



MELLISUGA HELENAE

BY SHARON BEALS

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary
United States
Bee Hummingbird
Mellisuga helenae

Santiago De Cuba, Cuba, collected in 1906
American Museum of Natural History

Found in the deciduous forests, mangroves, swamps and gardens of Cuba, the male of the species is the smallest of all birds, not much larger than a bee. The female builds a small cup of plant fibers with a soft inner layer of plant wool, decorated with lichens, usually hidden by overhanging leaves. She alone incubates two tiny eggs, and she feeds the chicks insects and nectar. They are considered a threatened species because many of the old forests in which they thrive have been lost to timber harvesting and agriculture.

The nests were photographed in four science collections: The California Academy of Sciences, The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, The Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, the

COUP D'ETAT



Cornell Museum of Vertebrates, and the American Museum of Natural History.

Subject Details:

Bee Hummingbird Nest

Mellisuga helenae

COLLECTOR: O. Tollin

PREPARATION: Nest(s) Egg(s)

SEX: unknown

PLACE: Santiago De Cuba, Bayate, Cuba, North America

COLLECTION DATE: 9 May 1906

COMMON NAME: Bee Hummingbird

TAXONOMY: Animalia Chordata Aves Apodiformes Trochilidae

PUBLISHED NAME: *Mellisuga helenae* USNM NUMB

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