

## Smallest Bird in Existence: Which is it - The Bee or the Bumble Bee Hummingbird ?

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### Hummingbird Information



Bee Hummingbird (Mellisuga helenae) - Male

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**There is some controversy with respect to which bird is the smallest bird in existence:**

Is it ...

- the Mexican [Bumblebee Hummingbird](#) (Atthis heloisa)

or

- the Cuban [Bee Hummingbird](#)

**Both of which are easily mistaken for bumblebees** due to the obvious similarity in size and foraging behavior. Bumblebees are also attracted to yellow and red colors - just like hummingbirds - and will also hover in front of



**Bee Hummingbird**  
Photos by Robert Tyrrell

flowers and hummingbird feeders to sip nectar through a long feeding tube. One has to be very close to really know whether this is a hummingbird or a bumble bee.

The Cuban [Bee Hummingbird](#) and the Mexican [Bumblebee Hummingbird](#) may share some ancestry, but are not closely related and are clearly separated geographically. As far as size is concerned, the Cuban Bee Hummingbird is slightly smaller than the Mexican Bumblebee Hummingbird -- therefore, the smallest bird species is indeed the Cuban Bee Hummingbird. Then again, in nature the sizes of individuals vary. So-called "runts" amongst the Mexican Bumblebee Hummingbirds may very well be comparable in size to the Cuban Bee Hummingbirds - but that is not the general rule.

## The Smallest Bird Alive is ...

[Bee Hummingbirds](#) are the smallest known living birds in the world - being comparable in size to bumble bees and are lighter than a Canadian or U.S. penny. Females are slightly larger than males.

Bee Hummingbirds measure mostly between 1.97 - 2.36 inches or 5 - 6 cm in length - including beak and tail; and they weigh between 0.06 - 0.07 oz or 1.6 - 1.9 g. Compare this to the largest hummingbird is the [giant hummingbird](#) of South America, which is 8 inches or 20 cm long and weighs around 0.70 ounces (20 grams).

[Bumblebee Hummingbirds](#) are the second-smallest bird known to be in existence.

They average 2.75 inches or 7 cm in length and weighing, on average, 0.1 oz or 3 grams. They are comparable in size to bumble bees and are also lighter than a Canadian or U.S. penny.



Bumblebee Hummingbird (*Atthis heloisa*)

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Species Research by [Sibylle Johnson](#)

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