



Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus*

What do they look like? Small dark brown bird 15 - 18 cm long. Slightly curved beak, pale 'eyebrow' and pale streaks on the belly. Hops up and down rough tree trunks and branches and can hold onto the underside of branches. Some people mistakenly refer to Brown Treecreepers as 'woodpeckers'. Call is distinctive - a series of loud, strong, rapid 'pip pip pips'. The call carries a long way. Sometimes the pips rapidly slow down, as though the bird has quickly run out of batteries!

Where do they live? Open woodland with mixed ground layer, open understorey and fallen timber. Woodlands dominated by box and ironbark and other rough barked trees are preferred. Widespread in eastern Australia but has declined alarmingly in southern parts and on Cape York.

What do they need to live, eat and breed? Mostly hunts insects and spiders gleaned from cracks in rough bark – the narrow, curved beak is well suited to this task. Sometimes feeds on the ground as well. Nests in dead, hollow limbs, fallen timber with branches that project off the ground or old wooden fence posts.

When might I see (or hear) them? Active by day, sometimes associates with other groups of birds. The strident call may be uttered at any time during the day.

What management actions affect this species? Maintaining woodland structural diversity, a mixed ground layer and careful fire management benefits Brown Treecreepers. Extensive tree clearing, overgrazing and wildfires that deplete fallen timber are major threats, and these practices have led to serious declines and local extinctions in the south. Wildfires on Cape York may be responsible for declines there. Property plans which retain ironbark and box woodlands may benefit this species.

How do they benefit the land I manage? As part of a large suite of insectivorous (insect eating) birds, Brown Treecreepers help keep woodlands healthy by keeping in check insect populations and preventing excessive insect attack on trees, shrubs and grasses.

