Brown Creeper

*Certhia americana*

**Conservation Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NatureServe:</th>
<th>Agency:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G Rank: G5</td>
<td>BLM:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Rank: S4</td>
<td>USFWS:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Rank**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>-20 to 20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>-50 to 50</td>
<td>-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>-40 to 40</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Higher numerical scores denote greater concern.

**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).

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

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 (-10 to 10)**

Unknown.

**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).

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

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 (-10 to 10)**

Does not concentrate.

**Reproductive Potential**

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

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

**Ecological Specialization**

**Dietary (-5 to 5)**

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)**

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).

**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 to lack of knowledge or conservation action. Action scores range from -40 (lower needs) to 40 (greater needs).**

| Management Plans and Regulations (-10 to 10) | 2 |
| Knowledge of Distribution and Habitat (-10 to 10) | 2 |
| Knowledge of Population Trends (-10 to 10) | 2 |
| Knowledge of Factors Limiting Populations (-10 to 10) | 2 |

**Knowledge of Distribution and Habitat**

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**

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**

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 forests 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harvest:</th>
<th>None or Prohibited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal Occurrence:</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxonomic Significance:</td>
<td>Monotypic species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Global Range in Alaska:</td>
<td>&lt;10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Global Population in Alaska:</td>
<td>&lt;25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripheral:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Guers, S. 2013. Songbird migration monitoring at Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. Federal Aid Final Performance Report, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau, AK, USA.


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