

## SPATHURA UNDERWOODI.

### White-booted Racket-tail.

*Ornismya Underwoodii*, Less. Troch., p. 105. pl. 37.

*Trochilus Underwoodii*, Jard. Nat. Lib. Humming Birds, vol. ii. p. 110. pl. 22.

*Fan-tailed Humming Bird*, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 339.

*Trochilus ventilabrum*, Lath. MSS.

*Mellisuga Underwoodii*, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, *Mellisuga*, sp. 56.

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THIS species enjoys a range of habitat over the Columbian Andes extending from the third to the tenth degree of north latitude, but appears to be confined to the regions ranging between five and nine thousand feet above the level of the ocean; it is abundant in the neighbourhood of Santa Fé de Bogota, and is numerous in Galipan between La Guayra and the Caraccas. Mr. Dyson informs me that when hovering before a flower the actions of its wings are exceedingly rapid, that it produces a loud humming sound, and that the large spatules at the end of the outer tail-feathers show very conspicuously, being kept in continual motion by the rapid movements of the bird, and the repeated closing and expanding of the tail; its white-booted legs also are equally noticeable: it is strictly an inhabitant of the hills, and loves to examine the flowers growing in the open passes and glades of the forest for its insect food, which it procures from the highest trees as well as those near the ground. During flight it passes through the air with arrow-like swiftness, the tail being carried in a horizontal position.

The plumage of the two sexes is widely different; the female being entirely devoid of the rich lustrous green on the throat, and having only a rudiment of the white boots so conspicuous in the male: the structure of the tail of the two birds is also very dissimilar, as will be seen on reference to the accompanying Plate.

The male has the whole of the upper surface, the abdomen, flanks and under tail-coverts bronzy green, becoming richer and of a coppery hue on the upper tail-coverts; throat and chest rich lustrous green; wings purplish brown; tail brown, with the exception of the spatulate tips of the lateral tail-feathers, which are black with greenish reflexions; tarsi thickly clothed with white downy feathers; bill black; feet yellow.

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

The female has the upper surface and two middle tail-feathers bronzy green, the bronzy hue predominating on the head and the green on the tail-feathers; wings purplish brown; lateral tail-feathers brown, the outer one on each side largely tipped with white, the remainder with a wash of bronzy green at their extremities; under surface white, spotted on the sides of the breast and flanks with bronzy green; under tail-coverts buff; tarsi clothed with white feathers; feet yellow.

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

The figures represent two males and a female of the natural size, on a branch of the *Passiflora ligularis*.