



# Brown Creeper

*(Certhia americana)*

**STATUS**

SARA **NO STATUS**  
 Alberta **SENSITIVE**

British Columbia **YELLOW**  
 Saskatchewan **NO STATUS**

**PRIMARY HABITAT**

Old Coniferous/Mixedwood

**TERRITORY SIZE**

0.01–0.025 ha

**NEST TYPE**

Behind loose bark

**NEST REUSE**

May use same nest tree

**STAND LEVEL**

Patches (>4.5 ha) with large-diameter paper birch, spruce, or Douglas fir trees/snags.

**LANDSCAPE LEVEL**

Old unharvested conifer forest >10 ha up to >54 ha.

This tiny songbird is well-camouflaged as it creeps up coniferous trees, probing for insects under the bark scales. Listen for their gentle song: “see! ... see all-the-big-trees!”

**BREEDING WINDOW**



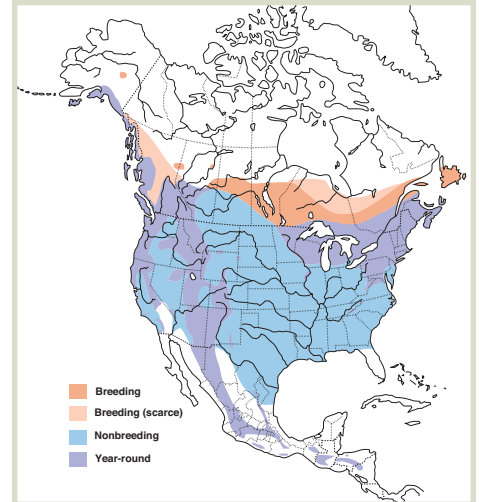
**HABITAT ECOLOGY**

- Brown Creepers occupy a broad range of forests and are most common in mature to old coniferous forests and mixedwoods containing poplar or birch. They are rare in unproductive black spruce and jack pine stands<sup>1</sup>.
- Their preferred habitat is older-than-rotation age stands (e.g., >80 years)<sup>2</sup>, and they are also found in recently burned forests<sup>3</sup>. In interior BC, they are associated with very large (>100 cm dbh, >80 year-old) Douglas fir<sup>1</sup>.
- Brown Creepers build a cup nest of twigs, bark, and other material between sloughing bark and the bole of a tree. Dead and dying trees with papery bark are therefore important habitat features<sup>2</sup>. They will also nest in crevices created by frost cracks and fire scars<sup>4</sup>.

**RESPONSE TO FOREST MANAGEMENT**

- Brown Creepers are highly sensitive to harvesting, including partial retention up to 80%<sup>1,5</sup>, moderate to heavy thinning<sup>6</sup>, and salvage logging of burned stands with <20% snag retention<sup>2</sup>.
- Despite being highly sensitive to harvesting, this species was observed within stands with residual patches containing large-diameter trees—albeit at 10–15% of their abundance in the unharvested forest<sup>7</sup>.
- They are sensitive to fragmentation: in a study in eastern Canada, Brown Creepers were reluctant to cross gaps >25 m wide in balsam fir stands<sup>8</sup>.

**RANGE MAP**



**STAND-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Large retention patches are recommended, anchored around large-diameter trees/snags with sloughing bark (especially birch and Douglas fir) in coniferous and mixedwood stands<sup>2</sup>.
- Patches >4.5 ha or as large as possible are recommended, although smaller patches nevertheless contribute to stand-level complexity and longer-term habitat quality<sup>9</sup>.