

## DORICHA LYRURA, Gould.

### Lyre-shaped Wood-Star.

*Doricha lyrura*, Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. 1869, 4th series, vol. iv. pp. 111, 112.—Elliot, Ibis, 1872, p. 354.—Muls. Hist. Nat. Ois.-Mouches, 1877, vol. iv. p. 41.—Elliot, Synopsis, 1879, p. 126.—Cory, Birds of the Bahama Islands, p. 110.

THIS is one of the most beautiful little gems that inhabit the Bahamas. The whole form and the very graceful lyre-shaped tail, I believe, are not seen in any other Humming-bird; hence its specific name is very appropriate.

I make the following quotation from my paper in the 'Annals of Natural History' (vol. iv., fourth series, 1869). "Having lately received, through the kindness of his Excellency Sir James Walker, Governor of the Bahama Islands, four specimens of a Humming-bird, of which for the last twenty years I have been anxious to procure examples, I feel convinced that, as I had for some time supposed from a conversation I had with the late Dr. Bryant, two species of this lovely family of birds inhabit those islands; and this conviction is strengthened by the circumstance that when in England, just prior to his lamented death, he informed me that the Humming-bird of the southern islands was supposed to be distinct from that killed in the neighbourhood of Nassau. He at the same time promised that I should have any examples that he could spare from his collection—a promise which has been partly performed by either Mrs. Bryant or her late husband's executors sending me, through Mr. G. N. Lawrence of New York, a male, which I find is different from those sent me by Sir James Walker. As the birds killed round Nassau are identical with the type of the genus *Doricha* (*D. evelynæ*), which is still in the Loddigesian collection, the southern bird requires a specific appellation; and it would have given me great pleasure to name it after its discoverer, had not another species of the same section of the Trochilidæ been named *bryantæ* by Mr. Lawrence.

"In size the new species, which I propose to call *Doricha lyrura*, is about the same as *D. evelynæ*; but the tail is distinctly forked, and its outer feathers are much longer, narrower, and outcurved at the apex, while the remainder regularly graduate towards the two central ones, which are very short. When the tail is raised and the feathers partially spread, they assume a lyre-like appearance; hence the specific appellation. Not wishing to depend upon my own judgment alone, I submitted this bird to the inspection of Mr. Salvin, who, after a careful examination, came to the same conclusion as myself, that the bird is distinct, and that the form of the feathers just described is the natural one. All my Nassau specimens, as well as others I have seen from that district, have the beautiful luminous lilaceous feathers confined to the throat, while in the specimen sent to me through Mr. Lawrence the whole face is luminous, the metallic lilaceous colour extending across the forehead."

Mr. Charles B. Cory, an American gentleman, has recently explored the Bahama Islands, and writes concerning the present species:—"Like many others of its family, the Lyre-tailed Humming-bird is restricted to a single island. It inhabits Inagua, and, although not rare, cannot be considered an abundant species. All the specimens which I procured were killed near Matherstome; and none were taken on any other part of the island. Its habits, as far as I was able to observe, were the same as those of *Doricha evelynæ*, from which it is impossible to distinguish it while darting from one flower to another. A negro brought me a fine male alive, which he had caught in a small net as it hovered over a flower. When living, the plumage shows somewhat brighter than in a dead specimen."

I find I have drawn three birds of this species, viz. two males and one female. Consequently a long description of the species is not required. I append, however, a brief diagnosis:—

The *male* has the forehead, throat, and breast beautiful shining lilac bordered with blue, the two colours blending at their juncture; immediately below the gorget is a band of greyish white, remainder of the abdomen bronzy brown; axillæ rusty red; wings purplish brown; upper surface golden green; the narrow outer tail-feather on each side black; the next two black on the outer web, chestnut-red on the inner one, the next blackish brown with green reflections; the two middle ones green. Total length  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches, bill  $\frac{7}{16}$ , wing  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , tail  $1\frac{1}{8}$ .

*Female*. Bill black, a little curved; crown, back of the neck, and all the upper part green; ear, outer part of the throat, sides of the neck, centre of the belly, all white tinged with buffy white; under tail-coverts buff; four central tail-feathers, three outer on each side with a square band of black; a patch of buffy white on lower part of the back. Total length  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches, bill 7, wing  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , tail  $1\frac{1}{8}$ .