

Hum

Zane hung the bird feeder on the hook near the porch. He had built it from a video on YouTube. It was supposed to attract hummingbirds, with its wavy red bottom that looked like a flower. He mixed $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar with one cup of water and added the nectar-like mixture to the feeder. Now all he needed was the birds.

Zane and his parents had gotten into bird watching while they were home during the pandemic. They had seen and identified many species of song birds. Zane had started a notebook where he wrote about the birds they saw. Sometimes he did sketches too. He had never realized how many cool and colorful birds lived in the area. But one bird that he had never seen was a hummingbird.

Hummingbirds belong to the family called Trochilidae. They are small with long, narrow bills and sword-like wings. They often have colorful feathers on their head and neck that sparkle when they catch the sunlight. Zane was fascinated by the tiny creatures. They are the smallest birds and also the fastest, with wings that beat 70 times a second when they are flying and more than 200 times per second while diving.

One interesting fact about hummingbirds that Zane learned is that they can go into torpor. Torpor is a sleep-like state where the birds can slow down

their heart and lower their body temperature. If an animal is in torpor for a long time, it is called hibernation. But hummingbirds go in and out of torpor quickly, depending on environmental conditions. This ability helps them because it allows them to take a break when the weather is cold or they can't find food.

Zane read that hummingbirds need to go into torpor a lot because humans are destroying their habitats. The flowers that hummingbirds use as a food source are less available. Zane wanted to help, so he learned how to build a feeder that would give hummingbirds what they need to survive. He wondered if they would come. He sat on the porch with his notebook and waited.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What did Zane put in his hummingbird feeder?
 - a. Birdseed
 - b. Breadcrumbs
 - c. Sugar water
 - d. Flower nectar

2. What is torpor?
 - a. A sleep-like state
 - b. Hibernation
 - c. Having colorful feathers
 - d. Speeding up the heart rate

3. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a characteristic of hummingbirds?
 - a. They have sword-like wings
 - b. They are small and fast
 - c. They have colorful feathers
 - d. They are aggressive

4. How do you think Zane felt when he read that humans were destroying the hummingbirds' habitat?
 - a. Helpless
 - b. Determined
 - c. Happy
 - d. Apathetic

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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