

Rufous-sided Towhee - *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*



Photo credit pbase.com



Photo credit flickr.com

The Rufous-sided Towhee is a large New World sparrow. The taxonomy of the towhees has been under debate in recent decades, and formerly the Eastern Towhee and the Spotted Towhee were considered a single species, the Rufous-sided Towhee.

Description

Size and Shape- The Rufous-sided towhee is a large sparrow with a thick, pointed bill, short neck, chunky body, and long, rounded tail.

Color Pattern- It has red-brown eyes, long black tail feathers and a small pointed black bill.

Song- Depending on where they live, the towhee's call will vary. Birds in the east sound nothing like birds in the west.

Behavior- They rummage in the leaf litter or creep through thick shrubs. Towhees tend to hop wherever they go, moving deliberately and giving themselves plenty of time to spot food items. They scratch at leaves with a characteristic two-footed backward hop, then pounce on anything they've uncovered.

Habitat- Lives in thickets and at the edges of brushy woodlands.

Range- It breeds from British Columbia east to Maine and south to California, Louisiana, Florida and Guatemala. It winters in the south from British Columbia, Nebraska and southern New England.

Diet- The towhee scratches under leaves looking for food. Nuts, seeds and fruits make up most of its diet. It also eats some insects.

Bird Statistics

Scientific name- *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*

Family- Emberizidae

Conservation Status- Least Concern

Length- 6.7–8.3 in (17–21 cm)

Wingspan- 11 in (28 cm)

Weight- 1.2–1.7 oz (33–49 g)

Egg Statistics

Color- Cream-colored or greenish.

Nest- Composed of grass, twigs and rootlets hidden on the ground, usually under the bough of a tree or shrub.

Clutch size- 2-6 eggs.

Number of broods- 2 per season.

Length- 0.8–1 in (2–2.6 cm)

Width- 0.7–0.8 in (1.7–1.9 cm)

Incubation period- 12 - 13 days

Nestling period- The young will leave the nest in 10 - 12 days after hatching.

Additional Information

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Spotted_Towhee/lifehistory#at_behavior

<http://www.wild-bird-watching.com/Towhee.html>

<http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/rufoustowhee.htm>

Thank you Charlotte Osborn for this bird data page March 2015.