

**THE NINTH ANNUAL XTREME HUMMINGBIRD XTRAVAGANZA AT THE  
GULF COAST BIRD OBSERVATORY IN LAKE JACKSON EXPANDED TO  
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 11 & 18 – FROM 8:00 A.M. UNTIL NOON!**

Autumn is hummingbird season in Texas, as thousands of these tiny creatures move through the state on their southward migration to Mexico and Central America. Nature enthusiasts welcome them with old-fashioned Texas hospitality, readying their gardens of nectar-producing plants and putting up special feeders filled with fresh sugar water. “Essentially, all the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that breed in the eastern half of the United States and Canada—estimated at 7.3 million—migrate along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico each fall,” says John Arvin, the Observatory’s Research Coordinator.

The male hummers grab your attention with their striking throat feathers, which act like a prism to bend light into a shimmering red spectrum. Females and juveniles lack the scarlet throat - though juvenile males often show red dots on the throat. But they all have one purpose - engorging enough nectar to bulk up their body fat so they’ll have enough fuel for their migratory flight.

Many Ruby-throats will travel 600 miles straight across the Gulf to the Yucatan Peninsula, and some will fly around the edges of the Gulf to points in Mexico. All will ultimately wind up in southern Mexico and Central America, as far south as Costa Rica, for the winter.

You can watch the thumb-sized hummers at the Observatory dart in and out of nectar-producing flowers like lantana, trumpet-vine, and honeysuckle, or you’ll spy them sipping nectar at feeders hanging from tree limbs and building awnings. Better yet, you’ll enjoy seeing a bird-bander hold a tiny hummingbird while taking measurements of the bird, weighing it, and clamping a thin, number-coded band on one of its teensy-weensy legs. *(Adapted from “Hum’s the Word,” by Gary Clark, Texas Highways Magazine, July, 2006)*

Come on out and watch the banding, adopt a hummingbird, browse the Nature Store, walk the nature trails, or buy a plant to attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

These informative lectures will round out the festival:

- September 11 - Cherie and Glenn McBride will perform Tiny Bird Songs.
  
- September 18 – Barbara Burkhardt will talk about Butterfly and Hummingbird Gardening.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW** and join us in September!

Go to [www.gcbo.org](http://www.gcbo.org) for a printable map to our Sanctuary  
(beware Google & Mapquest maps – they are incorrect)  
or call (979) 480-0999 for directions.

Your attendance will support coastal bird conservation.