

RAMPHASTOS ARIEL, *Vig.*

Ariel Toucan.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

Ramph. rostro nigro ; fasciâ basali aurantiâ, culmine ad basin cœruleo ; gulâ, genis, guttureque aurantio-luteis, hujus margine inferiore sulphureo ; crisso uropygioque coccineis.

Male.—Head, back of the neck, back, wings, abdomen and tail black, with a gloss of green on the back, wings and tail ; throat rich deep orange, bounded laterally and below by a line of sulphur-yellow ; broad crescent-shaped mark across the breast, upper and under tail-coverts deep blood-red ; bill black, with the exception of a broad transversal band of orange-yellow, and the basal fourth of the culmen, which is blue ; orbits deep red ; irides and legs blue ; the hinder part of the tarsi inclining to lilac ; nails black.

Total length, 19½ inches ; bill, 4½ ; wing, 7½ ; tail, 6½ ; tarsi, 1½.

Female.—Somewhat less in size, but similar in colour.

Tucana, sive Toucan Brasiliensis, Marcg. Hist. Bras., p. 217.—Ib. Orig. Drawing in Roy. Lib. Berl. (J. Natterer.)

Tucana Brasiliensis gutture luteo, Briss. Orn., tom. iv. p. 419. pl. xxxii. fig. 1.

Le Toucan à gorge jaune du Brésil, Buff. Pl. Enl. 307.

Le Toucan de Para de l'Amérique méridionale, Vieill. Gal. des Ois., Supp.

Ramphastos Ariel, Vig. in Zool. Journ., vol. ii. p. 466.—Gould, Mon. of Ramph., pl. 10.

————— *Temminckii*, Wagl. Syst. Av., *Ramphastos*, sp. 10.—Sturm's Edit. of Gould's Mon. of Ramph., pl.

————— *Tucanus*, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 403, *Ramphastos*, sp. 10.

THE *Ramphastos Ariel* enjoys a wide range over the eastern portions of Brazil ; inhabiting, as it does, all the countries from the River Amazon to Rio de Janeiro. Considerable difference is found to exist in the birds from the southern provinces near Rio, and those from the neighbourhood of the Amazon, the latter being generally of a smaller size, and having the orange of the breast of a redder hue, and the black of the body more intense ; they cannot, however, be regarded otherwise than as varieties of one and the same species.

The following note has been kindly sent to me by His Highness the Prince Maximilian of Wied :—

“ This species is very common in all the great forests and woody chains of mountains in the eastern part of the Brazils ; it usually dwells among the tops of the high trees, flying around and perching upon them, and there giving forth its whistling voice, which somewhat resembles that of the Missel Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) of Europe. It is very active and lively, and curious withal, its attention being easily drawn to any object ; it collects in small companies on the approach of a bird of prey, especially an owl, which they attack violently. The bird being very common, we killed many during the day for the sake of the flesh as a viand. This is one of the species, the feathers of which are used as ornaments by the aboriginal inhabitants ; thus we saw at Linhares, on the Rio Doce, a battle-chief of the Botocudos with a yellow breast of the bird attached to each end of his bow ; while the now civilized Tubinampians used the same part of the bird to decorate either side of their foreheads.”

Mr. Natterer met with this bird not far from Margaritiba, to the south of Rio de Janeiro, on the road to San Paulo, on the right bank of the Amazon, above the mouth of the Rio Tapajoz, and frequently at Para ; it appeared to follow the course of the Amazon for a certain distance ; but it was not noticed by him on the Rio Madeira, Rio Negro, or Rio Branco, where its place was supplied by *Ramphastos vitellinus*.

A fine individual of this species lived in the possession of the late Mr. Vigors for eight years, and formed the subject of the interesting account of the habits of the bird in captivity, published by him in the second volume of the ‘Zoological Journal,’ which work being now scarce, I shall take the liberty of transcribing therefrom those passages which are likely to be of interest to my readers :—

“ When in his cage,” says Mr. Vigors, “ he is peculiarly gentle and tractable, suffers himself to be played with, and feeds from the hand. In general he is active and lively ; and, contrary to what might be expected