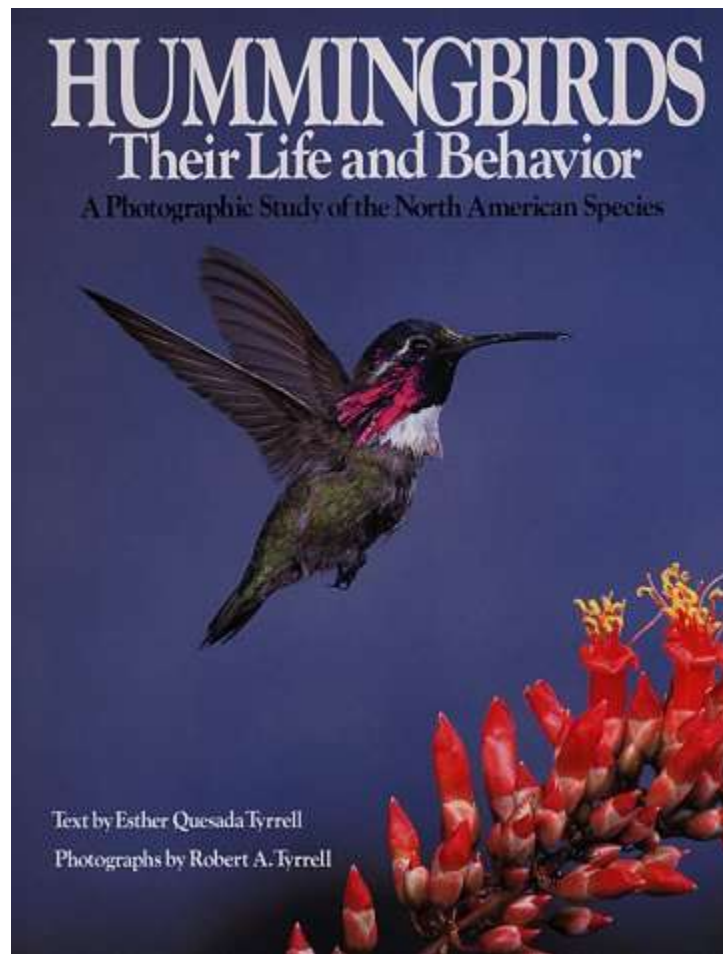




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<https://www.amazon.com/Hummingbirds-Their-Life-Behavior-Photographic/dp/0517553368>

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During a visit to local jumble shop the cover of this noteworthy book immediately caught my eye. Hummingbirds are frequent, welcome visitors to our yard during spring through fall each year.

This **HUMMINGBIRDS, Their Life and Behavior** 'Photographic study of the North American Species' is a large book measuring nearly 10" x 13", having 212 pages and many photos of these wee feathered denizens.

The Table of Contents indicates a Preface followed by An introduction to Hummingbirds, A Portfolio of North American Hummingbirds, Anatomy, Feathers, Flight, Courtship and Nesting, Food and Metabolism, Behavior,

Wildflower Pollination, followed with a section regarding Hummingbirds of the World, a Bibliography and Index.

I was interested to note while reading the preface, The Tyrell's 'interest in hummingbirds began in 1975 at which time Robert tried his hand at photographing a female Anna's Hummingbird and discovered how difficult these tiny birds are to catch on film.'

From that beginning the pair have gone on to become experts in the field of study regarding hummingbirds and their habits.

Filled with full page and half page photos and sketches along with text resulting from first-hand knowledge gleaned during years of study in the field, and research, **HUMMINGBIRDS** is a delight to read.

I especially enjoyed the detail and dedication to factual representation of the various birds showcased in this book. Pages 5 – 37 are particularly noteworthy for the enthusiast living in North America.

Beginning with Allen's Hummingbird, an alphabetical grouping of the birds living in North America is presented, including Anna's, Berylline, Black-chinned and on through Ruby-throated, Rufous and finally White-eared.

Each particular bird is presented as a 2, ½ page color photos of the male on the left leaf and specific details regarding Genus, Species, Field Markings, Range, Breeding Range, Winter Range if known, Nesting, Migration and Habitat. A detailed sketch of the female of the species is placed in the lower quadrant of the detail page.

I was particularly interested to note which of the birds I will most likely find in my own yard in the middle of the continent, Oklahoma/Kansas. Each year we have several pairs who return to sip from various blossoms we have added to garden over the quarter century we have lived here. I do not add sugar water or other feeder material to the spring garden, rather the birds feed from the various flowering. I do leave blossoms in place and add sugar water if blossoms are sparse during fall migration period.

I like the detail contained in the section regarding anatomy. I am a school teacher, curious about nature, and like learning in general. This lovely book answers many questions, and reinforces knowledge I already had gleaned from a variety of smaller, less detailed texts.

While photos in this section are not as prolific as in the preceding pages showcasing specific birds, there is nevertheless an abundance of photos presenting some of the birds I have not seen before.

The section regarding 'Feathers' relates that during the 1800s the gorgeous feathers caused thousands of hummingbird skins to be transported to Europe for use to create bonnet and fan accessories.

This section has both sketches and color photos of birds, feathers and nests with nestlings. While not quite as showy during molting the little birds are always tiny flying jewels in the garden. Molting is described in detail, interesting reading, not all the feathers are lost or replaced at the same moment.

This section too is filled with exquisite photos, one in particular caught my eye. I have never seen a Costa's Hummingbird, would like to especially after seeing the gorgeous amethyst helmet the males exhibit, showcased in this book!

The section titled 'Flight' begins with John Zugshwert's quote, 'The hummingbird is nature's helicopter.' Observing the little birds in the garden bears out that thought as birds flit, dart, fly backwards, hovers, lifts off straight up and perhaps even upside down.

Male and female bird photos are found in the section regarding 'Flight.'

Now and then I have been lucky to have tiny nests appear on a branch in my garden, the section titled 'Courtship and Nesting' , I found especially interesting.

Drawings depicting courtship displays of one or another specie as well as photos of nests are included in this section. Tiny nests are crafted with specifics for each specie, all are small whether conical, round, are all but hidden completely as they blend into surroundings. Locations for nest building varies, some on branches, or rocks, cactus, or vines are all used. Building materials include spider web, lichens, hair, mosses, and grasses are all used.

Eggs are tiny, chicks grow quickly, I found the ones in my garden soon outgrew the nest itself, and perched on the outer rim of the nest until ready to fly. Mom will repair and build up the nest while chicks are in it.

A single brood during spring is common, although now and then a second or even third pair will be hatched and cared for. Babies are born blind, helpless and having short bills. Feathers appear, bills lengthen, at 26 days or so fledglings will soon leave the nest and fend for themselves.

'Food and Metabolism' explains that hummingbirds with their high weight specific metabolism need to eat a good bit. Their primary food source is nectar. Tubular blossoms as well as insects provide the dining requirements of hummingbirds.

A recipe for sugar water, ratio 1 part sugar to 5 parts water is given. Hummers learn which flowers are best for them. They learn through trial and error the type flowers they prefer. In my garden I primarily have morning glories and climbing red trumpet vine. Hummers also come to the Rose of Sharon even though it does not have tubular blossoms.

Various metabolic rates, torpidity, sleep and migration are all discussed in this section.

'Behavior' opens with a quote from F. Stephens, 'They are very fond of chasing one another, sometimes for sport, often for spite. I am always reminded of a lot of schoolboys playing tag.' That pretty much sums up the hummers who frequent my own garden.

Hummers in the main are pretty antisocial, inquisitive and quarrelsome. They tend to be somewhat noisy; I often hear whistles and chirps when the hummers are here. I have not heard, but have read that some hummers sing.

Hummingbirds tend to be territorial, aggressive and migratory. They will ruffle and preen feathers, like sunbathing, and stretch wings at intervals.

'Wildflower Pollination' indicates a direct relationship between hummingbirds and the flowers they feed from. Red blossoms having tubular shape are favored by hummingbirds who carry pollen from blossom to blossom on beaks, and feathers.

A listing of specific Hummingbird-Pollinated Wildflowers is included.

Beautiful photos are scattered in each section of the book.

Page 200 begins a listing of Hummingbirds of the world, with Bibliography beginning on page 205 and Index rounding out the work pages 205 - 212

**Tyrrells, Esther Quesada and Robert** have crafted a lovely book entitled simply **HUMMINGBIRDS, Their Life and Behavior.**

Robert Tyrrell is noted to be the world's foremost photographer of hummingbirds, and opening the book and turning the pages certainly attests to the truth of the statement.

Esther Quesada Tyrrell, Robert's wife, field researcher, and one who studies Hummingbirds extensively has written the related informative text.

I am very impressed with this lovely book, it is a well made edition having firm covers, thick, glossy pages and lots of photos and information based on science, fact and personal observation.

Happy to recommend **HUMMINGBIRDS, Their Life and Behavior** 'Photographic study of the North American Species' for those who study birds in general, and hummingbirds in particular, as well as those who simply enjoy reading a well designed book filled with nearly 250 gorgeous photos and sketches along with a well written text.

Happy to recommend for home and public library, for the personal collection and as a gift for a friend or relative who enjoys birds and books about birds.

**Beautiful Stunning photos and informative text ... Highly Recommended ... 5 stars**

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**Reviewed by:** MOLLY REVIEWS BOOKS                      **molly martin**  
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<http://www.AuthorsDen.com/mjhollingshead>

**35+** years classroom teacher  
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#### **AMAZON BIOGRAPHY**

Robert Tyrrell, the world's foremost photographer of hummingbirds, has successfully captured on film the utterly fascinating day-to-day activities of our colorful North American species. Included among the 235 full-color pictures are never-before-photographed sequences such as nesting, molting, preening and territorial aggression, as well as an unprecedented portfolio of hummingbirds feeding from wildflowers.

Esther Tyrrell has written the accompanying illuminating text, by far the most complete and up-to-date information on hummingbirds ever assembled, which will make this book the definitive source for both scientists and the general reader for years to come.

#### **AMAZON PRODUCT DETAILS**

- 212 pages
- **Publisher:** Crown; 1 edition (February 13, 1985)
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