

This resource is based on the following source:

Kale, H. W., II, B. Pranty, B. M. Stith, and C. W. Biggs. 1992. The atlas of the breeding birds of Florida. Final Report. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Florida.

This resource can be cited as:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. 2003, January 6. Florida's breeding bird atlas: A collaborative study of Florida's birdlife. <http://www.myfwc.com/bba/> (Date accessed mm/dd/yyyy).

Carolina Chickadee *Parus carolinensis*

The Carolina Chickadee's distinctive field marks and constant visits to bird feeders make it familiar to people who know few other species. Often moving around in small flocks with other birds, the Carolina Chickadee makes its presence known with its namesake call.

The Carolina Chickadee is a resident south of a line drawn from southern Kansas east to central New Jersey. It is fairly common in northern Florida.

Habitat. The Carolina Chickadee is found in open pine woods, oak hammocks, and along the edges of cypress swamps. It also occurs in wooded suburban areas. Howell (1932) mentions a pair of chickadees that was found in a palmetto thicket on the Kissimmee Prairie, but this is not typical habitat.

The diet of the Carolina Chickadee consists mostly of moths, caterpillars, insects, and spiders. Seeds and other vegetable matter are also eaten.

The Carolina Chickadee nests in cavities which it excavates itself, or it may use natural cavities, abandoned woodpecker holes, or artificial structures. It readily nests in bird houses. The bottom of the cavity is lined with fur, feathers, and moss and other plant materials. Five to 8 white, finely spotted eggs are laid, although 6 eggs comprise a typical clutch. The eggs hatch in 12 to 13 days, and the young fledge at about 17 days of age. Carolina Chickadees are normally single brooded (Dixon 1963); late clutches probably denote renesting after the loss of a clutch or brood.

Seasonal Occurrence. Egg-laying occurs in March and April.

Status. The Carolina Chickadee is a nonmigratory species found in Florida, primarily north of an imaginary line drawn from Tampa Bay to Cape Canaveral. During Atlas fieldwork, a few birds were found south of this line, but none of these records confirmed breeding. Neither Howell (1932) nor Sprunt (1954) list any records of Carolina Chickadees south of Lake Okeechobee, and this distribution has not changed. The bird responds readily to recordings of Eastern Screech-Owl calls and is easily located where it occurs.

R. David Goodwin

Sponsored by Dorothy H. Jenkins



Illustration © 1995 Diane Pierce, All Rights Reserved.

Carolina Chickadee

