

TROCHILUS COLUBRIS, *Linn.*

Ruby-throated Humming-bird.

- Trochilus Colubris*, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 191.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 344.—Bonap. Syn. Birds of U. States, p. 98.—Wils. Am. Orn., vol. ii. p. 26. pl. 10. figs. 3, 4.—Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 569.—Jard. Nat. Lib. Humming-birds, vol. i. p. 85. pl. 5.—Reichenb. Aufz. der Col., p. 12.—Audub. Birds of Am., vol. i. pl. xlvii.—Ib. Orn. Bio., vol. i. p. 248.—Sagra, Voy. de Cuba, pl. 21. fig. 1.—Swains. and Rich. Faun. Bor. Am. part ii. Birds, pp. xxvi, xxxvi, 323.
- The Red-throated Humming-bird*, Edw. Nat. Hist. &c., vol. i. p. 38. pl. 38.
- Red-throated Honey-sucker*, Penn. Arct. Zool., vol. ii. p. 176.
- Mellisuga Carolinensis gutture rubro*, Briss. Orn., tom. iii. p. 716. pl. xxxvi. figs. 5, 6.
- *colubris*, Steph. Cont. of Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. xiv. p. 247.
- Le Rubis*, Buff. Hist. Nat. des Ois., tom. vi. p. 13.—Vieill. Ois. Dor., tom. i. pp. 66, 69, 70. pls. 31, 32, 33.—Vieill. Ois. de l'Am., tom. i. pls. 31, 32.
- L'Oiseau-mouche à gosier doré*, Vieill. Ois. Dor., tom. i. p. 89. pl. 46.
- Ornismya Colubris*, Less. Hist. Nat. des Ois.-mou., pp. xvj. 151. pls. 48, 48*.—Ib. Les Troch., p. 1. pl. i.—Ib. Ind. Gen. et Syn. des Ois. du Gen. *Trochilus*, p. xxxiv.
- Mellisuga colubris*, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 113, *Mellisuga*, p. 82.
- The Humming-bird*, Catesb. Nat. Hist. of Car. &c., vol. i. p. 65. pl. 65.

ALTHOUGH every species of Humming-bird inhabits either the great continent of America or the islands immediately adjacent, the subject of the present memoir is the only one usually seen in a state of nature by those travellers who wend their way across the Atlantic to the western world.

It was on the 21st of May, 1857, that my earnest day-thoughts and not unfrequent night-dreams of thirty years were realized by the sight of a living Humming-bird. To describe my feelings on the occasion would be no easy task; I leave them then to the imagination of my readers rather than make the attempt. In like manner I shall not give any narration of my own respecting this beautiful little bird, about which so much has been written by Wilson, Audubon, and others, but adopt the fairer course of giving copious extracts from the eloquent writings of those authors, and content myself with affording some additional information respecting the range of the species, its disposition in a state of captivity, &c. Second only to the gratification of seeing this Humming-bird in a state of nature was the pleasure I derived from a successful attempt to bring living examples to this country; unfortunately, their existence here was of short duration, but they lived long enough to prove that if other attempts be made, they will be rewarded with success. I have repeatedly stated in the present work, that many of the members of this family are migratory, while others are stationary, and some are restricted to exceedingly limited areas. The *Trochilus Colubris* is pre-eminently a migratory species, a great portion of its life being spent in passing from north to south, and *vice versa*. Its range may be said to extend over nearly forty degrees of latitude, or from ten to fifty degrees north, on the eastern side of the American continent; I have received it in abundance from Guatemala, Mexico, Texas, the United States, and Canada, in which latter country Dr. Richardson observed it on the plains of the Saskatchewan, and Mr. Drummond found it breeding on the banks of the Elk River. The months in which the United States are favoured with its presence are May, June, July, August and September; it arrives in the Southern States as early as March, and as the season advances, gradually passes on towards the central and northern portions of the country, including Canada and even some parts of the Hudson's Bay territory. It breeds in all the above-mentioned countries, and frequently raises two broods a year. About the middle of September the great southern migration commences, and the bird winters in the more genial and warmer countries of Mexico and Guatemala. This then is all that it is necessary to say respecting its migration, unless it be to add, that I believe its movement to and from either country is very gradual, and that it is probably performed in the broad open daytime only, and not by night, as has been suspected by Audubon. The period of my visit to America being somewhat early in the season, my attempts to discover a living "Hummer" in the neighbourhood of New York during the second week in May were futile, and it was not until I arrived at the more southern city of Philadelphia that my wish was gratified by the sight of a single male in the celebrated Bartram's garden, whither I was conducted by my friend Mr. W. M. L. Baily, from whom I also received many other kind attentions.

When first seen, the bird was engaged in examining the blossoms of a lofty chestnut; but its