

# Brown Creeper

*Certhia americana*

Class: Aves  
Order: Passeriformes

**Review Status:** Peer-reviewed

**Version Date:** 30 November 2018

## Conservation Status

NatureServe:

Agency:

G Rank: G5

ADF&G: Species of Greatest Conservation Need

IUCN: Least Concern

Audubon AK:

S Rank: S4

USFWS:

BLM:

Final Rank		
Conservation category: <b>V. Orange</b>		
unknown status and either high biological vulnerability or high action need		
<u>Category</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Score</u>
Status	-20 to 20	0
Biological	-50 to 50	-26
Action	-40 to 40	8
<b>Higher numerical scores denote greater concern</b>		

**Status** - variables measure the trend in a taxon's population status or distribution. Higher status scores denote taxa with known declining trends. Status scores range from -20 (increasing) to 20 (decreasing).

**Score**

*Population Trend in Alaska (-10 to 10)*

0

Unknown. This species is infrequently detected during surveys and data are inadequate for estimating statewide or short-term trends. Limited data suggest a stable long-term (1993-2015) trend in southeast and southcoastal Alaska (Northern Pacific Rainforest BCR; Handel and Sauer 2017). No data are available for other parts of the state.

*Distribution Trend in Alaska (-10 to 10)*

0

Unknown.

Status Total: 0

**Biological** - variables measure aspects of a taxon's distribution, abundance and life history. Higher biological scores suggest greater vulnerability to extirpation. Biological scores range from -50 (least vulnerable) to 50 (most vulnerable).

**Score**

*Population Size in Alaska (-10 to 10)*

-10

Uncertain, but >25,000. PIF (2019) estimates a population size in Alaska of 580,000 birds, with high uncertainty (95% CI: 220,000 to 1.1 million).

*Range Size in Alaska (-10 to 10)*

-8

Range is not fully understood. Occurs in southwestern Alaska at least as far north as Dillingham (Gibson 1970; Saracco et al. 2007), in interior Alaska north to Fairbanks (Van Velzen 1963; Guers 2013), and from southcentral Alaska (e.g. Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula) south to southeast Alaska

(Poulin et al. 2013). Estimated range size is ~350,000 sq. km.

*Population Concentration in Alaska (-10 to 10)* -10

Does not concentrate.

*Reproductive Potential in Alaska*

Age of First Reproduction (-5 to 5) -5

Unknown, but probably breeds in first year (Poulin et al. 2013).

Number of Young (-5 to 5) 1

Unknown for Alaska, but elsewhere in North America its annual clutch size averages 5-6 eggs (Poulin et al. 2013).

*Ecological Specialization in Alaska*

Dietary (-5 to 5) 1

Consumes a variety of invertebrates including spiders, flies, beetles, insect larvae, ants, and lepidopterans (reviewed in Poulin et al. 2013). These prey items are principally obtained by gleaning invertebrates from rough tree bark (Poulin et al. 2013). Because this habit of feeding is specialized and restricts the type of prey available, we rank this question as B- Moderately adaptable.

Habitat (-5 to 5) 5

In Alaska, inhabits closed-canopy, old-growth coniferous and mixedwood forests (Isleib and Kessel 1973; Spindler and Kessel 1980; Dellasala et al. 1996; Andres et al. 2004; Van Hemert et al. 2006). Brown creepers nest in natural crevices behind loose or peeling bark, usually in dead or dying trees (Andres et al. 2004; Poulin et al. 2013). The availability of suitable foraging and nesting habitat is thought to be a limiting factor for populations in Alaska (USFS 2008).

Biological Total: -26

**Action** - variables measure current state of knowledge or extent of conservation efforts directed toward a given taxon. Higher action scores denote greater information needs due of lack of knowledge or conservation action. Action scores range from -40 (lower needs) to 40 (greater needs).

**Score**

*Management Plans and Regulations in Alaska (-10 to 10)* 2

Protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA 1918).

*Knowledge of Distribution and Habitat in Alaska (-10 to 10)* 2

Habitat associations are well-known in southeast Alaska (Kessler and Kogut 1985; Suring 1993; Andres et al. 2004). Habitat in Prince William Sound (Isleib and Kessel 1973), on the Kenai Peninsula (Van Hemert et al. 2006), and in interior Alaska (Spindler and Kessel 1980) are consistent with habitat in southeast. Limited knowledge of distribution in central Alaska e.g. between Dillingham (Saracco et al. 2007) and Fairbanks (Gibson 1970; Guers 2013), or between Fairbanks/Tetlin Junction (Spindler and Kessel 1980) and Cook Inlet.

*Knowledge of Population Trends in Alaska (-10 to 10)* 2

Monitored locally through multi-year bird surveys in several locations such as Kodiak Island (Corcoran et al. 2014), Middleton Island (DeCicco et al. 2015), and Fairbanks (Guers 2013), and through the Breeding Bird Survey (Handel and Sauer 2017). However, detections for this species are low and data are inadequate for estimating statewide and short-term trends.

*Knowledge of Factors Limiting Populations in Alaska (-10 to 10)* 2

The availability of suitable foraging and nesting habitat is thought to be a limiting factor for

populations in Alaska (USFS 2008). Research in Alaska and elsewhere in its range suggests that this species is sensitive to habitat disturbance. Specifically, studies have found lower abundances (Nappi et al. 2010; Vanderwel et al. 2011; Thompson et al. 2013) and lower nest densities (Poulin et al. 2010; D'Astous and Villard 2012; Geleynse et al. 2016) in harvested or heavily burned forest stands. It is unclear whether these lower densities are the result of limited food (Poulin et al. 2010; D'Astous and Villard 2012) or limited nest sites (Geleynse et al. 2016). In addition, lower reproductive success has been documented for nests near forest edges and for nests in small forest patches, perhaps because of increased predation (Poulin and Villard 2011). Additional research is needed on the ecology and demographic rates of populations in Alaska, for which few data are available.

Action Total: 8

**Supplemental Information** - variables do not receive numerical scores. Instead, they are used to sort taxa to answer specific biological or management questions.

<b>Harvest:</b>	None or Prohibited
<b>Seasonal Occurrence:</b>	Year-round
<b>Taxonomic Significance:</b>	Monotypic species
<b>% Global Range in Alaska:</b>	<10%
<b>% Global Population in Alaska:</b>	<25%
<b>Peripheral:</b>	No

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Alaska Center for Conservation Science  
Alaska Natural Heritage Program  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, AK