

Black Capped Chickadee

Poecile atricapilla

General Information:

-One of my all time favorites, this common visitor at bird feeders in the northern United States and Canada leaves its nesting grounds in woodland areas during autumn and visits bird feeders all over the Northwoods.

Song:

-A beautiful and crisp *chick-a-dee-dee-dee*.

Behavior:

-Pairs; forms small groups after nesting season. Often joins mixed foraging flocks with other species. This tame little cutie forages among twigs and branches and under the bark of trees, often climbing upside down, looking for insects, and insect eggs. Eats seeds from conifers, bayberries, and other fruit. Holds large seeds between feet on a perch and pounds the seed coat open with its beak. Its diet is predominantly seeds during the winter. Incubating females hisses like a snake when the nest cavity is disturbed.



Breeding:

-Monogamous.

Nesting:

-Incubation of 11-13 days by both sexes. The 1 brood per year is brooded by the female, fed by both sexes, and the altricial young stay in the nest for 14-18 days.

Population:

-Widespread and common in deciduous or mixed deciduous-coniferous woodland, often in riparian growth. Stable and possibly increasing.

Conservation:

-Will nest in birdhouses and have a catholic diet at the birdfeeder.

Shoreline Restoration Issues:

- If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Black-capped Chickadee, you have a lot of options. I suggest the following: Plant the buffer zone with a mixture of conifer trees (i.e. Balsam Fir, Eastern White Pine, Red Pine, and/or White Spruce) along with deciduous trees (i.e. Swamp White Oak, Bur Oak, Red Oak, Silver Maple, Sugar Maple, River Birch, Paper Birch, Yellow Birch, and/or American Elm). I would then plant a couple shrubs around the majority of the trees planted. I would create a circle around the shrubs with Ostrich Fern, Cinnamon Fern, and Interrupted Fern. Then in the remainder of the area I would plant sedges and almost any native wildflower that can grow on your site. Some of the wildflowers that I would suggest the most are Wild Lupine, Cup-Plant, Wild Coreopsis, Ironweed, Blue Vervain, Asters, Wild Bergamot, Blue False Indigo, and Blazingstars.