

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Regulus calendula

Atiny bird seemingly overflowing with energy, the Ruby-crowned Kinglet forages almost frantically through lower branches of shrubs and trees. Its habit of constantly flicking its wings is a key identification clue. Smaller than a warbler or chickadee, this plain green-gray bird has a white eyering and a white bar on the wing. Alas, the male's brilliant ruby crown patch usually stays hidden—your best chance to see it is to find an excited male singing in spring or summer.

Keys to Identification

Size and Shape

Kinglets are tiny songbirds with relatively large heads, almost no neck, and thin tails. They have very small, thin, straight bills.

Color Pattern

Ruby-crowned Kinglets are olive-green birds with a prominent white eyering and white wingbar. This wingbar contrasts with an adjacent blackish bar in the wing. The “ruby crown” of the male is only occasionally visible.

Behavior

Ruby-crowned Kinglets breed in tall, dense conifer forests such as spruce, fir, and tamarack. In winter and during migration, also look for them in shrubby habitats, deciduous forests, parks, and suburbs. may follow the woodpecker around during the day, feeding at the wells the sapsucker keeps flowing.

Cool Facts

- The Ruby-crowned Kinglet is a tiny bird that lays a very large clutch of eggs—there can be up to 12 in a single nest. Although the eggs themselves weigh only about a fiftieth of an ounce, an entire clutch can weigh as much as the female herself.
- Metabolic studies on Ruby-crowned Kinglets suggest that these tiny birds use only about 10 calories (technically, kilocalories) per day.

Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 3.5 - 4.3 inches
- Wingspan - 6.3 - 7.1 inches
- Weight - 0.2 - 0.4 ounces

