

black-capped chickadee *Poecile atricapillus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Paridae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The black-capped chickadee averages four and three-fourths to five and three-fourths inches in length. It has a black-feathered cap and throat patch. The cheek feathers are white while the feathers on the sides of the belly are buff-colored. There are white edges on the wing feathers.

BEHAVIORS

The black-capped chickadee is a common, permanent resident in the northern one-half of Illinois. It lives in woodlands, shrubs, residential areas, parks and thickets. Nesting occurs from April through June. The nest is placed in a cavity in a tree or fence post (excavated by both sexes), a natural cavity, an abandoned woodpecker hole or in a bird box from four to 10 feet above the ground. The nest is composed of wool, hair, fur, moss, feathers and plant fibers and is constructed by the female over three to four days. The female lays six to eight white eggs with brown markings which she alone incubates for the 12- to 13-day incubation period. The male brings food to the female while she is at the nest. Black-capped chickadees feed with other bird species in groups. The call is "chick-a-dee-dee," and it also whistles "fee-bee." This bird eats insects, seeds, acorns and berries.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie Habitats

none

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