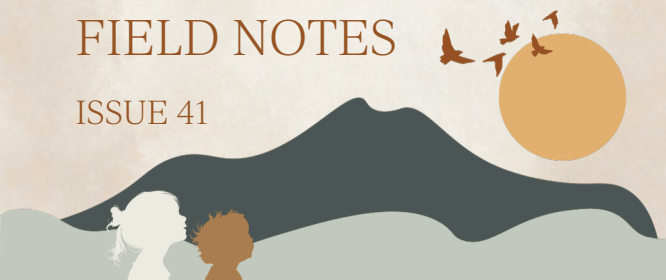


Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

ISSUE 41



Pika

MAMMAL

HABITAT & DIET

Live across high-elevation mountainous areas in the Western United States and Canada. They live in the following states in the USA: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico. They are herbivores which means they eat plants including grasses, wildflowers, moss, lichen, and twigs.

FUN FACT

Pika live in a harsh and often very cold ecosystem, but they do not hibernate or migrate during cold months. Instead they store up lots of food to last them through winter! Although they weigh far less than a pound, they can store up around 65 pounds of food for winter.



WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE CUTEST ANIMAL GOD CREATED?

I have a hard time answering this question. I also have a hard time thinking of an answer when my kids ask me what my favorite animal is. My favorite animal changes a lot, and many times, it is whatever animal I am currently studying (right now, it is an octopus). However, I think one of God's cutest animals is a pika. Have you ever seen a pika in the wild or in a picture? A pika is a small mammal that lives high up in the mountains. It looks like many rodents, but it is not a rodent. Instead, it is closely related to a rabbit (also not a rodent).

I love seeing pika when my family is exploring the tundra. Do you know what a tundra is? It is an ecosystem high up in the mountains where not many plants grow. It might seem like nothing can live in such a harsh place, but pika thrive on the tundra! They love nibbling on tender grasses and tundra wildflowers. Pika make a very cute little squeaking sound, which is often how we spot them.

How does such a small, cute mammal survive in a very harsh environment? One way is by storing up food for the winter. Have you ever dried out flowers to create a decoration? Pikas do this for food. They chew off plant stems and lay the plants out to dry in the sun and air. The pika builds up "haypiles" of these dried plants to save for winter when plants are dormant (not growing).

Just as pika store up food for winter, God calls us to store up good things—not necessarily dried flowers, but treasures in heaven. Matthew 6:19–21 says, "Don't store treasures for yourselves here on earth where moths and rust will destroy them and thieves can break in and steal them. But store your treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is." We can store up treasures in heaven by following God's plan for our lives and telling others about God's truth and love.

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