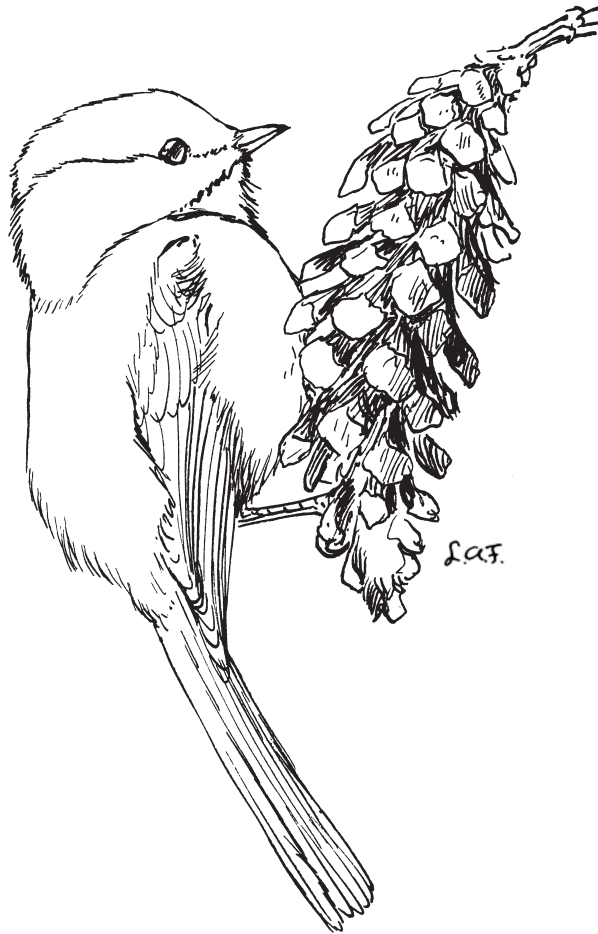


## Black-capped Chickadee



**B**lack-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*) are active even on the harshest winters days. This permanent resident is easiest seen at the Treman Bird Feeding Garden where it congregates in winter nonbreeding flocks. To survive the cold winter nights, these cavity-nesters lower their body temperatures and enter regulated hypothermia, saving significant amounts of energy. They also cache thousands of seeds for future use.

### Identification Tips

- Small songbird (5–6 inches from bill to tail) with short seed-crushing bill.
- Solid black cap and bib, and white cheeks.
- Unstreaked, pale gray upperparts and grayish underparts.
- Buffy flanks and white edges on wings. Bill black; legs and toes bluish gray, iris dark brown.
- Sexes similar.
- Adults have at least 15 different kinds of vocalizations including a loud and a soft *fee-bee*, *chick-a-dee-dee*, and a high zee. Males give a loud territorial *fee-bee* call early in the spring.

### Cool Facts

- The chickadee's simple-sounding calls are really extremely complex and language-like, conveying information about their status and that of other flocks, and predators.
- Winter flocks contain regular members and "winter floaters"—birds who rotate between three to five flocks. If a high-ranked bird disappears from the flock, a floater may replace it, assuming its rank and pairing with its mate.
- Chickadees usually nest in old woodpecker holes or excavate their own holes in snags and rotten branches. They will use nest boxes that are partially filled with sawdust if natural cavities are scarce.