ZODALIA ORTONI.

Quito Purpleback.

Lesbia ortoni, Lawr. Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. New York, 1869, vol. ix. p. 269. Zodalia ortoni, Muls. Hist. Nat. Oiseaux-Mouches, tom. iii. p. 282.—Elliot, Syn. p. 149.

Since the closing of my 'Monograph of the Humming-birds,' twenty years ago, many fine Humming-birds have been discovered. The Zodalia ortoni is one of the gayest. The first and only known male was taken in the Quito valley, Ecuador, about 1869, and now graces the Museum of Vassar College, New York. It is a little surprising that the late Dr. Jameson never found this fine Humming-bird at Quito, although he lived at that place nearly all his life.

I consider that M. Mulsant is right in separating this species generically, and have often regretted that my friend Lawrence did not apply a new generic name to this very singular bird, particularly as he himself hinted at the end of his description, "perhaps the two species should be placed in a new genus."

The female of this species is the property of Mr. O. Salvin, and was, I believe, obtained from a collector who stated he brought it from Quito, close to the place where the male was procured. This female, unlike other Sylphs, has a short forked tail with the outer feathers rather pointed.

The narrow-tailed bird from Quito, Zodalia ortoni, and the broad-tailed from Popayan, Cometes glyceria, are said to be of the same form. This opinion I cannot agree with. The light luminous throat-mark of the birds which we now call sparganura runs down to a point; the tail-feather is very broad; the throat-mark of ortoni is of a richer green, and similar in shape to that of Lesbia Gouldii.

I will now give a part of Mr. Lawrence's description of this fine bird:—" In both glyceria and ortoni the tail is shorter than in members of Cometes or Lesbia. The bill is like that of Lesbia. Perhaps the two species should be placed in a new genus. The upper colouring of ortoni is somewhat like that of Ramphomicron microrhynchus, but is of a lighter shade and less shining. In the under plumage it resembles L. amaryllis; but the breast is of a darker green, more uniform in colour, as the buff bases and edges of the feathers are less apparent. The gorgets of amaryllis and ortoni are much alike in colour and extent.

"Male. Entire upper plumage and wing-coverts of a rich glossy purple, the concealed bases of the feathers are green; upper tail-coverts similar in colour to the back, but marked centrally between the purple and green with crimson; the tail-feathers are brownish black, except the two central, which are green; the ends of the eight middle feathers are largely marked with a deep vinous bronzy crimson, most in extent on the short central feathers; the outer feather on each side ends with obscure bronzy green; the outer edge of the lateral feather is buff for three quarters of its length from the base, this colour occupying only about one third the width of the web; the under surface of the tail is steel-blue, bronzy at the ends of the feathers; the shafts of the two long lateral feathers are whitish at base for about half their length; wings brownish purple; the throat-gorget is of a brilliant metallic pale green; the sides of the neck, breast, upper part of abdomen, and sides are of a shining green; lower part of abdomen ashy buff; bill and feet black."

Mr. Salvin's female, which he has lent to me, has the crown, nape, shoulders, and all the feathers of the rump green; the centre of the throat and middle of the underside are most minutely speckled, almost solid on the flanks; under tail-coverts buff, a very little greenish white on the underside of the tarsus. The tail is very attractively coloured for a female bird; three or four of the blue feathers are tipped with green. For myself I am thankful for the loan of both sexes, neither of which I possess.

Male. Total length $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches, wing $2\frac{1}{2}$, tail $3\frac{7}{16}$.

Female. Total length $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, wing $2\frac{1}{2}$, tail $2\frac{1}{4}$, bill $\frac{3}{2}$.

The accompanying Plate represents two males in different positions and a female, all of the natural size.

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