

MELIDECTES TORQUATUS, *Sclater*.

Pectoral Honey-eater.

Melidectes torquatus, Sclater, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1873, Nov. 4, p. 694, fig. 2 & pl. lv.—A. B. Meyer, Sitzungsber. der k.-k. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien, Bd. lxx. p. 128 (1874, Juni 18).

THE late Mr. Strickland used to say that, in his opinion, we had nearly come to the end of species, and that but few more discoveries would be made; yet this is not the case, and, with deference to the opinion expressed by my very worthy and lamented friend, I may state that not only have hundreds of novelties appeared since his premature demise, but we are, even at the present period, yearly in receipt of birds of whose existence we had previously no conception. It is, however, I consider, a piece of good fortune if an ornithologist has an opportunity of describing such a fine bird as the one under consideration. That *Melidectes torquatus* is very different from all others, there can be no doubt; and it gives me great pleasure in being able to assist in giving it publicity.

I must not omit thanking my friend Dr. Meyer for the loan of several examples of this bird in the finest state of plumage. These, when compared with specimens collected by d'Albertis in the Arfak Mountains, present little or no difference in size and appearance. As regards sexes, Mr. Sclater says, "Fem. mari similis;" while all those sent to me from Dr. Meyer were marked female.

Mr. Sclater, in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society,' Nov. 4, 1873, says, "This is a most conspicuous new Meliphagine form, not very far from *Ptilotis*, but distinguishable by the bareness of the sides of the face, and bare stripe behind the rictus. These are separated by a scanty line of feathers, extending beneath the eye.

"A pair of these birds were obtained by Signor d'Albertis at Atam in October 1872."

Bill bluish horn-colour, lighter at the tip; throat, crown, ear-coverts, mark down the side of the neck, and pectoral band, black, the space between the pectoral band and the throat white; sides of the neck buff striated with black, upper surface olive black, each feather strongly edged with white; wings brown, edged with olive; tail dark brown, edged with olive on the outer margins; under surface greyish white, spotted with black down the flanks and suffused with reddish buff on the chest; a large bare space of yellow surrounds the eye, above which, separating it from the black, is a line of buff; there is also a small bare space of yellow on the jaw.

Total length $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches, wing 4, tail $3\frac{3}{4}$, tarsi 1, bill $1\frac{1}{4}$.

The figures in the accompanying Plate are of the size of life.

Hab. Atam, apud mont. Papuanos Arfak.—*Sclater*.