

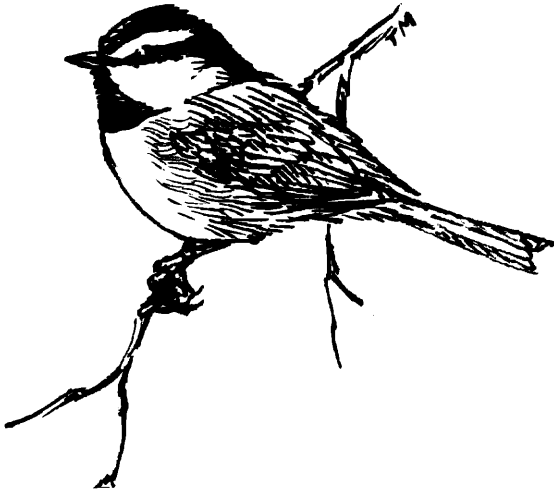
MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE SURVIVES FOR A DECADE

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Although the mean longevity of small passerines is not impressive (Farner, pages 397-449 in A. Wolfson, ed., *Recent studies in avian biology*, Univ. Illinois Press, Urbana, 1955), interest in exceptional cases persists (e.g., Kennard, *Bird-Banding* 46:55-73, 1975). Noteworthy in this respect is a Mountain Chickadee (*Parus gambeli*) banded 106-74819 by F. N. Folks at the Beaver Mountain Ski Area, 7400 feet elevation, in Cache County, Utah, on 13 May 1965. This individual was judged to be a male from his breeding behavior in 1965. I recaptured him last on 11 December 1969, and identified him by his distinctive color-band combination as he was feeding nestlings on 6 July 1974. I was unable to locate this bird on several visits in the subsequent autumn and winter. If we assume a hatching date of 20 June 1964, this individual had begun his eleventh year. His territory from 1967 onward was situated some 600 m from the ski resort parking lot. Thus, incidental feeding on scraps of food discarded by humans could not have been a factor in his survival in winter.

The longevity of this male was approached by that of two others among the 31 resident males banded in the area from 1961 through 1968. Their minimum ages at disappearance were 7 years, 11 months and 7 years, 9 months. The minimum age of the oldest resident female (n=25) was 5 years, 7 months.

Considering the small sample size, these records from an environment with severe winters compare favorably with the maximums reported by Kennard (op. cit.) for the Black-capped Chickadee, *P. atricapillus* (12 years, 5 months) and the Carolina Chickadee, *P. carolinensis* (10 years, 11 months).



Sketch by Tim Manolis