

Lophophanes cristatus Linnaeus, 1758

Crested Tit
Family: Paridae

Museo Virtuale
Museo regionale di Scienze Naturali della Valle d'Aosta

Musée Virtuel
Musée Régional des Sciences Naturelles de la Vallée d'Aoste



(Photo Markmedcalf, Fotolia)

This small passeriforme is easy to distinguish by the shape and colour of its head, which is white decorated with black, with a pronounced triangular ridge of dark grey feathers held high to form a crest.

The bird's livery is dark brown on its back, wings and tail with a grey-white underbelly. The beak is narrow, short and pointed; the throat has a white collar with a black border - more noticeable under the

beak - which also runs across the eyes, almost forming an ellipse.

It's preferred habitat are **conifer forests**, especially spruce woods or spruce mixed with larches, where it often lives alongside the Coal Tit.

It feeds mainly on insects and spiders found among the branches of the trees, which it navigates with authentic acts of acrobacy. Depending on the season, its diet may also include pine nuts, which they extract directly from the pine cones, larvae, worms, seeds and berries.

The Crested Tit **stores food for the winter**, hiding it in holes in the trees or among lichens.

Nests are built inside holes in dead trees and lined with moss, lichens, fur and cobwebs.

Due to its solitary nature and its habit of moving under the cover of the trees, it is not easy to spot. It is, however, common to hear its call.