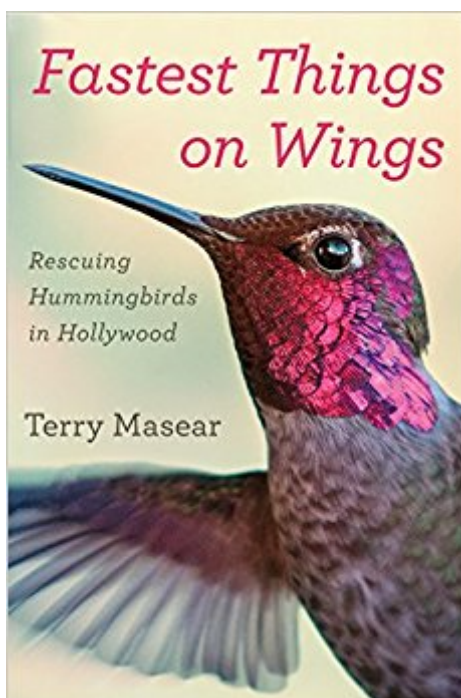


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# Fastest Things On Wings: Rescuing Hummingbirds In Hollywood



## Synopsis

A heartwarming account of the trials and triumphs a hummingbird rehabber encounters while caring for her tiny, fragile patients. Before he collided with a limousine, Gabriel, an Anna's hummingbird with a head and throat cloaked in iridescent magenta feathers, could spiral 130 feet in the air, dive 60 miles per hour in a courtship display, hover, and fly backward. When he arrived in rehab caked in road grime, he was so badly injured that he could barely perch. But Terry Masear, one of the busiest hummingbird rehabbers in the country, was determined to save this damaged bird, who seemed oddly familiar. During the four months that Terry worked with Gabriel, she took in 160 hummingbirds, from a miniature nestling rescued by a bulldog and a fledgling trapped inside a skydiving wind tunnel at Universal CityWalk, to Pepper, a female Anna's injured on a film set. In their time together, Pepper and Gabriel form a special bond and, together, with Terry's help, learn to fly again. Woven around Gabriel's and Pepper's stories are those of other colorful birds in this personal narrative filled with the science and magic surrounding these fascinating creatures. [View larger](#)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From Rescue to Release: A Young Hummingbird's Two-Month Journey through Rehab [View larger](#) [View larger](#) [View larger](#) This rufous nestling fledges and leaves the nest three to four weeks after hatching. Nests in the wild usually have two chicks, a female and a male. The rapidly growing fledgling enters a small flight cage where he

learns to eat formula from feeders, perch through the night, and develop basic flight skills. A week later, the teenager moves to a large flight cage where he practices more advanced flight skills, including 360-degree rotations and hovering in midair.

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The young adult joins five to twenty rescued hummingbirds in an outdoor aviary, where he learns to mine flowers, use a sugar feeder, and catch fruit flies in flight. Before his release, the adult hummingbird masters sophisticated flight maneuvers, including how to flip, spin, barrel roll, and fly backward, sideways, upside down, and in a straight vertical. In the wild, the rufous migrates up to 7,000 miles each year. His wings rotate in a figure-eight pattern from sixty to over one hundred times per second.

“In her endearing new book, *FASTEST THINGS ON WINGS: Rescuing Hummingbirds in Hollywood*, Terry Masear reveals that these birds are not only gorgeous, smart and jaw-dropping masters of flight but also trusting souls that bring out the humanity and love in even the most hard-bitten residents...This is a book about birds that is actually a book about love, and Masear does us a favor by risking heartbreak every day....a powerful story of interspecies communication and trust. The last words of *FASTEST THINGS ON WINGS* are: “I am flying.” A fitting end to a book that will change forever the way you look at these little birds.

•Los Angeles Times “rewarding for birds and reader alike. This is a charming and lively summertime read, something for the patio or balcony, glass of iced tea at hand, a hummingbird or two zipping around the azaleas.”

•Dallas Morning News “a must-read for everyone who enjoys hummingbirds. (Is there anyone who does not fit that category?) Terry Masear is a hummingbird rehabilitator who takes in these tiny injured birds and treats them with great care. Her book, *FASTEST THINGS ON WINGS* tells about her experiences winning and occasionally losing her battles to bring her charges back to health. Although Masear lives in Hollywood and deals with West Coast birds, her stories apply equally to the one species, the ruby-throated hummingbird, we have here. I learned much from this book.”

•Buffalo News “[a] bright, engrossing debut|Not just for birders, this captivating book brims with warmth, humor, and drama that will have wide appeal.

•Kirkus Reviews, “starred review” “Encounters with hummingbirds with a variety of personalities have given [Masear] many insightful stories to tell. She has also learned much about the sometimes strange and other times wonderful people of her community, who call her night and day to report orphaned or distressed hummingbirds. Masear is bound to win fans with this passionate memoir.”

Booklist "Masear shares an abundance of knowledge about hummingbirds, mating and feeding habits, their incredible flying abilities and migratory journeys, and what they need to heal and thrive. But her observations about the rescuers are just as interesting. You can learn a lot about someone by his reaction to a helpless hummingbird in need of rescue," she writes. "In fact, you can find out just about everything you need to know about a person."

BirdWatching Magazine "Terry Masear's charming account of saving hurt and orphaned hummingbirds grabbed my attention from the first paragraph and kept me riveted until the very last page. I loved this artfully woven story and am certain that animal lovers of all ages will as well."

Michele Raffin, author of *The Birds of Pandemonium* "This rare and lovely book is destined to be a classic. I was riveted, charmed, delighted, devastated, profoundly moved, and taken to a magical place few people ever get to glimpse. It's one of the best books I've ever read about how rehabbers bond with the animals we save."

Stacey O'Brien, author of *Wesley the Owl* "This book is a delightful read. No one else could write such a wonderful memoir of care, compassion, and delight for these small creatures. Masear's writing is enthralling and captivating and I hated for it to end."

Joanna Burger, author of *The Parrot Who Owns Me* "Fastest Thing on Wings is an exaltation of hummingbirds, but it's also the story of Terry Masear's exceptional heart and heroism in saving these fragile and remarkable creatures. In her beautiful account, every rescue is a revelation. Hollywood is full of stars, but few shine as brightly as hers."

Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO, The Humane Society of the United States "In this well-written memoir, she tells the story of Gabriel, a male Anna's Hummingbird rescued from danger in the middle of busy Rodeo Drive, and Pepper, a female Anna's hummingbird injured on a film set. Along the way, Masear shares an abundance of knowledge about hummingbirds, mating and feeding habits, their incredible flying abilities and migratory journeys, and what they need to heal and thrive. But her observations about the rescuers are just as interesting. You can learn a lot about someone by his reaction to a helpless hummingbird in need of rescue," she writes. "In fact, you can find out just about everything you need to know about a person."

BirdWatching "You don't have to be a bird person in general or a hummingbird person specifically to read this book. You don't need to know anything about birds at all. The very gifted bird whisperer Terry Masear has you covered. She's one of California's hardest-working hummingbird rehabilitators. What she knows about these tiny wonders will leave the average bird lover agog....[you'll] come away with a sense of awe for the tenacity and toughness of these wild animals and their sheer will to

survive." [Washington Post](#) "I cannot believe what a gripping read this is like the Hunger Games for hummingbirds." [Robin Young](#), host of NPR's Here and Now "I begin with a must-read for everyone who enjoys hummingbirds. (Is there anyone who does not fit that category?) Terry Masear is a hummingbird rehabilitator who takes in these tiny injured birds and treats them with great care. Her book, *Fastest Things on Wings*, tells about her experiences winning and occasionally losing her battles to bring her charges back to health. Although Masear lives in Hollywood and deals with West Coast birds, her stories apply equally to the one species, the ruby-throated hummingbird, we have here. I learned much from this book" [Buffalo News](#) "When Terry Masear, author of *THE FASTEST THINGS ON WINGS: Rescuing Hummingbirds in Hollywood* rescued a fledgling 12 years ago, she had no idea that she would one day be Hollywood's go-to hummingbird rehabber, fielding as many as 85 calls a day. [In the book] she explains how one of the smallest, most beautiful birds in the world evolved from dinosaurs; how hummingbirds can experience PTSD; how even rock stars cry over injured hummingbird chicks; and why she suffers from kitchenheimers." [National Geographic](#)

Before he collided with a limousine, Gabriel, an Anna's hummingbird with a head and throat cloaked in iridescent magenta feathers, could spiral hundreds of feet in the air, dive 60 miles per hour in a courtship display, hover, and fly backward. When he arrived in rehab caked in road grime, he was so badly injured that he could barely perch. But Terry Masear, one of the busiest hummingbird rehabilitators in the country, was determined to save this damaged bird. During the five months that Terry worked with Gabriel, she took in 160 orphaned and injured hummingbirds, from a miniature hatchling rescued by a bulldog to Pepper, a female Anna's grounded on a film set. In their time together, Pepper and Gabriel formed a special bond and together, with Terry's help, learned to fly again. Woven around Gabriel's and Pepper's stories are those of other colorful birds in this personal narrative filled with the science and magic surrounding these fascinating creatures."

Fascinating. I find that when I start reading, I can't put the book down. Except for the parts where the author goes on very long, multiple-page tangents about scientific information regarding hummingbirds. (I get it, she's knowledgeable about what she does, but I feel it's too much for a narrative-style book.) There is also a curious thing that happens as the book progresses: the author sounds like she's starting to get burnt out. She starts to complain more and more AND MORE about how much hummingbird rehab has taken over her life. Each chapter reads as more of

a stand alone essay, with so much unnecessary recapping (which starts to really get to you about halfway through the book). She actually starts to restate statistics about how many hummingbirds she has rehabbed in her life, how many she rehabs in a given summer, etc. BUT, the statistics get inflated when she restates them! That being said, the stories in this book are amazing. They are so touching, so insightful. I cried countless times, both from feeling her pain and from feeling her joy. I would absolutely recommend this book to anyone who is considering it enough to be reading the reviews.

I read an excerpt from this wonderful gem of a book that Audubon shared on their Facebook page a couple weeks ago (who knew feeding hummingbirds tiny ants would kill them?). I was instantly hooked, not only by the poignant story of a bird rescue, but by the skill the author told it. I'm a picky (sometimes lazy) reader, but this narrative had everything I love in a good read: lots of interesting anecdotes from real-life, fascinating facts and information woven into the storyline and an astute, compassionate and insightful author. I couldn't wait to send a copy to my mother-in-law in New Hampshire who's going through a rough time, and I'm confident it will lift her spirits. I keep thinking of all the friends and family members who I know will love this book, and can't wait to tell them about it. (If you know anyone who maintains a feeder, this would be a perfect gift for any occasion!) If nothing else, this book helps us understand why it's so important to tune into the nature around us, even those of us who live in dense, urban communities. When we start to look and listen closer to these truly amazing creatures, we not only get to enjoy their beauty and antics, but learn about our own connection with the natural world--and why it's so important to find ways to sustain and nurture it. I salute Terry Masear's efforts and feel lucky she also had the writing chops to chronicle them in such an entertaining and meaningful way. For me, the true test of a great book is my excitement about telling others about it. And this is one of those reads.

Rehabilitating wildlife requires an extraordinary combination of knowledge, skill and dedication. One must have deep knowledge of the physiology of your patient but also the ability to intuit the needs of a creature incapable of human speech. You must be a counselor to the damaged psyche not only of your patient, but frequently to the humans who bring him to you - and often to yourself. Because rehabbing is not just a hobby or a career, it's an obsession. And the line between obsession and madness can be very thin. No one knows this better than Terry Masear. Her book chronicles her life as a Hummingbird Rehabber in Los Angeles. Over the course of one insane summer she handles thousands of emergency calls, accepts one hundred and sixty orphaned birds

and learns more about them, her fellow Angelinos and herself than she thought possible. With a deep philosophical perspective Terry relates stories that will touch your heart and make you laugh out loud. You will find inspiration in the story of Gabriel, a parking attendant at a Beverly Hills restaurant who sees a bird collide with a limo and races out into traffic on Rodeo Drive to save it. Traveling halfway across LA by bus he delivers the dinner napkin swaddled patient to Terry. Although seeming expired, her loving care brings the Anna hummingbird back to health. And then there's Stan. "When it comes to saving Hummingbirds, sometimes crazy isn't enough. Some people, like Stan, break rank and elevate the perils of rescue to impossibly dangerous heights. Take two unpredictable orphan Hummingbirds, one inconveniently long branch and one very hostile Rottweiler. Dose liberally with crying twin girls, an angry wife and terminal guilt and you have a formula for slapstick unmatched since Jerry Lewis graced the big screen. Through all the sacrifice, the joys and the despair Terry finds inspiration from these little bundles of feathered dynamite. Hummingbirds are the poster children for primal innocence, both theirs and ours. They symbolize the beauty of pristine nature before human civilization came tromping into paradise with its rough, heavy boots and mucked everything up. And despite our ongoing interference, these fearless spirits continue living alongside us, serving as a reminder of what once was, and what can be."

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