucotis*

**County Record**

El Paso  
Culbertson  
Jeff Davis  
Brewster  
Starr



**Costa's**  
*Calypte costae*

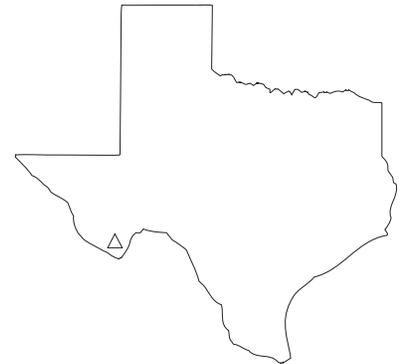
**County Record**

El Paso  
Hays  
Kleberg

**Berylline**  
*Amazilia beryllina*

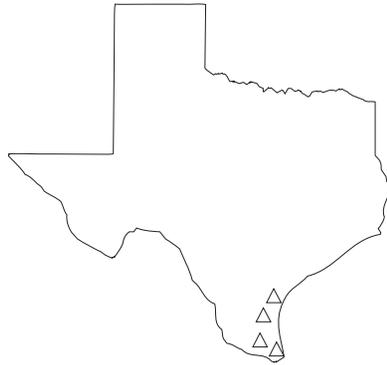
**County Record**

Brewster



**Green-breasted Mango**  
*Anthracothorax prevostii***County Record**

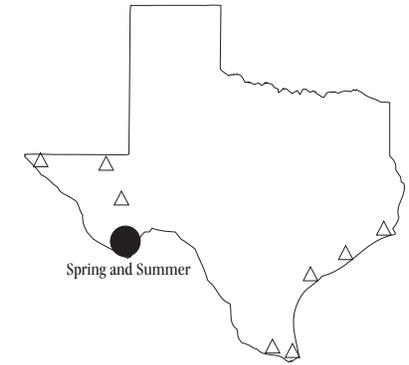
Nueces  
Brooks  
Hidalgo  
Cameron

**Blue-throated**  
*Lampornis clemenciae*

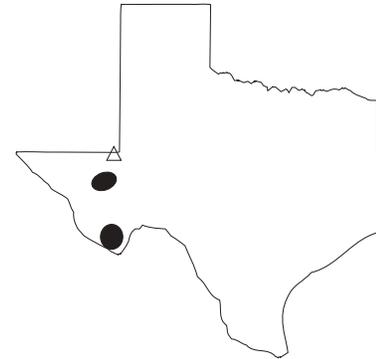
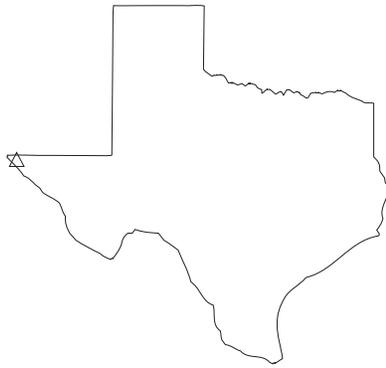
Found mainly in  
Southwestern mountains  
of the U.S.

Locally common in the  
mountains at Big Bend.

Very rare in Davis  
Mountains

**Violet-crowned**  
*Amazilia violiceps***County Record**

El Paso

**Magnificent**  
*Eugenes fulgens*

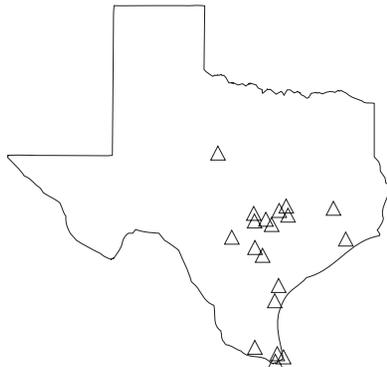
Typically found in SE Arizona  
and SW New Mexico.

When found in Texas, it is  
isolated to certain places in  
the Trans Pecos Mts.

Breeds in Big Bend/Davis  
Mountains

**Green Violet-ear**  
*Colibri thalassinus***County Record**

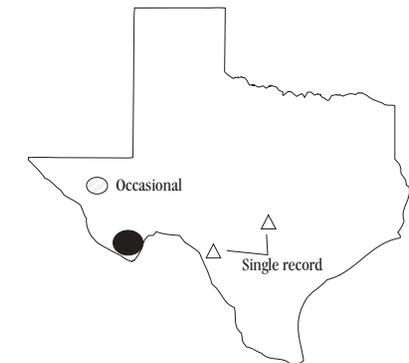
Bandera	Nueces
Bexar	Hidalgo
Hays	Cameron
Travis	Brazoria
Bastrop	Montgomery
San Patricio	Coleman

**Lucifer**  
*Calothorax lucifer*

Primarily a Mexican species. Enters  
the U.S. in the Big Bend Region and  
parts of SW New Mexico and SE  
Arizona. Fairly common in the Big  
Bend.

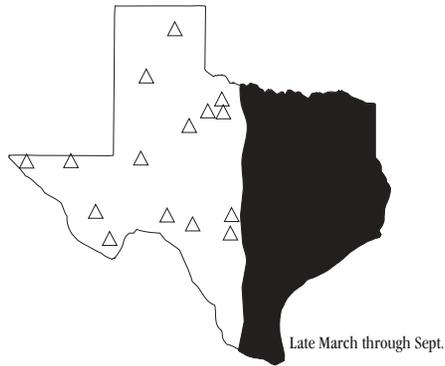
Fall wanderers have been reported in  
the Texas Hill Country & Rockport.

Breeds in Big Bend.



**Ruby-throated**  
*Archilochus colubris*

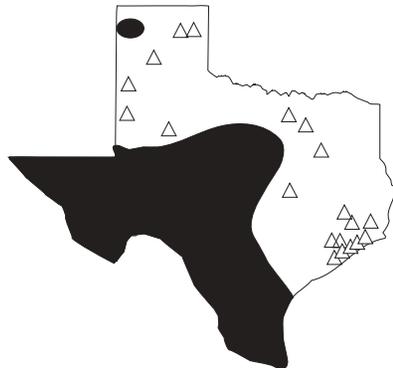
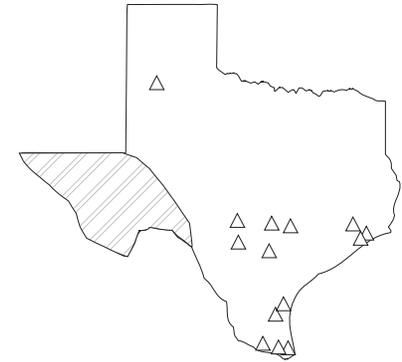
Relatively common in eastern half of Texas - occurs in large numbers at East Texas feeders. Could show up farther west.



**Anna's**  
*Calypte anna*

Should be watched for in the fall and winter. Fairly rare & irregular migrant and winter resident. During some winter seasons as many as 20 or more Anna's may be reported from El Paso to Beaumont.

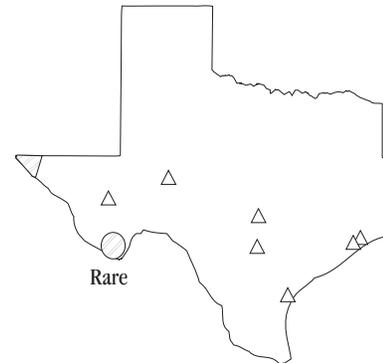
Fairly regular migrant in Trans-Pecos.



**Black-chinned**  
*Archilochus alexandri*

Relatively common spring and summer resident in the western half of Texas.

Could be a rare winter visitor to the coast.



**Calliope**  
*Stellula calliope*

Fairly regular August migrant in El Paso.

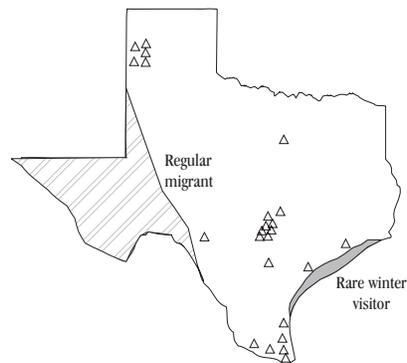
May be seen in the Big Bend in August and September.

Rare in other locations.

**Rufous**  
*Selasphorus rufus*

Common spring and fall migrant in West Texas.

Some birds overwinter on the coast and occasionally inland.



**Broad-tailed**  
*Selasphorus platycercus*

Regularly seen in the Trans Pecos.

Breeds in the mountains.

Occurs in small numbers in central Texas and the upper Texas Coast during migration.

