

# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

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Edition 22.3



Carolina Chickadee by Dave Woehr



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Chickadee Fledgling and Parent by cotinis (CC BY-NC 2.0)

## **Carolina Chickadee** (*Poecile carolinensis*)

By Dave Woehr, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist

The Carolina Chickadee is a common year-round resident of southern Ohio. Ohio's other chickadee, the Black-capped Chickadee, resides in northern Ohio and into Canada. Both species are so much alike in size, color, behavior, and voice that even expert birders sometimes have difficulty knowing which one they are looking at. The Cincinnati Audubon Society doesn't even bother to mention the Black-capped Chickadee among the birds they list for our area, so if you see a chickadee south of I-70, it's almost certainly a Carolina Chickadee.

The chickadee is an entertaining little fellow to observe. It's a bit of a chatterbox as it whistles and buzzes to fellow chickadees, titmice, juncos, and cardinals, while gleaning the landscape for edible seeds it finds along woodland edges, flower gardens, and weedy fencerows. It can frequently be found hanging upside down on the stalk of a goldenrod that has gone to seed. Sunflower seed is a hands-down favorite of this little bird, so it can easily be attracted to seed feeders especially in the fall and winter months. It has been known to be coaxed to an outstretched human palm loaded with sunflower seeds. They also will eat suet.

Chickadees are cavity nesters. They readily utilize abandoned woodpecker cavities and nest boxes. They are rather secretive about their nest locations staying out of sight as much as possible and being a bit less vocal than at other times while incubating their 6 - 8 eggs and bringing in small insects to feed their young. The chickadees' outgoing personality makes it a welcome yard bird.

To learn more about this species, visit [page 27 of Ohio Division of Wildlife's Common Birds of Ohio Field Guide](#).

