

APODIFORMES

(Hummingbirds, Swifts)

Hummingbirds

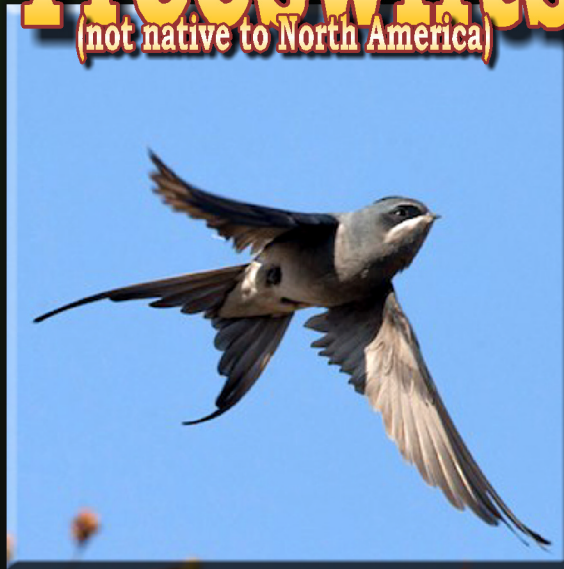


Swifts



Treeswifts

(not native to North America)



Family TROCHILIDAE (Hummingbirds)

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*)

male



Red Rock NCA; Nevada

Measurements:

Length: 4" Wng Span: 5"

Average Weight: 0.15 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small and stocky; relatively short, straight, black bill; tail extends beyond wingtips when perched; pale white line over eye; (m) red throat, face, crown; gray below; (f) metallic green back, crown; gray below with red patch or spots on throat

Notes:

common locally; ranges from Pacific NA s to northern Mexico, SoCal e to NM, rare elsewhere; feeds on nectar, small insects; only NA species with red crown; red appears dark brown or purple without direct sun light

Mojave presence: year-round

Comments:

Females of many hummer species are notoriously difficult to distinguish, even within the species, especially with the absence of good sunlit conditions. These two gals at the Red Rock NCA display different throat patterns; the one on the left has just a sprinkling of reddish dots on her throat, while the one on the right sports a more fashionable large spot of red feathers.

All male hummers are much more colorful than their rather drab counterparts, facilitating easier species identification. But lighting is still a critical factor. The red throat and crown of the fellow on the left appears more brownish than brilliant red; the damsel on the right is certainly drab by comparison, although she definitely provided a rather spectacular photo op (both at RRNCA)!

female



Hoover Dam; Lake Mead NRA

male



red crown and neck

female



enjoying rosemary

Hoover Dam; Lake Mead NRA



Photo: Dennis Morrison

Family TROCHILIDAE (Hummingbirds)

Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*)



Red Rock NCA; Nevada



Corn Crk; Desert NWR; NV

Measurements:

Length: 3.5" Wng Span: 4.75"

Average Weight: 0.11 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

tiny size; short tail; dull green above, whitish below; curved bill; pale eyeline; (m) purple crown, throat with flaired gorget; pale white between throat and nape, eye, crown; (f) grayish to white throat, breast; white tips on outer tail feathers

Notes:

uncommon; spends summer in sw US, year-round in Baja, Mexico; feeds on nectar, small insects; one of the smallest birds in the US

Mojave presence: summer range

Broad-Tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*)



Red Rock NCA; Nevada



Colorado Plateau; Valle, AZ

Measurements:

Length: 4" Wng Span: 5.25"

Average Weight: 0.13 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

slender body, big head; metallic green above, grayish-white chest, buffy flanks; long, straight, dark bill; tail extends past wingtips when perched; (m) green crown, magenta throat; (f) grayish throat with dark spots; broad, rounded tail with rufus at base and white tips on outer feathers

Notes:

common locally; spends summer in w inland NA, winters in Central America, rare in the se US; feeds on nectar, small insects; very similar to Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, but ranges don't usually overlap

Mojave presence: summer range; restricted to far eastern areas



Red Rock NCA; Nevada



Colorado Plateau; Valle, AZ

Family TROCHILIDAE (Hummingbirds)

Black-Chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)

male



black throat

Red Rock NCA; Nevada

Measurements:

Length: 3.75" Wng Span: 4.75"

Average Weight: 0.12 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

slender; metallic green above, grayish below, flanks greenish; long, slightly down-curved black bill; (m) black throat with iridescent purple at base that's visible with direct sunlight; (f) gray-white throat, usually plain, but some individuals show pale streaks or collar; outer 3 tail feathers white tipped

Notes:

common locally; ranges from w NA, south into Mexico, rare in the se US; feeds on nectar, small insects; hybridizes with other hummers, making identification difficult; all hummers are important plant pollinators

Mojave presence: summer range; migration

female



possibly a hybrid

Red Rock NCA; Nevada

male



sticking out long tongue

Red Rock NCA; Nevada

female



white-tipped tail feathers

Red Rock NCA; Nevada

catching insect on the wing



Comments:

This handsome and talented fellow certainly seemed like he was having a good time showing off his best moves for me in June of 2020 at the Clark County Wetlands Park in Las Vegas. He showed me how he catches insects on the wing, and was very adept at hovering in place (characteristically bobbing his tail), allowing me ample opportunity to take his picture. The sun was shining just right to illuminate the iridescent purple band at the base of his black throat.



Family **APODIDAE** (Swifts)

White-Throated Swift (*Aeronautes saxatalis*)



Hoover Dam; Lk Mead NRA



Hoover Dam; Lk Mead NRA

Measurements:

Length: 6.5" Wng Span: 15"

Average Weight: 1.1 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

aerodynamic body; black wings, back, sides; white throat, belly, patch on flanks, and tips of secondary flight feathers

Notes:

common locally; found throughout most of w NA near canyons and cliffs from CA east to TX (rare farther east), s BC (Canada) south to Central Amer.; feeds on flying insects; shallow-notched tail usually held pointed in flight; narrower wings than swallows; only swift with white on its plumage; no sexual dimorphism; very difficult to photograph in flight

Mojave presence: year-round



Hualapai Plateau; Grand Cyn



Hoover Dam; Lk Mead NRA