

Cedar Waxwing

Bombycilla cedrorum

General Information:

-Named for the red wax-like tips on tips secondaries, this year round resident and social bird travels in large flocks in the non-breeding season and may even nest in loose colonies. The purpose of the “red wax” is long-debated, but younger birds do not have it and the older birds that do often choose each other as mates and produce more young than the younger pairs. At times this bird may become so intoxicated on overripe fruit that it cannot fly.

Song:

-Call is a thin high-pitched warbled *zee* or *zeeet*, more protracted just before leaving its perch; may call constantly in flight.

Behavior:

-In pairs or is small to large flocks. Gregarious, especially in migration and winter. This tame and sociable bird feeds close to other bird in trees or on the ground. Eats fruit, flower petals, and insects, and also drinks sap. Several may sit on a wire or branch and pass a piece of fruit back and forth, beak to beak, which is a totally awesome thing to see.



Breeding:

-Monogamous and solitary to colonial. During courtship, male and female will sit together and pass flower petals or fruit back and forth, share food, and rub bills. This act is referred to a “tid-biting”

Nesting:

-Incubation of 12-16 days by both sexes. The 1-2 broods per year are fed by both sexes, brooded by the female, and stay in the nest for 14-18 days.

Population:

-Fairly common to uncommon in woodlands, forest edges, farmlands with fruit trees, towns, and suburbs.

Conservation:

-A neo-tropical migrant. When the Brown-headed Cowbird tries to parasitize its nest, it will either reject or damage that the cowbirds eggs.

Shoreline Restoration Issues:

If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Cedar Waxwing I recommend planting coniferous trees on the lot lines with berry producing trees and shrubs in the middle of your lot. Some suggestions are Mountain Ash, Hackberry, Black Cherry, Flowering Crabapple, Nannyberry, Juneberry, Winterberry, Staghorn Sumac, and Snowberry. For coniferous trees I would suggest Balsam Fir, Tamarack, White Spruce, Eastern Red Cedar, Northern White Cedar, Red Pine, and Eastern White Pine. Fill in the remainder of the area with ferns or wildflowers.