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Module 10: Garden Ecology

Urban EcoLab

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## Hummingbird Resource for Teachers

Center for Urban Resilience

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**Hummingbird Species Common to Southern California/Los Angeles Region**

	<b>Anna's (Year-round)</b>	<b>Allen's (Year-round)</b>	<b>Costa's (Migratory)</b>	<b>Rufous (Migratory)</b>	<b>Black-chinned (Migratory)</b>
IUCN+ Species Status	Least Concern	Least Concern	Least Concern	Least Concern	Least Concern
	<b>Note:</b> Although these species are rated as “least concern” we should consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some species such as the Allen's and Rufous hummingbirds have experienced a significant decline; thus we need to study the factors (e.g. urbanization, coastal expansion, climate, habitat loss) that contribute to this in order to mitigate further decrease/potential decrease.</li> <li>As citizen scientists, we can do our part to help hummingbirds by planting flowers/plants in order to have a variety of feeding sources to allow for successful existence and migration. Feeders are a supplemental intervention.</li> <li>Hummingbirds are key pollinators in our ecosystem.</li> </ul>				
Rating on Continental Concern Score	8 out of 20	15 out of 20	13 out of 20	13 out of 20	11 out of 20
% decrease or % increase	2% increase per yr	83% cumulative decline	slow decline	2% decline per yr 62% cumulative decline	populations increased
Years Measured	1966-2014	1966-2014	1966-2015	1966-2014	1966-2014
Estimated Global Population	5 million	700,000	3 million	11 million	5 million
*On 2014 State of the Birds Watch List?	NO	YES	----	YES	NO
*On 2016 State of North America's Bird Watch List?	----	----	NO	----	----
Possible reasons for decline	----	see below	habitat loss (loss of coastal scrub & Sonoran desert scrub)	see below	----
Possible reasons for increase	widespread backyard feeders; more eucalyptus trees	----	----	----	hummingbird gardens, hummingbird feeders

+International Union for Conservation of Nature

\*lists bird species that are at risk of becoming threatened, endangered, or at risk of extinction without conservation action

**Sources:**

[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Annas\\_Hummingbird/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Annas_Hummingbird/lifehistory)  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Allens\\_Hummingbird/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Allens_Hummingbird/lifehistory)  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Costas\\_Hummingbird/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Costas_Hummingbird/lifehistory)  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Rufous\\_Hummingbird/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Rufous_Hummingbird/lifehistory)  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-chinned\\_Hummingbird/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-chinned_Hummingbird/lifehistory)

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**General List of possible causes for declines across hummingbird species and other bird species:**

- less precipitation / moisture
- drier conditions / general drying trend (drought)
- overall changes in general climate (climate change)
- use of pesticides in gardens
- less snow melt at higher elevations, leading to lower water levels
- changes in blooming period
- fewer flowers for nectar feeders
- habitat loss
- disturbance from forest fires
- land use changes due to logging and human development

**Viability of studying hummingbirds as an indicator species:**

- hummingbirds feed on flower nectar, insects, spiders, tree sap, and at hummingbird feeders
- if changes in ecosystems cause a decline in those ecosystem resources, hummingbirds cannot survive
- if we see a general trend in declining hummingbird species, this is a key indicator that something is going on in the ecosystem
- it is important for us to preserve habitats that will provide ample hummingbird flowers for nectar feeders like hummingbirds and insects, as they are also key pollinators

**What can we do in our urban areas in Los Angeles (schools, backyards, parks, green spaces)?**

- *plant hummingbird friendly flowers* – see list below
- *provide fresh water* (hummers love to splash around in a bird bath!)
- *maintain a variety of hummingbird-friendly habitats* such as a variety of trees, bushes, flowers, etc. to provide feeding, roosting and nesting opportunities
- *put up a hummingbird feeder* and they will find it! It may take a little while but once they do, they will remember it and return each year to/from their migration. Feeders are a supplemental intervention in the event that flowers are not available.

**Hummingbird friendly flowers:**

**Source:** <http://www.hummingbirdsociety.org/hummingbird-flowers/>

“Hummingbird favorites usually but not always have long, tubular blossoms that are red, orange, yellow or blue, especially blue Salvia species; the shape limits insect access to the nectar inside. Hummers like blossoms with lots of concentrated nectar, preferring sucrose.”

See below for photos and description of hummingbird favorites.

## OUR FAVORITE FLOWERS FOR ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS

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<http://www.hummingbirdsociety.org/hummingbird-flowers/>

Photo	Family	Common Names	Description
An asterisk (*) indicates warm climates. Our personal favorites are underlined.			
	Abutilon*	Chinese Bell Flower Chinese Lantern Indian Mallow Flowering Maple	Approximately 150 species of broadleaf plants in the mallow family.
	<u>Agastache</u> *	Cusick's Giant Hyssop Hummingbird Mint Threadleaf Hyssop	A genus of 9–12 species of aromatic flowering herbaceous perennial plants in the Lamiaceae family.
	Aloe*	Aloe Vera	A genus containing about 500 species of flowering succulent plants.
	Anisacanthus*	Desert Honeysuckle Flame Anisacanthus	A genus of flowering plants in the bear's breeches family native to tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas.
	Aquilegia	Sierra Columbine Crimson Columbine Fragrant Columbine	A genus of about 60-70 species of perennial plants that are found in meadows, woodlands and higher altitudes throughout the Northern Hemisphere.
	Caesalpinia*	Bird of Paradise Broadpad Nicker Yellow Peacock	A genus of flowering plants in the legume family with different publications including anywhere from 70 to 165 species.
	Callistemon*	Crimson Bottlebrush	A genus of 34 species of shrubs in the family

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Weeping Bottlebrush Myrtaceae, all of which are endemic to Australia.  
Red Bottlebrush



Chilopsis Desert Willow A genus of flowering plant containing a single species, *Chilopsis linearis*.



Fuchsia Fuchsia A genus of flowering plants that contains almost 110 recognized species.



Hamelia Firebush A genus of flowering plants in the coffee family.



Justicia Water Willow Shrimp Plant A genus of flowering plants native to tropical and warm temperate regions of the Americas, with two species occurring north into temperate zones.



Kniphofia Red Hot Poker Torch Lily Knofflers A genus of flowering plants that includes 70 or more species native to Africa.

Lobelia

Indian Tobacco  
Fool's Bane  
Vomitwort

A genus of flowering plants comprising 360–400 species, with distribution primarily in tropical to warm temperate regions of the world and a few species extending into cooler temperate regions.

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Lonicera

Honeysuckle

There are about 180 species of honeysuckle, 100 of which occur in China; Europe, India and North America, with about 20 native species each.

Monarda

Bee Balm  
Oswego Tea  
Bergamot

A genus of roughly 16 species of flowering plants endemic to North America.

Penstemon\*

Beard-Tongue

A large genus of North American and East Asian flowering plants with partly tube-shaped, and two-lipped flowers.

Salvia\*

Sage

The largest genus of plants in the mint family with approximately 700–900 species of shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and annuals.

Tecoma /  
Tecomaria

Yellow Trumpetbush

A genus of 14 species of shrubs or small trees in the trumpet vine family. Twelve species are from the Americas, while the other two species are African.