

Brown Creeper

Certhia americana

Brown Creepers are tiny woodland birds with an affinity for the biggest trees they can find. Look for these little, long-tailed scraps of brown and white spiraling up stout trunks and main branches, sometimes passing downward-facing nuthatches along the way. They probe into crevices and pick at loose bark with their slender, down-curved bills, and build their hammock-shaped nests behind peeling flakes of bark. Their piercing calls can make it much easier to find this hard-to-see but common species.

Keys to Identification

Size and Shape

Brown Creepers are tiny yet lanky songbirds. They have long, spine-tipped tails, slim bodies, and slender, decurved bills.

Color Pattern

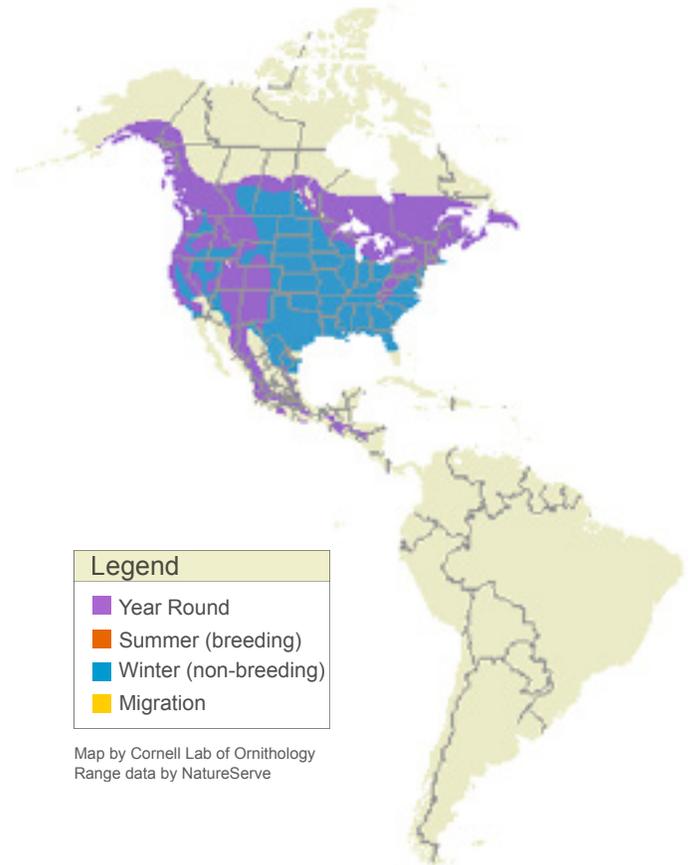
Streaked brown and buff above, with their white underparts usually hidden against a tree trunk, Brown Creepers blend easily into bark. Their brownish heads show a broad, buffy stripe over the eye (supercilium).

Behavior

Brown Creepers search for small insects and spiders by hitching upward in a spiral around tree trunks and limbs. They move with short, jerky motions using their stiff tails for support. To move to a new tree, they fly weakly to its base and resume climbing up. Brown Creepers sing a high, warbling song; they also give a high, wavering call note that sounds similar to that of a Golden-crowned Kinglet.

Habitat

Brown Creepers breed primarily in mature evergreen or mixed evergreen-deciduous forests. You can find them at many elevations, even as high as 11,000 feet at treeline in the West. In the winter season, the species moves into a broader variety of forests and becomes much easier to find in deciduous woodlands.



Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 4.7 - 5.5 inches
- Wingspan - 6.7 - 7.9 inches
- Weight - 0.2 - 0.4 ounces