

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Animal Abstract

Element Code: ABNUC29080

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Saucerottia beryllina*
COMMON NAME: Berylline Hummingbird

SYNONYMS: *Amazilia beryllina*
FAMILY: Trochilidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Deppe, 1830

TYPE LOCALITY: Ocozocoautla: Cerro Brujo

TYPE SPECIMEN: MLZ:Bird:27335. Mario Del Toro Aviles. 1940-07-02.

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: There are 11 species in the genus *Saucerottia* (Billerman et al. 2022, ITIS 2025). *Saucerottia beryllina* is the only species of the genus *Saucerottia* in Arizona (Arizona Bird Committee 2024).

AOU (1998) formerly included in the genus *Amazilia*, but see Stiles et al. (2017) for resurrection of *Saucerottia* based on genetic data (McGuire et al. 2014, Chesser et al. 2020).

DESCRIPTION: *S. beryllina* is a medium sized hummingbird that reaches 8–10 cm in length. Males weigh 4.4 grams, and females weigh 4.0 grams (Weller and Kirwan 2021). Males have straight, medium sized blackish bills, except for pinkish basal half of mandible. Males also have bronze-green to coppery color on head, back and rump. Males have chestnut base of primaries and secondaries, with underparts glittering golden green. Uppertail-coverts and tail variable in males, often coppery to rufous colored (Weller and Kirwan 2021). Females are similar, but throat and belly is paler, more greyish, and lacks pinkish bill base. Juveniles are similar but have less iridescence on the throat, with greyish-cinnamon colored bellies (Weller and Kirwan 2021).

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: Very similar in appearance to the Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*), but their ranges do not overlap. Unlike other hummingbirds, both are

dark green overall with rufous tails (Sibley 2000). The rufous wing patches of Berylline Hummingbirds help distinguish them from Buff-bellied Hummingbirds and Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds (*Amazilia tzacatl*) (Weller and Kirwan 2021).

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Color drawing (National Geographic, 1999:265)

Color photo (Tyrell, 1985:10)

Color drawing (Sibley 2000:295)

Color photos (Weller and Kirwan 2021)

TOTAL RANGE: From southeastern Arizona to Sonora and Chihuahua, and southward to Chiapas and east to Veracruz, Mexico. Also found in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras (Weller and Kirwan 2021).

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: *S. beryllina* is very rare in the southwestern United States, where it is apparently confined to the Huachuca and Chiricahua mountains of Arizona (Weller and Kirwan 2021).

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: Hummingbirds are known for their small size and rapid wing movements (10–80 wing beats per second depending on bird size), and are capable of both forward and backward flight. The characteristic humming sound they make in flight is caused by modified outer primary feathers and is the basis for their common name (Camfield 2004). They can compensate for their high energetic requirements by going into torpor during cold nights, an adaptive response especially important for species living in colder environments. Hummingbirds have characteristically small feet, are unable to walk on the ground, and will fly rather than walk in order to shift on a perch (Camfield 2004). Hummingbirds are sexually dimorphic and are solitary and territorial animals. (Camfield 2004).

REPRODUCTION: *S. beryllina* mainly breeds June–October with a peak in September. Nest-sites can be found near ground level to as high as 15 m above the ground. The species nests in shrubs and trees such as Wigandia, pine and oak (Weller and Kirwan 2021). In Arizona, *S. beryllina* has been documented nesting in sycamore trees (*Platanus*). Nests are oftentimes rather solid, constructed on a horizontal branch, and made of grass, plant fibers, and cotton. Nests often have a conspicuous streak of grass blades near the bottom that are fixed with cobweb, with the outside decorated with pale-colored lichens (Weller and Kirwan 2021). Nests measure 40–50 mm both in outside diameter and depth, with an inside depth of 15 mm and width of 26 mm. Clutch size is two eggs, and fledglings hatch after around 20

days (Weller and Kirwan 2021). Only female hummingbirds are involved in parental care, being responsible for incubation of eggs, brooding young hatchlings, and feeding chicks as nestlings and fledglings (Camfield 2004).

FOOD HABITS: *S. beryllina* feeds on nectar throughout foliage strata, often congregating with other hummingbird species at flowering trees; catches small insects at spider webs or by hawking (Weller and Kirwan 2021). Depending on habitat, feeds on both native and introduced plants, including *Malvaviscus*, *Psittacanthus* and *Calliandra*, also succulents like *Ceiba* and *Lemairocereus*. *S. beryllina* is a generalist forager, often occupying feeding territories. Relatively dominant, although subdominance was registered where sympatric with *Lampornis amethystinus* (Weller and Kirwan 2021).

HABITAT: Found in dense oak and pine-oak forest and scrub, tropical deciduous forest, forest edges, and thorn forest. Also found in open areas with scattered trees, areas of riparian vegetation, plantations, urban parks and suburban gardens. Mainly found in arid habitats, less frequently in humid areas (Weller and Kirwan 2021).

ELEVATION: Widespread in all altitudes, though most commonly found between 500–1,800 m, occasionally up to 3,000 m (Weller and Kirwan 2021).

PLANT COMMUNITY: Madrean evergreen woodland

POPULATION TRENDS: The population trend appears to be stable (Birdlife International 2021). Climate change is affecting *S. beryllina* populations and will eventually cause currently inhabited areas to become less supportive of the species as temperatures increase. It is projected that *S. beryllina* could lose local populations in the south and in the mountainous parts of central Mexico due to rising temperatures and a lack of possible sites of expansion towards the north (Lara et al. 2012).

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

Status definitions: <https://bit.ly/hdms-status-definitions>

Heritage Network Conservation Status Rank definitions: <https://bit.ly/hdms-rank-definitions>

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:

STATE STATUS:

OTHER STATUS:

Not Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS
Region 3 1999)
LC (IUCN, BirdLife International 2021)

PREVIOUS STATUS**OTHER STATUS:**

Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3 1988) as *Amazilia beryllina*

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: Unknown

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:

SUGGESTED PROJECTS:

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: USFS – Coronado National Forest; AMNH - Southwestern Research Station; TNC – Ramsey Canyon.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**REFERENCES:**

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MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

The family is thought to have originated in South America with a secondary radiation into North America. Species name is Latin for the color of beryl, bluish green to sea green.

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