

## **White-breasted Nuthatch** (*Sitta carolinensis*)

The nasal call of the White-breasted Nuthatch is commonly heard throughout the year, and especially, in winter, around bird feeders offering black oil seed and suet. In summer, they prefer insects and spiders.

During the fall and winter months, these birds carry seeds to nearby trees and dutifully cache them in the bark and other crevices. When hungry, they jam a seed into the bark and then bash, or ***hatch***, it to open the shell. Most often they will be observed descending a tree trunk in an upside down position.

Nuthatches use natural cavities or old woodpecker holes for their nests. The female alone prepares the nest, and many have been observed sweeping the nest area with the body of a crushed insect. Scientists believe that chemicals produced by the insect may aid in repelling predators. Upon laying 5-9 eggs, the female is solely responsible for incubation. At this time, she is fed by her mate. Young are fed by both parents.

White-breasted Nuthatches generally do not migrate and remain in their nesting territory year round. Pairs are thought to mate for life making the nuthatch, for some believers, a symbol of a strong pair bond.