



# The Importance of the Right Underwear

*By Staff Anonymous*

**Y**ou are ready for the field. Hanging off one belt loop is a carabiner with your umbrella. On the belt itself is a pouch with your liter water bottle and another one with the Leatherman Tool the TSA hasn't had to confiscate yet (but will, memory is not perfect) and which you need to open the seemingly adult-proof packaging of the snacks that are in the bulging belt pack that also contains sunscreen, camera ... At this point, your pants are headed south down your Pufflegs, exposing two inches of underwear. But are you wearing the right underwear? Your outer clothing is of the earth tones that your guide prefers so as not to startle any shy birds that aren't scared off by eight overladen-but-prepared human beings in earth tones, but wouldn't a dash of color perhaps attract that Lucifer, Jacobin, or Hairy Hermit you are dying to encounter, if not now, then certainly during a rest stop? Of course it would! And that boring white underwear is surely not doing the group any good when your laundry is out on the line (see the photo above that started all of this silliness). It is time for an Underwear Upgrade—Be a Coquette to get a Coquette!

Avian vision is similar to human vision (although the vision of birds expands into UV), so what you see is pretty much what the

hummingbird is going to get. Hundreds of species of plants have evolved with hummingbirds as their primary pollinators, and almost all of these are at the red end of the spectrum—so if you plan on letting your underwear do the attracting, yellow, orange, and red are the best bets. (On the other hand, if you wish to attract a moth, blues and purples may be the ticket.) Co-evolution between a specific hummingbird and a specific plant species has not been demonstrated (hummingbirds depend on so many resources over the course of a year), so we do not anticipate any discrimination between Hanes and Victoria's Secret, except from your human co-travelers. If you choose to wear red-shifted underwear, Field Guides cannot assume any liability for damages caused by any Flowerpiercers, nor any ensuing attentions by short-billed, non-pollinating nectar thieves like Metaltails following the work of the Flowerpiercers. Because many hummingbirds routinely encounter a plant in which only a few flowers have a juicy load of nectar while most are empty (known as the “bonanza-blank” strategy, it forces hummingbirds on to the next plant, increasing cross-pollination), Field Guides believes that the safe use of Underwear will not harm the hummingbirds. And besides, the hummingbirds at the pictured Undergarments are evolution in action, a few mental dwarfs and wimps that can't hack it at the feeders five meters from the laundry. In Brief, it is a tough world out there.

A Green-crowned Brilliant and Steely-vented Hummingbird are “looking in the drawers” at Reserva Arrierito Antioqueña, Colombia.  
(Photo by guide Richard Webster)