

# Blue Jay

## **Cyanocitta cristata**

### General Information:

-Once considered primarily a forest dweller, the Blue Jay has adapted to cities, parks, gardens, and forest fragmentation. Some populations remain in locales year-round, while more northern ones migrate south in flocks of 50-100. Common despite clear-cutting in eastern forests, its range is expanding northwest. It is easily recognized by its large size; blue-purple upper-parts, wings, and tail; and jaunty bluish purple crest.

### Song:

-Sharp penetrating *jay, jay, jay* or *thief, thief, thief!* It also has a musical *weedle-weedle*, like the squeaking of a farm pump that needs oil.

### Behavior:

-Usually in pairs or flocks; especially gregarious after the nesting season, this bird will live in oaks and beeches. It is noisy; shrieks alone or in groups at cats, snakes, owls, hawks, and hunters. Omnivorous, but over 70% of its diet is plant matter, especially acorns, pine seeds, corn, fruits, and berries. Animal fare includes insects, carrion, eggs and young of other birds, snails, fish, frogs, small reptiles, and small mammals. Stores acorns in the ground for the winter, a major factor in establishing and distributing oak forests, as many acorns are not found and germinate.



### Breeding:

-Monogamous and a solitary nester.

### Nesting:

-Incubation of 16-18 days by both sexes, but mostly by the female. The 1 brood per year of altricial young is fed by both sexes, brooded by the female, and stay in the nest for 17-21 days.

### Population:

-Common and widespread in woodlands and residential areas with big shade trees.

### Conservation:

-Will come to feeders with suet, sunflower seeds, peanuts, cracked nuts, and corn.

### Shoreline Restoration Issues:

-If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Blue Jay on your shoreland property I would suggest that you concentrate your efforts on planting a diverse mixture of trees. Blue Jays will eat a variety of acorns and pine seeds, therefore I would suggest planting some Eastern White Pine, Red Pine, Jack Pine, Swamp White Oak, Bur Oak, Red Oak, White Oak, and Northern Pin Oak. They will also eat berries, therefore I would suggest creating a nice understory with berry producing shrubs. Since they will also eat small fish, the planting of emergent aquatic vegetation is encouraged.