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THREE NEW VENEZUELAN BIRDS¹

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Further examination of the Venezuelan birds in the American Museum of Natural History and the Phelps Collection, Caracas, Venezuela, has shown the following undescribed forms, consisting of one new species and two new subspecies.

In the lists of specimens examined, those in the Phelps Collection are so characterized; the remaining material is in the American Museum of Natural History.

Names of colors are capitalized when direct comparison has been made with Ridgway's "Color standards and color nomenclature."

***Acestrura heliodor meridae*, new subspecies**

TYPE: From Páramo Conejos, State of Mérida, Venezuela; altitude 4000 meters. No. 484853, American Museum of Natural History. Adult male collected May 17, 1897, by "S. Briceño Gabaldón é hijas."

DIAGNOSIS: Differs from the other subspecies of *heliodor* (*cleavesi*, *heliodor*, and *astreans*) by having a darker, more purplish, less reddish throat.

RANGE: Known from the upper Subtropical, Temperate, and Páramo Zones in the Mérida region, at altitudes between 2000 and 4000 meters.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPE: Upper parts Cossack Green, with a white patch on the sides of the lower back; tail-coverts more dusky; a white postocular stripe broadening posteriorly on the sides of the neck. Chin and throat between (True) Purple and

¹ Previous papers in this series by the same authors are American Museum Novitates nos. 1270 (1944), 1274 (1945), 1312 (1946), 1338 (1947), 1373 (1948), 1395 (1949), and 1412 (1949).

Rood's Violet, the lateral throat feathers greatly elongated; sides of neck white; breast pale grayish, more whitish anteriorly, merging laterally into the white of the neck; rest of under parts Diamine Green. Remiges near Seal Brown; upper wing-coverts uniform with the back; under wing-coverts and axillaries uniform with the abdomen. Tail Blackish Brown (2), with the rectrices long and narrow. Bill (in dried skin) black; feet brown. Wing, 29 mm.; tail, 19; exposed culmen, 13; culmen from base, 14; tarsus 3.5.

REMARKS: Sexes unlike in coloration and size. Description of adult female (No. 484884): Top of head, back, and rump Spinach Green; a white patch on sides of lower back; lower rump and upper tail-coverts dark Sanford's Brown, forming a broad band and with a green spot in the center of some of the posterior feathers; lores, ear-coverts, and malar stripe dusky; a small whitish spot at upper posterior border of the orbit. Chin, throat, and sides of neck Pinkish Cinnamon merging into the dark Sanford's Brown of the flanks, sides of abdomen, axillaries, and under tail-coverts; middle of abdomen a little paler; anal region white. Wings darker than Warm Blackish Brown; upper coverts uniform with back; under coverts greenish. Tail Cinnamon-Rufous, paler on under surface, with a broad black band across the center and with a slight trace of green just preceding the dark band on the median feathers; rectrices short and rounded, entirely different from those of the male.

Size similar to that of *heliodor*. The female has a longer wing and bill. Measurements: five adult males, including type: wing, 28–29 mm. (average 28.5); tail, 19–20.5 (19.3); exposed culmen, 12–13 (12.4); five adult females: wing, 33–35 (33.7); tail, 14–16 (15.1); exposed culmen, 13.5–14 (13.9). Measurements of *heliodor* from "Bogotá": five adult males: wing, 27.5–29 (28.3); tail, 18–20 (19.0); exposed culmen 12–13.5 (12.4); five adult females: wing, 33–35.5 (40.0); tail, 15–16 (15.4); exposed culmen, 13–14 (13.5).

Both Boucard and Simon comment on the Mérida birds as having a darker, more purplish throat than the Bogotá ones. Boucard (1892, *Genera of humming birds*, p. 16) says, "...the color [of the throat] is of a more metallic lilac red; but I doubt very much if this is sufficient to consider it a distinct species." Simon (1921, *Histoire naturelle des Trochilidae*, p. 239) says, "...ne diffère pas de celui de Bogotá sauf parfois par la plaque jugulaire d'un rose un peu plus bleu."

Simon calls attention to the fact that Boucard misidentified his "several" specimens from Mérida as the species *decorata* which Peters (1945, Check-list of birds of the world, vol. 5, p. 139) lists as "Known only from the unique type" and "supposed to be from Antioquia in Colombia." Gould's plate (1861, Monograph of the Trochilidae, vol. 3, pl. 146 and text) shows that the throat plumes of the type of *decorata* are very much shorter than in *heliodor*, forming a rounded, not pointed, pattern and that the color of the throat is still redder, less purplish, than in *heliodor*. Consequently this name is not available for the Mérida bird.

The immature specimens present a somewhat confusing picture, from which it is impossible to draw exact conclusions because of inadequate sexing of the material examined. Descriptions of the various styles of plumage are as follows:

- A. Throat and belly dull, light cinnamomeous, with traces of indistinct spots on the throat; sides of breast whitish; flanks with a dull greenish tone; tail as in the adult female, but colors dull.
- B. Throat deeply cinnamomeous, crissum paler; a whitish band across the breast and sides; lower under parts green; tail as in adult male.
- C. Throat white or with a variable cinnamomeous wash, usually with various purple feathers appearing in places; breast whitish; lower under parts deeply cinnamomeous but usually with green feathers appearing on the flanks; tail with somewhat narrower feathers, finely tipped with rufous, intermediate in appearance between those of adult males and females.
- D. Throat and breast white with a slight buffy tinge and with scattered purple feathers as in C; lower under parts dark green but crissum and middle of belly sometimes light rufescent; tail as in adult female.
- E. Like D, but tail as in adult male.

It is impossible to trace any clear succession of plumages through this assemblage. Furthermore, except for the birds here described, there is no example among the 15 immature specimens in this series that seems clearly recognizable as an immature female, making it quite probable that one or more of the plumages here described belongs to that sex.

In view of the fact that plumage C shows the tail approaching that of the adult male, C is probably an immature male stage as are B and E. The only plumages left for young females are A and D, and if D is correctly assigned to the female, it suggests (through its possession of some purple feathers on the throat and the green belly) that some adult females may resemble the males. Such condition has been suspected and even demonstrated among other hummingbirds and may be more common than is known at present.

In any case, the suggestion is made here and awaits substantiation by an adequate series of carefully sexed young birds. There is still much more to be learned about the immature plumages of hummingbirds.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

A. h. astreans.—COLOMBIA: El Mamón, Santa Marta region, 1 ♂; Valparaiso, 1 ♀; "Colombia," 2 ♂.

A. h. heliodor.—COLOMBIA: "Bogotá," 15 ♂, 9 ♀, 1 juv.; "New Grenada," 2 ♂, 2 ♀, 2 juv.; "Colombia," 2 ♂; La Tigre, Cauca, 1 ♀; San Agustín, Huila, 1 "♂" juv. No locality, 1 ♂, 4 ♀.

A. h. cleavesi.—ECUADOR: Río Oyacachi, below Chaco, 1 ♂, 4 ♀; Baeza, 1 ♂.

A. h. meridae.—VENEZUELA: El Valle, Mérida, 1 ♂, 1 juv., 4 ♀, 1 ♀¹; Páramo Tambor, 4 ♂, 6 juv.; Páramo El Escorial, 4 ♂, 1 ♂¹, 1 juv.; Páramo La Culata, 1 ♀; Páramo Conejos, 2 ♂ (including type), 2 ♂¹, 1 juv.¹; Páramo Pinos¹, 1 ♀, 1 juv.; Páramo Nevados, 1 juv.; Venezuela, 1 ♀; no locality, 1 ♀¹.

Picumnus spilogaster orinocensis, new subspecies

TYPE: From Altigracia, Orinoco River, State of Bolívar, Venezuela, No. 488839, American Museum of Natural History. Adult male collected January 27, 1898, by George K. Cherrie.

DIAGNOSIS: Differs from *P. s. spilogaster* of British Guiana and northern Brazil by having paler brown back and rump and uniformly unspotted under parts.

RANGE: Known only from Altigracia and Caicara on the south bank of the lower Orinoco River, Venezuela.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPE: Back and rump Dresden Brown, the feathers with indistinct bars giving a slightly mottled appearance; upper tail-coverts whitish; occiput and supra-ocular region blackish, finely spotted with white; crown and forehead Scarlet, the bases of the feathers black; nasal patches brownish gray; ear-coverts pale brownish with indistinct, whitish cross bars; malar region whitish with fine dusky tips to the feathers. Below whitish with a slight buffy tinge, deeper on the belly; a few inconspicuous, pale brownish spots on sides of breast. Wings Benzo Brown; primaries and outer secondaries finely edged with paler, and inner secondaries and tertials very broadly edged with buffy; inner vanes of remiges edged with pale buffy; upper wing-coverts dusky brown, narrowly edged with paler brownish, uniform with the back; under wing-coverts and axillaries buffy white. Tail

¹ Specimens in the Phelps Collection, Caracas.

black; median pair of rectrices with white inner webs; outer two pairs with a broad whitish diagonal band crossing both webs in advance of the dark tip, broader on the outer web. Bill (in dried skin) horn color, base of mandible paler; feet blackish. Wing, 56.5 mm.; tail, 31; exposed culmen, 13; culmen from base, 15; tarsus, 14.

REMARKS: Sexes alike except that the female lacks the reddish orange crown, the whole top of head being black with small white spots.

Size similar to that of *spilogaster*. Range of measurements: type and four other adult males: wing, 51–56.5 mm. (average, 53.1); tail (4), 29–31 (29.8); culmen from base, 14–15 (14.4); six adult females: wing, 51.5–55 (53.2); tail, 28.5–30 (29.3); culmen from base, 14–15 (14.3). Measurements of *spilogaster*: three adult males: wing, 53–57 (54.8); tail, 29–33.5 (31.0); culmen from base, 12.5–15 (13.6); two adult females: wing, 56–58 (57.0); tail, 30.5–31.5 (31.0); culmen from base, 14–14 (14).

Peters (1948, Check-list of birds of the world, vol. 6, p. 95) has synonymized *Picumnus spilogaster* Sundevall (1866, *Conspectus avium picinarum*, p. 100; "Guyana") with *P. minutissimus* Pallas (1782, *Neue Nordische Beyträge*, vol. 3, p. 5, pl. 1, fig. 2; Surinam and Cayenne) but we do not agree, as five specimens at hand, which agree closely with Sundevall's description, are entirely different from *minutissimus* and do not show any approach to the squamulated under parts of that species.

We have synonymized *P. leucogaster* Pelzeln (1870, *Zur Ornithologie Brasiliens*, p. 335; Forte do Rio Branco, Rio Cauamé, Brazil) with *P. s. spilogaster*, because four of the present series are from Frechal, Brazil, and show a complete gradation from relatively immaculate under parts as described for *leucogaster* to the prominently spotted lower breast, sides, and abdomen, and strongly barred throat of typical *spilogaster*. The type locality of *leucogaster*, Forte do Rio Branco, is about 70 miles south of Frechal.

It is noteworthy that, notwithstanding much collecting, the species has not been obtained in the region between the lower Orinoco River in Venezuela and the upper Rio Branco in Brazil.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

P. s. spilogaster.—BRITISH GUIANA: 1 [♂]. BRAZIL: Frechal, Rio Surumú, 2 ♂, 2 ♀.

P. s. orinocensis.—VENEZUELA: Altagracia, 1 ♂ (type), 1 ♀; Caicara, 4 ♂, 5 ♀.

***Picumnus nigropunctatus*, new species**

TYPE: From Araguaimujo Mission, Orinoco Delta, Venezuela. No. 48362, Phelps Collection, Caracas. Adult male collected March 5, 1949, by Ramón Urbano. (Type on deposit at the American Museum of Natural History.)

DIAGNOSIS: Differs from all other species of *Picumnus* by having the breast as well as the flanks and sides of belly with rounded dark spots on a light ground.

RANGE: Known only from the unique type.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPE: Back and rump dusky, the feathers broadly edged with greenish yellow, giving a squamulated appearance; upper tail-coverts more yellowish; occiput and nape black, finely spotted with white; crown black, finely streaked with Scarlet-Red; forehead, against the bill, buffy white; sides of neck yellowish buff with dusky tips. Chin whitish, throat more buffy with narrow dusky tips anteriorly; breast, sides, flanks, abdomen, and under tail-coverts Straw Yellow × Naples Yellow, finely marked with slightly elongated, prominent black spots, absent on lower abdomen. Wings Benzo Brown; primaries narrowly edged, and secondaries, tertials, and greater upper wing-coverts heavily edged, with pale greenish yellow uniform with the back; median coverts with bright yellowish tips (almost forming spots) preceded by a blackish central marking; lesser coverts with dull yellowish terminal dots; under wing-coverts and axillaries buff; inner webs of remiges narrowly edged with greenish white. Tail black, inner webs of median rectrices yellowish white; on the outer two pairs a patch of yellowish white occupies the terminal part of the outer web, crossing diagonally to the inner web, more narrowly on the external pair. Bill (in life), "black, base whitish gray"; feet, "greenish gray"; iris, "dark." Wing, 49.5 mm.; tail, 23.6; exposed culmen, 12; culmen from base, 12; tarsus, 13.

REMARKS: This new bird does not seem to have any close relative to which it might be compared. In the general dorsal coloration and pattern it shows some similarity to *P. e. exilis* of southeastern Brazil, but the under parts are quite different. Probably it is best listed adjacent to *exilis*.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

Specimens in the American Museum of the following species of *Picumnus* were examined: *cinnamomeus*, *rufiventris*, *castelnaui*, *olivaceus*, *granadensis*, *exilis*, *borbae*, *aurifrons*, *temminckii*, *cirratus*, *spilogaster*, *sclateri*, *steindachneri*, *squamulatus*, *minutissimus*, *albosquamatus*, *guitifer*, *varzeae*, *pygmaeus*, *pumilus*, and *innominatus*. The type was further compared with descriptions of *fuscus*, *limae*, *nebulosus*, *pallidus*, and *asterias*.

