

you'll never see two chickadees at a feeder at the same time. They zoom in and out one at a time, and if you blink, it's likely you'll miss them.

Not so with the fledglings. They are lucky they don't plow into the feeder. They remind me of kids on a slip-and-slide.

Once they discover how to enter the feeder, the youngsters aren't sure which sunflower seed to take or exactly what they are supposed to do with it. It's fun to watch as they learn to hold a seed between their feet and crack it open.

The young chickadees that visit my feeder don bright, crisp feathers and an occasional fluff of lingering down. They shine next to their ragged-looking parents, who have spent months squeezing in and out of nest holes. I don't think I

could ever have too many chickadees in my backyard.

Some of the other birds that bring their young to my feeders include: House Sparrow (no surprise there), House Finch, American Robin, Mourning Dove, Blue Jay, Red-winged Blackbird and Common Grackle.

*Juvenile Black-capped Chickadees
'remind me of kids
on a slip-and-slide.'*

During the summer, I use an inexpensive seed mix at platform feeders and on the ground. I maintain my sunflower and niger feeders, too, but the most valuable commodity I provide is water -and lots of it.

I would like to compile a list of all species that visit feeders with their young. I'd also like information on brood size and food preference. I am looking forward to hearing from you about your experiences watching birds at the feeder. ■

Editor's Note:

Sue Friscia, Field Trip Chairman of the Illinois Ornithological Society, serves free food to birds at 10 feeder stations in her backyard. Since she hung her first feeder on a clothesline five years ago, Sue has counted 48 species of birds in her neighborhood and has seen 200 individuals feeding at one time.

Sue welcomes your notes on feeder watching. You can write her at: 3417 West 123rd Street, Alsip, IL 60658.

AVIAN ANNALS

by Eric Walters

These birding experiences were recorded in regional and national publications. They reflect what may have been happening years ago during the breeding season in Illinois.

75 years ago:

One birder found nests from 108 different species within a ten-mile radius of his home in Champaign County.

60 years ago:

A Bald Eagle attacked a heronry in Quincy in late June. With the help of some nearby Red-winged Blackbirds and Tree Swallows, the parent Great Blue Herons convinced the eagle to leave without a meal.

35 years ago:

The first organized breeding-bird survey for Illinois was completed. A record number of Mourning Dove nests were found in September.

30 years ago:

Six Wilson's Phalarope nests were discovered at Lake Calumet.

20 years ago:

The first Mississippi Kite nest for the state was found at Kaskaskia State Park. The bird built the nest 15 feet above a picnic table.

10 years ago:

Illinois' first reported House Finch nest was discovered in Robinson. ■