

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (RTHU)

Nesting Report Protocol Field Guide (U.S. and Canada)

Task

To observe and report nesting behavior of RTHUs

What You Need

- Pencil or pen
- Clipboard
- Bird identification guide
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird Nesting Data Sheet*
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera

In the Field

1. Fill out the top of the *Ruby-throated Hummingbird Nesting Data Sheet*. Record when the nest was found.
2. Record the dates for what you can of the following observations. **Do not disturb the nest.**
 - Start of nest construction
 - End of nest construction
 - Laying of first egg
 - Laying of second egg
 - First sighting of adult female sitting on nest
 - Hatching date(s) for egg(s)
 - First sighting of young hummingbirds (nestlings) in nest
 - Fledging date (when nestlings leave the nest)
 - Last sighting of adult female on nest
3. Record if the eggs do not hatch or if the nestlings die. If the female rebuilds the nest or reuses the nest for a new set of eggs, fill out a second data sheet and record the new observations as listed above.
4. Record dates and observations of any adult male behavior at the nest. Be careful to report observations of what you actually see, rather than an interpretation of what you see.

Examples: 2 April 2002—Male sitting on nest for 30 seconds (NOT male incubating eggs)

1 May 2002—Male flying over nest (NOT male protecting nest)

Note 1: It is against state or federal law to possess the body, feathers, skeleton, nest or eggs of any wild free-flying bird—including hummingbirds—unless you have a special permit.

Note 2: If you see a color-marked or unusual RTHU, other species of hummingbirds (vagrants), or ANY hummingbird from mid-October through mid-March, describe the color markings and shape of beak. Record your observations on the *Ruby-throated Hummingbird Sighting Data Sheet*. Contact Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History at research@hiltonpond.org or (803) 684-5852 as soon as possible.