

brown creeper

Certhia americana

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Certhiidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The brown creeper averages about five inches in length. The feathers on its upper side are brown, while the feathers on its lower side are white. Its bill is thin and slightly curved downward. It has stiff tail feathers that help to brace the bird against a tree trunk when it is climbing.

BEHAVIORS

The brown creeper is a common migrant and winter resident statewide in Illinois. It is a rare summer resident statewide. Spring migrants begin arriving in April. This bird nests and lives in cypress swamps and floodplain forests. Its nest is built behind loose bark on a tree at a height of about five to 15 feet above the ground. The nest is made of twigs, leaves and bark and lined with shredded bark, grasses, feathers and mosses. Nest-building takes about one month and is mainly accomplished by the female. Four to eight white eggs with red-brown spots are deposited in the nest by the female. Both the male and female take turns incubating the eggs over the 14- to 15-day incubation period. Fall migration begins in September. The brown creeper climbs a tree trunk in a spiral manner, starting at the bottom. It uses its bill to pull insects and spiders out of bark as it climbs. Brown creepers overwintering in Illinois tend to search for food in groups with other bird species. Its call is “see, ” and its song is “see-ti-wee-tu-wee ” or “see-see-see-sisi-see.”



ILLINOIS RANGE



Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none