

RAMPHASTOS AMBIGUUS, *Swains.*

Doubtful Toucan.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

“ *Ramph. niger ; jugulo flavo ; mandibulae superioris parte superiore flavâ, transversè maculatâ, strigâ viridi obliquè divisâ ; mandibulâ inferiore nigrâ.*” —Swainson.

General plumage black, with a tinge of rufous at the back of the neck and a greenish gloss on the wings, body and tail; throat rich yellow, bounded below by a narrow line of yellowish white, to which succeeds a broader one of blood-red; upper tail-coverts creamy white; under tail-coverts blood-red; upper mandible obliquely divided for about three-fourths of its length from the base by a strongly defined streak of black, the space below which is chocolate-black, and that above yellow, traversed by a broad streak of green; under mandible chocolate-black at the base, passing into black towards the tip; orbits blue?; legs and feet blue above, lilac beneath.

Total length, 20 inches; bill, $5\frac{1}{4}$; wing, $8\frac{3}{4}$; tail, $6\frac{1}{2}$; tarsi, $1\frac{1}{2}$.

Ramphastos ambiguus, Swains. Zool. Ill. 1st Ser., vol. iii. pl. 168.

— *Swainsonii*, Gould, Mon. of Ramph., pl. 8, lower figure.—Ib. Sturm's Edit., pl. , lower figure.

HOWEVER much I may have been perplexed by the Mexican Keel-billed Toucans, I have been ten times more so by the Columbian species known under the name of *Tocard*, to which in the former edition of this work I gave the name of *Swainsoni*, believing as I did that the *Tocard* of Le Vaillant and the *Ramphastos ambiguus* of Swainson were one and the same species; I am now, however, induced to regard them as distinct, in consequence of having recently seen in some of the continental Museums, and lately received in a collection of birds from the neighbourhood of Bogota, several examples which precisely accord with Swainson's figure of his *Ramphastos ambiguus*, and which differ from the *R. Tocard* in having smaller and straighter bills, with all the space beneath the oblique band purplish black, and with a distinct trace of the green mark along the sides of the yellow portion of the upper mandible so conspicuous in Swainson's drawing; I have determined therefore upon restoring that appellation to the bird for which Mr. Swainson doubtless intended it, and which I believe to be quite distinct from the *R. Tocard*. Some variation appears to exist in the colouring of the bare skin round the eye. Mr. Mark, Her Majesty's Consul at Bogota, tells me it is bluish green. Dr. Tschudi, who collected specimens in Peru, says it is blue, which on examination I found to be the case, so far as could be judged from the appearance of his specimen in the Museum at Neufchatel. Swainson, who states that his figure was taken from a drawing made from the bird immediately after death, also represents it blue: the diversity of hue is probably due to age, but may be attributable to some other circumstance with which we are not acquainted. In the examples from Bogota, the oblique verditer-green mark on the upper mandible, forming so conspicuous a feature in Swainson's figure, is very apparent; and this among other reasons has led me to consider the species to be a true one and to figure it as such.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that this conclusion has been arrived at since my account of the *R. Tocard* was printed; and that the insertion of Swainson's name of *R. ambiguus* among the synonyms of that species is an error.

The term “*Doubtful*,” I may observe, alludes to the species, and not to the “*Toucan*” as a generic appellation.

The figures are of the natural size.