

Extension Connection

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Gilpin County CSU Extension's
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GILPIN COUNTY UPDATES

BY CLAIRE SKEEN, OFFICE ASSISTANT

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) published an amended public health order, [Safer-at-Home and in the Vast, Great Outdoors](#).

The order addresses several new topics, including youth and adult league sports, playgrounds, swimming pools, gyms and recreation centers, outdoor recreation and places of worship.

Gilpin County Public Health aligns with the state on this amended order. You can always find the latest updates and guidance at covid19.colorado.gov

While the Extension Office is still virtual at this time, we are starting curbside grass and wildflower seed pickup. To schedule a time, please contact extension@gilpincounty.org.

The Gilpin Library Summer Reading Challenge is now live! Sign up here: <https://www.gilpinlibrary.org/2020-summer-reading-program.html>

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GILPIN COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

BY JENNIFER COOK, DIRECTOR

Gilpin County is in the process of developing our first comprehensive plan and we want community input. A comprehensive plan is our community's road map for the future. It projects needs and trends over the next twenty years and will allow the county to be proactive rather than reactive to change.

It can be easy to tune this out, but the Comprehensive Plan can mean changes to the look, feel, and functionality of our county and day-to-day life. This is because the Comprehensive Plan is the community's most important document regarding land use, growth, development, transportation, and resource utilization.

What do you want to see protected in Gilpin County? How can we manage development and tourism in the county? What values should we preserve? Participate in our survey and community meetings to be sure your voice is heard as Gilpin develops this important plan.

How to Participate:

1. Take Community Survey #2 at CompPlan.GilpinCounty.org by July 31st
2. Join us for a Virtual Community Workshop on June 23rd from 6-7:30pm. Get the zoom link at CompPlan.GilpinCounty.org



HUMMINGBIRDS

BY JENNIFER COOK, DIRECTOR

Hummingbirds are buzzing by all over Gilpin County as they migrate through Colorado. They rely on habitat all along their migration paths and breeding areas in order to thrive. Some hummingbirds are at risk because of habitat loss, climate change impacting distribution of nectar plants, spread of invasive plants, and use of pesticides.

Hummingbirds feed on nectar from flowers, trees, and shrubs, often playing an important role in pollination of flowering plants. They also eat insects such as fruit flies and gnats, as well as tree sap. Hummingbirds get enough water from the nectar and insects they eat, but are often attracted to water because more gnats and flowers may be in these areas.

There are four native hummingbirds that can appear at high elevations in Colorado. The Broad-tailed migrate to the area in April or May, and stay through the summer, whereas Calliope, Black-Chinned, and Rufous make occasional or short appearances. Use a field guide or [web lists](#) to identify the hummingbirds near you. Take note of what they are consuming and consider creating or enhancing your backyard habitat for hummingbirds. This is one way to help hummingbirds thrive.



Plant a Garden to Attract Hummingbirds!

Consider plants that will survive in our mountain climate and will attract hummingbirds with their tubular flowers built for hummer beaks. Planting non-natives can be destructive, especially if the plant becomes invasive. Yellow toadflax is an example of what NOT to plant. This one is attractive to hummingbirds, but is an invasive and noxious weed in Colorado.

Plant perennial flowers such as Giant Hyssop (Agastache), Indian paintbrush (Catillegia sp.), Delphinium, Bee balm (Monarda sp.), and Lupine (Lupinus). Shrubs such as Currants (Ribes sp.) are ideal for attracting hummingbirds. For more plant species, visit Gilpin Extension article, [How to Create a Hummingbird Garden.](#)

In addition to flowers, nesting sites are important too. In Gilpin County, we have this part covered! The Broad-tailed Hummingbird migrates here for the summer to breed. Females make their nests on low horizontal branches of pines, firs, spruces, and aspens.

More info on Hummingbirds of Colorado -

<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/HummingbirdBrochures/HummingbirdGuideCO-WY-SD.pdf>





HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS TIPS & TRICKS

BY CLAIRE SKEEN, OFFICE ASSISTANT

If you're thinking of hanging up a hummingbird feeder this summer, here's some tips and tricks:

- Bring your feeder inside at night and hang it back up in the morning to minimize attracting bears.
- Hang your feeder at least 4 feet above the ground and in a shady spot if possible.
- In hot weather, clean your feeder at least twice a week with hot tap water or a weak vinegar solution.
- Keep an eye on your feeder for any sign of mold, ants, or any discoloration to the food.
- You don't need to get fancy with your hummingbird food. A 1:4 ratio of refined white sugar to tap water is perfect. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of refined white sugar to 1 cup of water and boil. Let it cool to room temp before filling your feeder.
- Keep unused mix in the fridge for up to 1 week.
- Only use refined white sugar. Other sweeteners may have additional ingredients. Never use artificial sweeteners! Don't add artificial red food coloring. If you want to add something red to attract hummingbirds, consider a red feeder or planting red flowers nearby.

Source: <https://www.audubon.org/news/hummingbird-feeding-faqs>



KID'S CORNER: BIRD BEAK BUFFET

BY KIRSTEN SPRINGER, CSU GILPIN EXTENSION STEM EDUCATOR
PWILD ACTIVITY ADAPTED FOR EXTENSION CONNECTION

All animals must eat to survive. Their bodies are adapted to eat certain foods that occur in the places that they live. The traits may be specialized for the particular foods found in their environment.

All birds have some kind of beak for grasping and eating. The size and shape enables them to eat certain kinds of foods. Short, thick beaks belong to sparrows and finches that eat seeds and nuts, so they can crack them open. Hummingbirds have long slender beaks to reach the nectar deep into the flowers.

A beak is an adaptation – a special feature or behavior that helps an animal survive in their environment. Birds have other adaptations such as webbed feet on ducks, but this activity focuses on their beaks and what they eat.

You can find materials mostly in the kitchen, they include:

- a spoon, fork, chopsticks and 2 toothpicks
- different shapes of pasta, cooking oil and sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- serving utensils and small plates
- cup or scoop
- turkey baster or eye dropper
- strainer
- tongs
- scissors
- nutcracker

You will set up “feeding” stations for different types of birds. If you have a field guide, use it for children to identify the bird/beak that they are imitating.

THE FEEDING STATION

<u>Bird</u>	<u>How They Use Their Beak</u>	<u>Tool</u>	<u>Action</u>
Pelican	Pouch-like beak scoops up fish	Scoop	Scoop packing peanuts out of a tub of water
Hummingbird	Probes flowers for nectar	Turkey Baster	Suck colored water out of a tall vase
Snipe, Shorebirds	Probes water and shore for small invertebrates	Tongs	Search for plastic worms In a tub of sand
Woodpeckers	Use strong beaks to chisel In wood	Tweezers	Search for rice buried In bark
Owls, Hawks, Eagles	Tear meat apart	Scissors	Tear playdough wrapped around a stick
Herons, egrets	Catch and spear fish	Chopsticks	Spear packing peanuts
Sparrows, finches	Crack open seeds and nuts	Nutcracker	Crack open seeds/nuts
Ducks, swans	Spoon-like bills strain aquatic plants and algae from water	Strainer	Strain tea leaves out of water

The youth will use the tools to pick up the item and bring to a designated spot.

Let the youth determine which was the hardest food to eat and why?
Decide what the best habitat for that type of bird would be most suitable.