

## The Charming, Chattering **Chickadee**

**Chickadees are charming, bold little birds that are often among the earliest visitors to bird feeders.** Found throughout much of the continental U.S., you'll see them living in forests, in parks and in residential neighborhoods as long as they have plenty of trees and shrubs to visit. These highly social birds don't migrate in the winter, instead remaining year-round in their habitat.

Best known for a scolding "chickadee-dee-dee-dee" call and a high-whistled "fee bee" song, communication within the flock is quite complex. What is also interesting is that other bird species respond to chickadees, including nuthatches, woodpeckers, kinglets, creepers, warblers and vireos.

**Seven subspecies of chickadees can be found in North America.** These

include the **Carolina, Black-capped, Boreal, Mountain, Chestnut-backed, Mexican and Gray-headed Chickadee.** All seven species share many characteristics like round bodies and short necks and beaks – and they're almost all universally characterized as cute. Let's take a closer look at four of these tiny wonders.

**Black-capped Chickadees** are gray birds with black caps and black throats. They are often confused with their near twin, the **Carolina Chickadee**, but this bird is found primarily in the Southeast quadrant of the United States, and the Black-capped

Chickadee's territory expands across the Northern portion of the country.

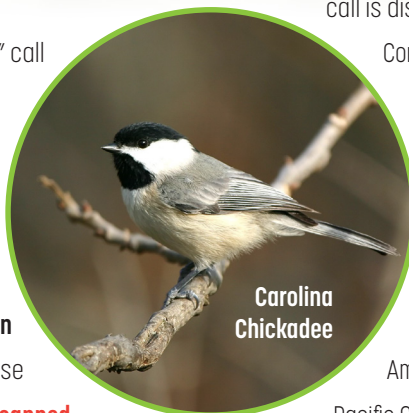
You can also tell the difference between the two as the Carolina Chickadee's "chicka-dee-dee" call is faster and higher pitched than that of the Black-capped whose buzzy "chicka-dee-dee-dee" call is distinctive and easy to pick out.

Commonly from British Columbia and south through the Rocky Mountains and the Cascade and Sierra Mountains, another chickadee species is the **Mountain Chickadee**, who sports a black cap with a white eyebrow. This tiny bird has a large head, plump body with a dull white breast and belly, gray wings, and pale gray flanks.

Among the trees of the old-growth forests lining the Pacific Coast lives a unique species of chickadee you won't find anyplace else: the **Chestnut-backed Chickadee**. This bird is the smallest and most colorful chickadee, sporting caps of deep brown and rust-colored flanks and backs. Even though they tend to follow a social hierarchy at the feeder, a chickadee won't linger long. What they will do is grab one seed and fly away with it. Perhaps setting it on a branch to peck an opening into the husk or hiding it in the bark of a tree, as chickadees are capable of recalling thousands of hiding spots.



A Black-capped Chickadee shows he isn't afraid to sit in a hand for a bite to eat.



Carolina Chickadee



Chestnut-backed Chickadee



Mountain Chickadee



### What to Feed Chickadees

Give the chickadees in your neighborhood a token seed to carry by filling your feeder with **Lyric Chickadee Premium Sunflower & Nut Mix**. And, if you have the patience, place the seed in your hand, sit quietly, and you may be lucky enough to have one land on your hand for a bite to eat!