

Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

ISSUE #87



Townsend's Solitaire

Bird

HABITAT

Townsend's solitaire live in forests in western North America. They are often found where there is a lot of juniper and in woods with both coniferous (pinecone) trees and deciduous (leafy) trees.

DIET

Townsend's solitaire eat insects during the breeding season, but what about in cold months when there are no insects to be found? They switch to eating berries, mostly juniper.

*Identify them by their white eye ring!



HAVE YOU EVER WATCHED A BIRD EAT?

My family and I were recently hiking in the mountains when a small gray bird caught our attention. I stood still watching this bird. It was sitting on a bush. My husband and I were trying to figure out what kind it was. It seemed familiar. I had a couple of types of birds in mind that I thought it might be.

After a minute, the bird flew up from the bush and then swooped down to pick a berry while in flight, then landed and ate the berry. As soon as it did this, I knew what bird it was: a Townsend's solitaire. I was able to identify the bird because I had watched other Townsend's solitaires do this before. One January, I walked my neighborhood every morning looking for birds. I turned my morning walks into a research project by watching how different types of birds ate the olive fruit from wild olive trees. The Townsend's solitaire had the most interesting way of eating olives. It perched on a branch, then swooped down to a lower branch, grabbed an olive while in flight, then landed on another branch and ate the olive. Because I had watched this bird eat so many times, I knew what type of bird my family saw in the mountains.

It's fun to learn bird types by their colors and patterns. However, we can also learn to identify them by their behavior. Spend time watching birds and paying attention to how they fly and eat.

Just as birds can be identified by how they act, so can we. The Bible says other people will know we follow Jesus by how we live, especially by how we love. John 13:35 says, "All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other." As we follow God's ways and allow his Spirit to work in us, we act and live differently. Matthew 5:16 says we should, "...Live so that they will see the good things you do and will praise your Father in heaven." Let's ask God to help us live his way so others can identify us as those who love and follow God.