

## SUNBATHING IN THE BROWN CREEPER

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On 22 August 1988 at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Santa Cruz County, California, I observed a Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) move into a sunlit portion of a trunk of a Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) and subsequently go through a sunbathing sequence. During this period the creeper spread its wings and tail, maximizing exposure to the bright sunbeam (Figure 1). Previously the bird had been foraging on well-shaded areas of the trees; when sunbathing it frequently kept its eyes closed as if it had difficulty adapting to the intensity of the direct sunlight. After a few minutes of sunbathing it did some preening, and then resumed foraging on trunks nearby.

Sunbathing of this species has not been previously reported according to a worldwide review (Kennedy 1969). A summary of this type of maintenance behavior (Mueller 1972) mentions temperature regulation (i.e., heat conservation) as one of its important functions. It is well known that the Brown Creeper exhibits other ther-

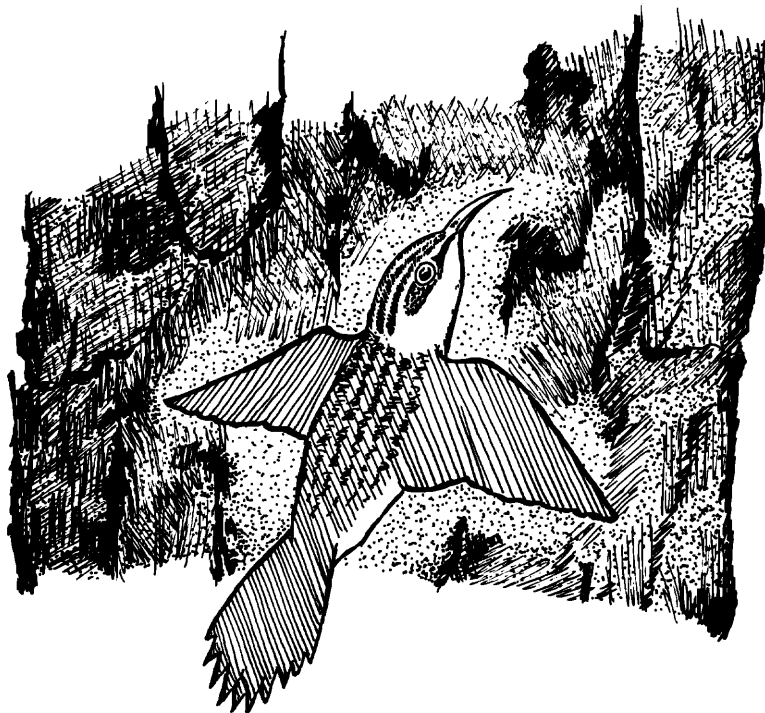


Figure 1. Sunbathing posture of the Brown Creeper on a small sunlit patch of bark of a Redwood.

Sketch by Charles Leck

## NOTES

moregulatory behaviors such as tight communal roosting (Ehrlich et. al. 1988) and temperature-selective foraging (Webber 1986). In the cool shadows of the coastal redwoods it is quite possible that the behavior both helps warm the creeper and aids in ectoparasite removal as suggested by the subsequent preening (Terres 1980).

### LITERATURE CITED

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