



Klamath Network Featured Creature

August 2009

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)

FIELD NOTES:

General Description:

The Black-chinned Hummingbird is a small to medium-sized hummingbird, about 3 ¼ inches long at maturity and weighing about 3 g or 0.1 oz. The bill is long, straight, and thin. Adults have brilliantly shiny green backs, green sides, and a white belly. As the name implies, males have a dark head and chin. The males also have an iridescent violet throat band and a dark forked tail. The less conspicuous female has a white-tipped rounded tail and a few black dots on the throat instead of a patch, similar in looks to the female Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Juvenile males resemble females but are distinguishable by a dark streak on the throat.

Habitat and Distribution:

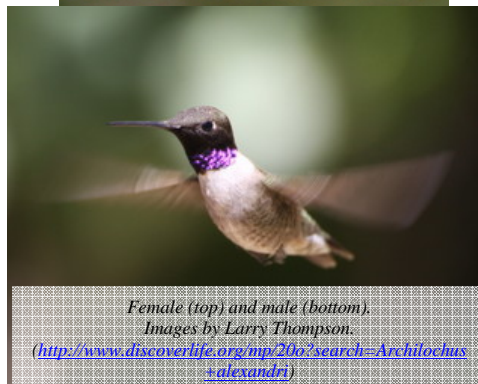
Although highly territorial, the Black-chinned hummingbird will share its space when food is bountiful. They migrate to higher elevations with the timing of the flower blooms. Their choice of habitat is broad, from canyons and deserts, to savannas and chaparral, to forests and foothills. Black-chins have the most extensive breeding range of all northwestern hummingbirds. They are found across western North America, from southern British Columbia to northern Mexico, and from the Pacific Coast to Texas. Winter migrations take this hummingbird to the more southern portions of its range. Black-chins leave Washington, Oregon, and California in September/October, headed to Arizona and Mexico. Before taking part in the long migration, *A. alexandri* will fuel up, increasing its body weight 25-50%.

Where to see in the Network:

A. alexandri is found in Whiskeytown, Crater Lake, and Lava Beds, and is common throughout this region.

Conservation Status:

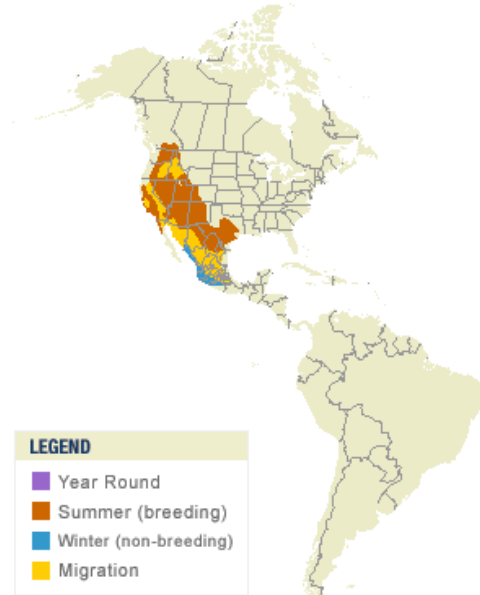
Black-chins are common throughout their range. They are also frequently found in suburbs and human communities in the hummingbird's habitat.



Female (top) and male (bottom).
Images by Larry Thompson.
(<http://www.discoverlife.org/mp/206?search=Archilochus+alexandri>)

Black-chinned Hummingbird

Archilochus alexandri



LEGEND

- Year Round
- Summer (breeding)
- Winter (non-breeding)
- Migration

Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-chinned_Hummingbird/id

Reproduction:

The male will court the female with a series of shallow dips and a high-pitched warbling song. After mating, the male returns to his loner life. The female builds a well-camouflaged nest, taking about 3 days to construct it. *A. alexandri* nests about 4-8 feet high in a tree, often over water, and along a drooping or forked branch. The down of young sycamore trees and other plants is woven together with spider webs and lichens make a soft, elastic nest. The elasticity of the nest allows it to expand to double its size while the chicks are growing larger inside. Two to three eggs are laid between April and September, depending on location. The female incubates the pinkish-white eggs for 13-16 days. Young fledge at about 20 days old.

Diet:

Black-chins savor delicious pollen, nectar, and insects. Their long extendable tongues reach into the flowers and also snag insects' wings. They will eat insects found around flowers during the day and may actively hunt for insects by perching on a branch and darting out into the open, catching flying insects. This hummingbird occurs around many population centers and also enjoys sugar water from a feeder. As a small hummingbird, their main predators are insect-eating birds and animals.

[Click here to see a video of a male feeding on a flower.](#)

More Information:

Trussler, A. 2001. "*Archilochus alexandri*" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed August 27, 2009 at http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Archilochus_alexandri.html.