

SPATHURA SOLSTITIALIS, Gould.

Ecuador Racket-tail.

Spathura (or *Steganurus*) *solstitialis*, Gould, Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. 4th series, vol. viii. p. 62 (1871).

Steganura solstitialis, Muls. Hist. Nat. Oiseaux-Mouches, iii. p. 260 (1876).—Elliot, Synopsis of the Trochilidæ, p. 142 (1879).

THE genus *Spathura* (or, as Mr. Elliot calls it, *Steganura*) consists at present of six species, whose range extends through Venezuela and Colombia, and thence through Ecuador and Peru into Bolivia; but they are, as far as we know, entirely absent from the Brazilian and Amazonian districts of South America. These six species form a natural genus, being, as Mr. Elliot well remarks, strongly characterized birds, with luminous throats and breasts, tarsi completely hidden in downy puffs, and elongated external rectrices bare of webs near the tip and ending in a spatula. There are two well-marked divisions of the genus, viz. those species which have their tarsal tufts white, and those which have them rufous. *Spathura solstitialis* belongs to the latter section, and is further distinguished by having very long outer rectrices and oval spatulas.

I quote a few remarks on the genus published by me in 1871, when I first described the present species:—“These Racket-tails, as they have been familiarly termed, are denizens of the Andes and the Cordilleras from New Granada to Bolivia, including the great spur which juts off into the Caraccas. I find that the two white-booted species, *Spathura underwoodi* and *S. melananthera*, frequent the regions north of the Equator, that those with red boots, *S. peruana*, *S. rufocaligata*, and the new one about to be described, are as exclusively found to the south of it, and that the white-booted *S. melananthera* and this new red-booted species inosculate in Ecuador. The latter, for which I propose the name *solstitialis*, differs from *S. peruana* in having, like the white-booted *S. underwoodi*, the outer margin of the spatulate-tipped tail-feathers grey—a character which is not found in either of the other red-booted species.”

“The following is a copy of my original description:—

“*Male*. Bill black; crown of the head and all the upper surface, flanks, and under tail-coverts dull green; wings and outer tail-feathers purplish brown, the outer margins of lateral or spatulate feathers grey; the remaining tail-feathers rich bronzy green above; throat and chest fine glittering green; tarsi thickly clothed with reddish buff feathers.

“Total length 5 inches, bill $\frac{3}{4}$, wing $1\frac{3}{4}$, tail $3\frac{1}{2}$.

“*Female*. Destitute of the tail-spatules and of the thick clothing of the tarsi, which are only thinly covered with buff feathers; buff is also the colour of the crissum; upper surface grass-green: tail bronzy green, the outer feather on each side tipped with white; under surface beautifully spotted with green on a white ground. In size of body she is about the same as the male.”

The habitat of the present species is Ecuador, whence Mr. Buckley brought me several specimens, from some of which the Plate has been drawn. It represents two males and a female, all of the natural size.