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Recommended Citation

(1970) "Cover - IAS & ISTS Officers, Directors and Chairpersons - IST Journal Information - Table of Contents," *Iowa Science Teachers Journal*: Vol. 8: No. 2, Article 1.

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IOWA SCIENCE TEACHERS' JOURNAL

Volume 8

Number 2

December 1970



A PUBLICATION OF THE IOWA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

in cooperation with

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The IST Journal is published each October, December, February, and April by the Iowa Academy of Science for its members and special subscribers. Its central theme is science teaching at all academic levels.

Subscription Rates: Single copies \$.50; subscription, \$2.00. For subscription, circulation data, additional copies, and changes of address, contact Dr. Robert Hanson, Iowa Academy of Science, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Advertising Rates: Full page, single issue \$50; \$160 per annum. For advertising information contact: Walter DeKock, Science, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls.

Publication: Open to all persons interested in science education; preferential consideration for Academy members. For information as to policy as well as submission of new items of general articles, contact: Robert E. Yager, Science Education, U of I, Iowa City. All manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced on one side of the paper, and submitted in duplicate. They must reach the

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The cover photograph shows two ruby-throated hummingbirds sipping red-colored sugar water from a feeder. Hummingbirds (unlike other birds) derive power from both upbeat and downbeat of their wings, enabling them to hover indefinitely, rise vertically, fly forwards, backwards and sideways. The wingbeat of the ruby-throat is approximately 50 times per second, creating their characteristic zooming hum.

Photographs by H. L. Dean, Department of Botany, The University of Iowa, using a hand-held Rolleiflex equipped with an Autostrobony flash unit. The flash duration here is about 1/40,000 second.