

Name: _____

A Mighty Flier

by Kelly Hashway

What is two inches tall, can hover in mid-air, and flies in every direction including backwards? It's not an insect. The answer is the bee hummingbird.



Most hummingbirds are about three to five inches long. But the bee hummingbird is only five centimeters, or approximately two inches, making it the smallest species of bird alive today. Really it isn't bigger than a large insect. But don't let its tiny body fool you. This

bird is a fierce flier. It can beat its wings up to 80 times per second. If you ever see one in flight, you'll notice its wings are just a blur to the human eye. Hummingbirds are also the only vertebrates that can hover in one place. Add to that being able to fly backwards and upside down, and these creatures are amazing flying machines.

And being a master flier isn't the only one of the bee hummingbird's talents. The bee hummingbird does a great job performing its part in plant reproduction. During the course of a single day, the bee hummingbird can visit up to 1,500 flowers. And just like a bee, when the bee hummingbird drinks nectar from the flowers, pollen is transferred from the flower to the bird's body. This pollen is carried to the next flower. Transferring pollen from one flower to another helps plants make seeds.

Besides drinking nectar, bee hummingbirds eat insects. In fact, they eat about half their body mass each day. But what's more impressive is that they drink eight times their body mass every day. This is why they live in areas where there are gardens and shrubbery. These tiny birds are found primarily in Cuba, but some have been spotted in Jamaica and Haiti as well.

Despite its size, there's no arguing that the bee hummingbird is a mighty flier.

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- How do hummingbirds help flowering plants?
 - They give the flowering plants energy.
 - They help flowering plants make seeds and reproduce.
 - They build their nests in flowering plants.
 - They drink pollen in the flowers.
- The bee hummingbird is about as large as...
 - a flea
 - a bee
 - a dragonfly
 - a sparrow
- If you ever see a hummingbird in flight, you may have a difficult time seeing the wings. They would look blurry. Why?

- What do hummingbirds drink?
 - pollen
 - insects
 - flowers
 - nectar
- In which countries do bee hummingbirds live?

- If a bee hummingbird weighed 2 grams, about how many grams of liquid would it drink in a day? Use your math skills to figure out the answer. Show your work in the space below.

answer: _____

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line.

Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. _____

l i r m o y e a x a t p p

hint: about; roughly; estimated number

2. _____

b a t v e e t r s r

hint: animals with backbones

3. _____

t e a r n c

hint: sweet liquid inside of flowers

4. _____

e l p n o l

hint: powdery dust in flowers that is used to help them reproduce

5. _____

f a n d t s e e r r

hint: moved

6. _____

a s m s

hint: amount of matter something is made of; can be measured in pounds, ounces, grams, or kilograms

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In the article, "A Mighty Flier," you learned about the world's smallest bird, the bee hummingbird.



Write a short essay in which you compare and contrast the hummingbird to any other type of bird. In your writing, list five ways the hummingbird is similar to other bird you chose. Then, list five ways a hummingbird is different from the other bird.

ANSWER KEY

A Mighty Flier

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- How do hummingbirds help flowering plants? **b**
 - They give the flowering plants energy.
 - They help flowering plants make seeds and reproduce.**
 - They build their nests in flowering plants.
 - They eat the dead parts of flowering plants.
- The bee hummingbird is about as large as.... **c**
 - a flea
 - bee
 - a dragonfly**
 - a sparrow
- If you ever see a hummingbird in flight, you may have a difficult time seeing the wings. They would look blurry. Why?
The wings beat so fast the human eye cannot see them.
- What do hummingbirds drink? **d**
 - pollen
 - insects
 - flowers
 - nectar**
- In which countries do bee hummingbirds live?
Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti
- If a bee hummingbird weighed 2 grams, about how many grams of liquid would it drink in a day? Use your math skills to figure out the answer. Show your work in the space below.

2 grams x 8 = 16 grams

answer: **16 grams**

ANSWER KEY

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. approximately

l i r m o y e a x a t p p

hint: about; roughly; estimated number

2. vertebrates

b a t v e e e t r s r

hint: animals with backbones

3. nectar

t e a r n c

hint: sweet liquid inside of flowers

4. pollen

e l p n o l

hint: powdery dust in flowers that is used to help them reproduce

5. transferred

f a n d t s e e r r

hint: moved

6. mass

a s m s

hint: amount of matter something is made of; can be measured in pounds, ounces, grams, or kilograms