

BOGDIVERSITY THURSDAY



—*from Head Naturalist Clinton*

Boreal Chickadee

POST 13—December 23, 2021

Bogs hold a lot of wonderful species, from plants to bugs to birds and beyond. For our 13th post in our Biodiversity Thursday series, we are featuring one of the most wonderful bog denizens: Boreal Chickadee!

Boreal Chickadees are both incredibly widespread through the boreal forest, but also an incredibly shy species. This dusky chickadee just barely dips in to the lower 48 (into northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York) and most of its range is throughout the boreal forests of Canada and Alaska. This species doesn't typically stray from its ideal habitat, but sometimes does make irruptive type flights (especially in the eastern US).

In our area, Boreal Chickadees are a resident species and prefer intact, old, and dense Black Spruce forests. Often very cryptic, these chickadees are not quite as bold as Black-capped Chickadees and prefer to stay in the forest. The raspy calls of

Boreal Chickadee are distinct and can often be heard deep in the woods, though they are not as vocal as Black-capped Chickadees.

This sought after species in the Sax-Zim Bog is a special sight! Boreal Chickadees come in to bird feeders in the Bog, but only to suet and can be seen at a few different feeders in the Bog. Boreal Chickadees are also a species that is in decline in the southern parts of its range. Due to its habitat needs, especially for winter survival, this is a species that doesn't fare well with habitat disturbance like logging of high quality black spruce habitat.

Recently, there has been some exciting research done on Boreal Chickadees in the Sax-Zim Bog and Red Lake Peatlands, which is in the final years of field work. We will be sure to share this information when it is published.

More information in the photos below!
(Photos below by Sparky Stensaas)



Boreal Chickadees are much different in plumage and voice from Black-capped Chickadees. They have soft brown and rufous tones and olive backs. Their raspy voices are subtle coming from the dense spruce habitats they prefer.



Here is a great comparison of the two chickadees in our area! There isn't a strong difference in size, though Boreal Chickadees are slightly larger and are shorter tailed.



Boreal Chickadees are around all season, but are quite difficult to find as they spend a lot of time deep in the bogs and forests, tending chicks in their cavity nests.