

## SELASPHORUS PLATYCERCUS.

### Broad-tailed Flame-bearer.

*Trochilus platycercus*, Swains. in Ann. Phil., 1827, p. 441.

*Ornismya tricolor*, Less. Hist. Nat. des Ois. Mou. Supp., p. 125. pl. 14.—Ib. Les Troch., p. 156.

pl. 60.—Jard. Nat. Lib. Humming-Birds, vol. ii. p. 77. pl. 13.

——— *montana*, Less. Les Troch., p. 161. pl. 63, p. 163. pl. 64.

*Mellisuga platycerca*, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 113, *Mellisuga*, sp. 78.

*Selasphorus platycercus*, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 82, *Selasphorus*, sp. 3.

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IN its structure, particularly in the form of its tail, this species closely assimilates to *Selasphorus rufus* and *S. scintilla*; like those birds too, it is an inhabitant of Mexico, and not of Brazil, as stated by Lesson; it far exceeds both its congeners in size, but is much less brilliant in colour, the gorget being purplish red instead of fine orange-scarlet. The thick and dense character of its plumage induces me to believe that the temperate and colder regions of the country constitute its principal habitat; and in confirmation of this view I may state, that all the specimens I have seen had been collected on the great plateau to the westward of the City of Mexico; from this comparatively northern latitude to the more southern regions of Guatemala (whence I have also seen specimens), it is in all probability very generally distributed. In Mr. John Taylor's collection of Mexican birds, are several specimens which had been procured near the Real del Monte Mines, and a beautiful specimen presented to me by the Director of the Museum at Basle was from the same district. Slight differences occur in the colouring of the gorget, some approaching a bright geranium red, while in others it is of a purplish hue or less inclined to scarlet. In all probability it will be found that this species migrates during the summer months to California, but at present I have no positive evidence that such is the case.

The usual difference occurs in the colouring of the sexes.

The male has the head, upper surface, wing-coverts, two central tail-feathers and the flanks bronzy green, tinged with brown on the head; wings purplish brown; lateral tail-feathers dark brown, with paler shafts and margined basally, particularly on their inner webs, with rufous; immediately behind the eye a minute mark of white; throat glittering amethystine red; across the breast a broad crescent of dull buffy white; centre of the abdomen pale grey; under tail-coverts brownish grey with darker centres; bill blackish brown; feet brown.

The female has the upper surface of the same colour, and the white mark behind the eye as in the male; the throat and under surface white, marked with buff on the under wing-coverts and flanks, and with a spot of brown near the tip of each of the throat-feathers; two central tail-feathers bronzy green; the next on each side bronzy green margined externally with rufous, and largely tipped with dull black; the lateral feathers on each side are rufous at the base, and dull black for the remainder of their length, except at their tips, which are white; bill and feet as in the male.

The figures represent two males and a female on the *Aristolochia macradenia*, of the natural size.