

WATCHABLE WILDLIFE GUIDE



## Colorful zinger

[By Tim Herd]

A brilliant flash, a subtle hum and a sweeping zinger meant it's hummingbird breeding time.

The broad-billed hummingbird, with its hovering wings, metallic green feathers and red-orange bill, probes the nectar-filled recesses of a thistle flower. Detecting the vital juices, the hummer's long, grooved tongue with a split and frayed tip darts to the dainty reservoir and laps up the sweet succulent like a fine brush. The tiny flier also has a taste for pollen grains, spiders and small insects.

Constantly foraging to fuel its high metabolism, the colorful sprite exudes energy, especially at this time of year when breeding and nesting are priorities. The male courts a female with a distinctive display of repetitive pendulum-swing flight toward her, often accompanied by a high-pitched "zing." The seeming hypnotic act appears to have its effect on her, and the pair breeds. They build a tiny, raggedy cup nest of grass stems, plant down, leaves and bark, all bound together with spider silk, and deposit a pair of jelly-bean-sized-eggs.

### WHERE TO OBSERVE

- Coronado National Forest, Ariz.
- Madera Canyon, Ariz
- Cascada de Bassaseachi Nat'l Park Chihuahua
- Arareko Ecotourist Complex, Chihuahua
- Cooper Canyon, Chihuahua
- Cumbres de Majalca Nat'l Park Chihuahua
- Bolson de Mapimi Reserve, Durango
- Guadalupe Canyon, N.M.
- Bandelier National Monument, N.M.
- Carlsbad Caverns National Park, N.M.
- Desert National Wildlife Range, Nev.
- Zion National park, Utah

### LOOK FOR

- Stocky hummingbird
- long red-orange bill
- metallic green back
- broad, notched tail
- males:* metallic blue throat, white underparts
- females:* with throat, gray underparts

### LISTEN FOR

- Throbbing hum of wings
- Clipped "je-dit" call

<p><b>Broad-billed hummingbird</b> <i>Cyananthus latirostris</i></p> <p>4 inches</p> <p><b>Habitat:</b> open deciduous forests, aris scrublands, semi-deserts</p> <p><b>Range Key:</b> <span style="color: orange;">■</span> Breeding <span style="color: green;">■</span> Year-round</p>	
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