

## RAMPHOMICRON HETEROPOGON.

### Columbian Thorn-bill.

*Ornismya heteropogon*, Boiss. in Rev. Zool., 1839, p. 355.—Ib. Mag. de Zool., 1840, Ois. pl. 12.

*Trochilus coruscus*, Fras. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part viii. p. 15.

*Mellisuga heteropogon*, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 112, *Mellisuga*, sp. 28.

*Ramphomicron heteropogon*, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 79, *Ramphomicron*, sp. 2.

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THE high lands of the great country of Columbia, from Venezuela to some distance to the northward of Santa Fé de Bogota, are the natural habitat of this fine species. It is there very generally spread over the temperate regions of the country, never ascending to the snow-capped hills, nor descending to the hot plains below, but frequenting the warmer valleys, where a luxuriant vegetation teeming with insect life affords it a never-ceasing supply of nourishment. Its comparatively short and feeble bill points out that minute insects constitute its principal food; and as its structure is so similar to the other species of the genus, we may infer, that, like them, it tranquilly flits about among the low shrubs in secluded valleys, and does not ascend to the loftier trees, as do many of the *Trochilide*.

Of all the Humming-Birds sent in collections from Santa Fé de Bogota, the present species occurs in the greatest abundance; and it must indeed be very numerous in the districts resorted to by the wholesale collectors of that city. These specimens are either captured in nets, or killed with the blow-pipe by the Indians. Considerable variation occurs in the size of specimens from different localities. The Venezuelan examples, particularly those from Pamplona, are much larger, and have the luminous throat-mark more extensive than in those from Bogota; the colder climate of which place, due in a great measure to its elevated position, appears to prevent the birds from attaining the size and brilliancy of their more luxuriantly situated brethren. I have reason to believe that the old females have the beard-like appendage, though less strongly developed than in the male, inasmuch as among the numerous examples sent to Europe very small specimens so dressed frequently occur. If this supposition be correct, the latter style of plumage will doubtless be found in the very old females of the other species of the genus; but this is a point which can only be ascertained by dissection.

The young of the year of both sexes are totally devoid of the luminous gorget, the under surface being of a uniform colour; or if the uniformity be broken, it is only by a few speckled markings, like those that occur in the young of *R. Herrani*, *R. microrhyncha*, &c.

Forehead and crown of the head deep shining green; upper surface and wing-coverts rich greenish bronze; wings purplish brown; tail deep bronzy brown; down the centre of the throat a series of pendent plumes, the upper portion of which is shining metallic green, tinged on each side with orange, and the lower portion deep metallic purplish lilac; sides of the neck and under surface bronzy green, fading into pale brown on the lower part of the abdomen; across the vent an irregular mark of greyish white; under tail-coverts buff, with bronzy centres; bill black; legs purplish grey; soles of the feet yellowish; claws dark purplish brown.

Two males, and a female or a young bird of the year, are figured on the accompanying Plate, from Pamplonan specimens received from Mr. Linden.