

MYZOMELA ROSENBERGI, *Schlegel.*

Von Rosenberg's Honey-eater.

Myzomela rosenbergii, Schlegel, Nederl. Tijdschr. Dierk. iv. p. 38 (1871).—Meyer, Sitz. k. Akad. Wien, lxix. pt. i. pp. 211, 212 (1874).—Rosenb. Reistocht. Geelvinksbai, p. 138, pl. xvi. fig. 2 (1875).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. vii. p. 776 (1875).—Salvad. & D'Albert. *tom. cit.* p. 825 (1875).

THE genus *Myzomela* contains a number of species of small Honey-eaters, most of them attractive from the mixture of scarlet and black which forms their staple coloration, and spread over the Austro-Malayan, Australian, and Pacific subregions. Some few of them are dull-coloured; but most have a more or less brilliant plumage. Perhaps the most beautiful of all the *Myzomelæ* is the subject of the present article, which was discovered by Baron von Rosenberg in the North-western Province of New Guinea. It was subsequently obtained by Dr. A. B. Meyer during his sojourn in New Guinea in 1873, when it was procured by him near the village of Atam in the Arfak Mountains, at an elevation of about 3500 feet above the level of the sea; and since that time numerous specimens have been procured, by D'Albertis, Beccari, Bruijn, and other collectors, from the same district. It is probably to be found over the mountainous portions of the whole of New Guinea, as Signor D'Albertis procured two mutilated skins from the natives of Mount Epa in the south-eastern part of the island. With this exception, however, all the known specimens of *Myzomela rosenbergi* are from the Arfak district. Nothing has been recorded about the habits or food of this bird. Doubtless, like other *Myzomelæ*, it frequents flowering trees and shrubs for the sake of the nectar of the flowers and the insects attracted thereby. Nor are we yet quite certain as to its changes of plumage and sexual differences; for Dr. Meyer states that, of the specimens killed by himself, the adult males and females are similar in colour, and he treats the bird described and figured here as the female as a young bird which has not yet attained its full plumage. I have, however, followed Count Salvadori in considering that the sexes are dissimilar, as, owing to the large series at his disposal, consisting of forty specimens, his opinion on this point carries great weight.

I am indebted to Mr. W. A. Forbes for the loan of several fine specimens, from which my drawings were made. This gentleman has lately been preparing a monographic revision of the genus *Myzomela*, which he intends to publish. He has also kindly supplied me with the following diagnosis of *M. rosenbergi* :—

Adult male. The back, rump, and upper tail-coverts, together with the neck and breast, shining scarlet, the feathers greyish at their bases; the rest of the body, wings, and tail deep black, with a slight metallic lustre; the quills shining blackish grey beneath; bill black; legs horn-colour. Length about 3·7 inches, culmen 0·65, wing 2·5, tail 1·7, tarsus 0·55.

Young male. General colour reddish brown, mostly so on the back and rump, and paler beneath; the feathers blackish grey at the base, and the shaft lighter. This gives a streaked or flammulated appearance, most noticeable on the back, head, and chest. Wings and tail blackish brown, the greater and lesser wing-coverts tipped with pale chestnut; the quills margined externally with pale olive-yellow, becoming pale chestnut on the innermost secondaries; wings underneath grey, the quills with their inner margins white; bill blackish; feet horn-colour.

Adult female (sex ascertained by Dr. Beccari). Resembles the young male above described; but the forehead, breast, and rump are scarlet, the chin and throat blackish. This sex is also a trifle smaller than the male.