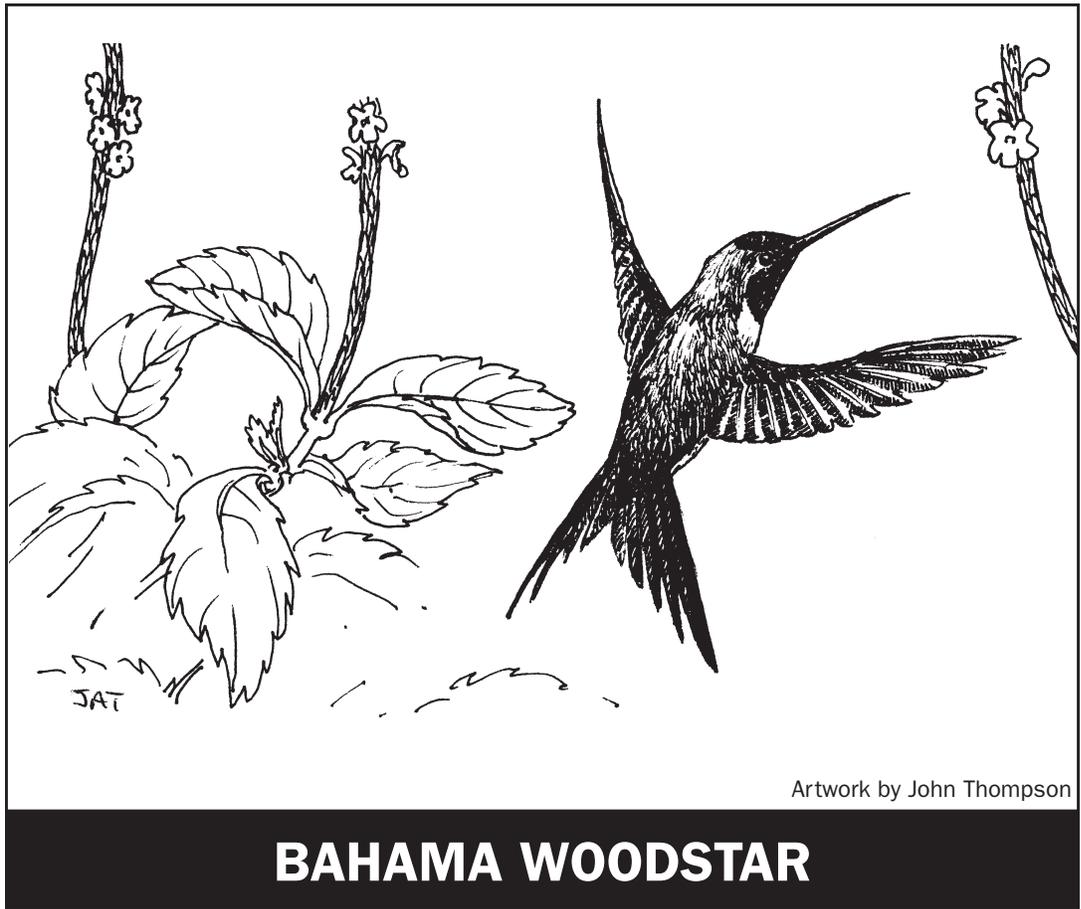




## Endemic Birds of the Bahamas



### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Calliphlox evelynae*

### COMMON NAMES

Hummingbird, God Bird

### DESCRIPTION

The Bahama Woodstar is a small species of hummingbird being approximately 3½ to 4 inches in length. It has greenish upper parts, a white chest and rufous lower underparts. Adult males have iridescent violet throat feathers which are strikingly beautiful when seen in the sunlight, but appear black when seen from a distance. Females and immatures have white throats. Males have forked tails but the females' tail is rounded.

### DIET

The Bahama Woodstar feeds on the nectar found in flowers and also on minute insects. They are common wherever flowers are found: in gardens, coppice or open country. When feeding they hover in front of each flower in turn, maintaining themselves stationary on wings that move so fast they seem invisible, and probe for nectar and insects.

### REPRODUCTION

Hummingbirds build a well constructed nest that is a little more than one inch in diameter. It is round, open, and made of soft woolly material similar to cotton, camouflaged on the outside with tiny pieces of bark. They may choose a variety of sites from two feet to twelve feet from the ground. Two rather elongated white eggs are laid. Breeding takes place year round, but the main season is in April.

## **HABITAT, STATUS AND RANGE**

The Bahama Woodstar is one of three Bahamian endemics (i.e. native only to The Bahamas) and is a common year-round resident throughout the Islands. It is found less commonly on Abaco and Grand Bahama, which it co-habits with the Cuban Emerald. It occupies a variety of habitats: gardens, scrub, forest edges, clearings and pine forest. The Bahama Woodstar is protected by law under the Wild Birds Protection Act. The Convention for International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) lists the Bahama Woodstar as Appendix II meaning it is a species which is threatened and stands to become endangered.

## **INTERESTING FACTS**

- A distinct local race, or sub-species, of the Bahama Woodstar is found on Inagua, males of which have violet feathers on the forehead as well as on the throat.
- Though a number of Bahama Woodstars may gather where flowers are abundant, they are not sociable birds and will chase an intruding neighbour away – this aggressiveness is shown to other species at times.
- When resting, they like to perch on an exposed twig or sometimes a telephone wire, and will allow a person to approach to within a few feet. At all times, in fact they show indifference to the presence of human beings.
- Hummingbirds are the smallest birds in the world. They have the fastest metabolic rate of any warm-blooded animal, the largest heart of all warm-blooded animals - for their size, and one of the largest brains of any bird - relative to their size.
- Hummingbirds have the greatest flight capability of any bird since they are capable of flying not only forward, but also backward, to the right and to the left, hovering and even flying upside down.