

HELIOMASTER LONGIROSTRIS.

Long-billed Star-throat.

Trochilus longirostris, Vieill. Ois. dor., tom. i. p. 107. pl. 59.—Ib. 2^{nde} Edit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. vii. p. 366.—Ib. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 566.

——— *superbus*, Shaw, Nat. Misc., vol. xiii. pl. 517.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. viii. p. 323. pl. 41. fig. 2.—Temm. Pl. Col. 299. fig. 1.—Jard. Nat. Lib. Humming Birds, vol. ii. p. 94.

Ornismya superba, Less. Hist. Nat. des Ois. Mou., p. 40. pl. 2.—Ib. Hist. Nat. des Col., p. 164. —Supp. des Ois. mou., pl. 33.—Ib. Les Troch., p. 99. pl. 34.—Ib. Traité d'Orn. p. 278.

Long-billed Humming Bird, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 354.

Mellisuga longirostris, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 112, *Mellisuga*, sp. 4.

Helimaster longirostris, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 70, *Helimaster*, sp. 2.

ALTHOUGH not known to Linnæus, this species of Humming Bird is one of those with which ornithologists have been longest acquainted, having been figured early in the present century in Shaw's "Naturalist's Miscellany," and the "Oiseaux dorées" of M. Vieillot. Most of the specimens contained in our collections are from the island of Trinidad, where it appears to be common; it also inhabits the neighbouring countries of the continent—Demerara, Cayenne, and the Caraccas, specimens from all of which are precisely alike in every particular. I have no positive evidence that it crosses to the Isthmus of Panama, or that it inhabits the States of Veragua and Costa Rica, but a species is there found to which it is so nearly allied, that the two birds might easily be confounded.

The *Helimaster longirostris* is subject to considerable variation in its colouring, due either to age or sex, but the true cause of which is at present unknown; thus individuals are often found with the throat almost entirely black, with a well-defined white line running from the gape down each side of the neck, and with the whole of the under surface of a much lighter grey than is observed in others, in which the rich colouring of the crown and throat is fully developed.

The descriptions given below are of individuals exhibiting the extreme variations of plumage and the intermediate state.

Forehead and crown metallic green, slightly tinged with blue; chin black; throat luminous crimson; occiput and nape greenish bronze; upper surface and wing-coverts shining green, with a bronzy lustre; on the centre of the back a longitudinal mark of white; wings deep purple-brown; two centre tail-feathers bronzy green, the remainder bronzy green at the base, passing into the dull black of their apical portion; the outer feather on each side with a large oval spot of white at the extremity of the inner web, the next with a smaller spot in the same position, and the third with a minute spot at the tip; below the eye a streak of black, and beneath this another of white; under surface grey, with a broad irregular line of white down the centre, and with a wash of green on the flanks, between which and the back is a tuft of snow-white feathers; under tail-coverts olive-brown, margined and tipped with white; bill black; feet blackish brown.

In another, perhaps the youthful state, the upper surface is brown, glossed with bronzy green; the white spots at the tips of the outer tail-feathers are larger, especially that on the third; the throat is black, glossed on the lower part only with dull metallic crimson; the under surface lighter, and the white mark on the side of the face much more conspicuous.

The supposed female is very similar to the last, but is altogether of a much darker or browner hue on the upper surface, and has no trace of the crimson lustre on the throat; both have the white mark on the back and the white tufts on the sides equally conspicuous.

The Plate represents two adult males, and what is supposed to be an adult female.