

AVOCETTINUS EURYPTERUS.

Purple-tailed Avocet.

- Trochilus eurypterus*, Lodd. in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., part ii. p. 7.
Polytmus euryptera, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 109, *Polytmus*, sp. 88.
Trochilus Georginae, Bourc. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xv. p. 48.
Polytmus Georginae, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 109, *Polytmus*, sp. 89.
Delattria georgina, Bonap. Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 253.
Avocettinus eurypterus, Bonap. Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 256.
Avocettula euryptera, Reichenb. Aufz. der Colibris, p. 6.—Ib. Troch. enumer., p. 1. pl. DCLXXIX. figs. 4485, 4486.
——— *Georginae*, Reichenb. Aufz. der Colibris, p. 6.—Ib. Troch. enumer., p. 3.
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It has for a long time been a question with me, whether the *Trochilus Georginae* of M. Bourcier, and the *T. eurypterus* of Loddiges, were not really one and the same species. To clear up this doubt, I obtained the loan of M. Bourcier's typical specimen in order to compare it with that of Mr. Loddiges, and I find that they do not differ sufficiently to warrant their being considered as distinct. Loddiges' bird is a trifle larger than M. Bourcier's, has the spots on the breast a little stronger, and the middle tail-feathers somewhat broader, and that is all; I am consequently obliged to sink the name of *Georginae* into the rank of a synonym. Loddiges' specimen, which was from Popayan, formed part of a small collection I received direct from that country in 1831, and which, together with other novelties, I had the pleasure of presenting to my late friend, from whose pen a description of it will be found in the "Proceedings of the Committee of Science and Correspondence of the Zoological Society of London" for 1832. The collection being unaccompanied by notes of any kind, no account could then be given of the species; nor in the interval of twenty-five years, which has since elapsed, have we been able to obtain any positive information respecting its habits and economy, and but little as to its natural habitat. The bird still continues extremely rare. All the specimens known so closely resemble each other in size and colour, that no marked difference can be perceived. Their style of plumage favours the idea of their being immature, but I believe the contrary to be the case, and that the species is one of those in which but little difference occurs in the outward appearance of the sexes, and in which the young are clothed in a plumage similar to that of the adults from a very early period of their existence.

I consider that Prince Charles Bonaparte had good grounds for separating this bird generically from the more common *Avocettula recurvirostris*, there being in my opinion but little affinity between them.

As I have already said, we are totally unacquainted with the habits and economy of this species; and respecting the bird itself, we only know that the first specimen was received from Popayan, and that the others have been found from time to time in collections sent from Santa Fé de Bogota. In all probability the bird is a native of the high lands of the Andes, and obtains its insect food from the flowers of the smaller alpine plants, the extreme shortness and feebleness of its bill, when compared with the size of the body, leading to such an inference.

Head deep bronze, passing into the golden green of the back and wing-coverts; lower part of the back and upper tail-coverts brighter green; wings purplish brown; two centre tail-feathers bronzy green; the remainder purplish black glossed with bronze, and the lateral feathers tipped with grey; centre of the throat and abdomen grey, with a spot of greenish brown at the tip of each feather; sides of the neck and flanks golden green; vent and under tail-coverts rusty red; bill blackish brown, except at the base of the under mandible, which appears to be flesh-colour; feet, which are very large, purplish flesh-colour.

The figures are the size of life. The plant is the *Ipomæa Plutensis*.