

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)



General info

There are 8 different species of TreeCreeper in the world however only the Euroasian Treecreeper or common treecreeper resides here at TreeZone. The Eurasian Treecreeper is non-migratory in the milder west and south of its breeding range, but some northern birds move south in winter, some of the Tree creepers seen here at TreeZone may end up as far south as China or South Korea. Or they may have travelled a short distance over from Orkney which is there most northerly habitat. The Eurasian Treecreeper has also occurred as a vagrant to the Channel Islands (where the Short-toed is the resident species)

Appearance/Identification

At first glance, treecreepers look very much like mice as they hop up tree trunks, which give them the fitting country name: tree mouse. That is, of course, if you can spot one in the first place, given that their plumage makes for perfect camouflage against the rough bark of an Pine tree.

Box of Knowledge

The treecreeper can climb at 10cm per second and in a day they may climb around 8200ft. That's almost three Munros!

Vital statistics:

- Length: 12.5 cm
- Wing Span: 17-21 cm
- Typical lifespan is 2 years but some birds have been known to live up to 8 years.





Habitat

During the night, the treecreeper roosts underneath the soft or dead bark of trees and fluffs its feathers to keep warm. It builds its nest in the same place as it roosts. The nest is usually made of grass, moss and leaves. There is also a central hollow comprising of feathers and bark that will hold any eggs. During the cold winter months groups of up to 15 birds can gather together in the same roost. However, the Eurasian Treecreeper is very territorial and will often attack other birds that come too close to its roost or nest. They also tend to avoid trees close to large wood ants nest of which there are several to be found around the Rothiemurchus Estate.

Food

Treecreepers can decimate the population of surface-living invertebrates within about 10m of their nest, so much of their foraging will have to cover a wide area. They eat a wide variety of insects, including beetles, earwings, moths and lacewings. They also eat a few small seeds such as spruce or pine. However, they will not survive long without an invertebrate food source.

Breeding

The treecreeper usually has two broods of five to six eggs a year, which are mainly incubated by the female. The female is sometimes helped by the male, although the male does not have the same featherless brood patch on its breast. The eggs are incubated for around 13 to 15 days and the chicks remain in the nest until they are around 18 days old. The chicks are fed by both adults until they leave the nest.

References:

Birdwords (2014) *Treecreeper (certhia familiaris)*. Available at:

<http://www.birdwords.co.uk/free-stuff/bird-factsheets/free-stuffbird-factsheetstreecreeper-certhia-familiaris/>
(Accessed: 18 April 2014).