

TROCHILUS POLYTMUS, *Linn.*

Black-capped Humming-bird.

Polytmus 1. Brown, Nat. Hist. of Jam., p. 475.

Falcinellus, caudá septem unciarum, Klein, Av., p. 108. No. 17.

Long-tailed Black-cap Humming-bird, Edwards's Birds, vol. i. pl. 34. p. 34.

Bourdonneur de Mangoe à longue queue, Albin, tom. iii. p. 20. pl. 49. fig. *a*.

Oiseau-mouche à longue queue noir, Sonn. Edit. de Buff. Hist. Nat., tom. xvii. p. 215.

Mellisuga Jamaicensis atricapilla, caudá bifurcá, Briss. Orn., tom. iii. p. 729.

Mellivora avis maxima, Sloane, Jam., vol. ii. p. 309. t. 264. fig. 4.

Trochilus Polytmus, Linn. Syst. Nat. Edit. 10, tom. i. p. 120.—Ib. Gmel. Edit., tom. i. p. 186.

—Ib. Turt. Edit., vol. i. p. 303.—Lath. Ind. Orn., tom. i. p. 302.—Vieill. Ois.

Chant. des Amér., tom. ii. p. 71.—Jard. Nat. Lib. Humming Birds, vol. ii. p. 108.

pl. 21.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds.—Gosse, Birds of Jamaica, p. 97.—Ib.

Ill. Birds of Jam., pl. xix.—Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 554.

Black-capped Humming-bird, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. ii. p. 748.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 281.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 296.

Colibri à tête noire, Vieill. Ois. Dor., tom. i. p. 121. pl. 67.

Ornismya cephalatra, Less. Ois. Mouch., p. 78. pl. 17.

THIS species, the type, according to modern systematists, of the Linnean genus *Trochilus*, is perhaps one of the oldest and best-known members of the entire family, a description of it being included in nearly every general work on Natural History, as will be seen on reference to the synonyms given above; but although the bird itself has been so long known, nothing whatever had been recorded of its habits and economy until the appearance of the very interesting and valuable account published by P. H. Gosse, Esq. in his "Birds of Jamaica," and from which I shall take the liberty of transcribing the more important particulars.

"This is the gem of Jamaican ornithology," says Mr. Gosse; "its slender form, velvet crest, emerald bosom, and lengthened tail-plumes, render it one of the most elegant members of its truly brilliant family." It "is a permanent resident in Jamaica, and is not uncommonly seen at all seasons and in all situations. It loves to frequent the margins of road-sides, where it sucks the blossoms of the trees, occasionally descending, however, to the low shrubs, and is abundant on the summit of the range of mountains known as the Bluefields ridge. Behind these peaks which are visible from the sea, at an elevation of about half a mile, there runs through the dense woods a narrow path, just passable for a horse, overrun with beautiful ferns of many graceful forms, and always damp and cool. No habitation occurs within several miles, and no cultivation, save the isolated provision-grounds of the negroes, which teem with enormous *Arums*; and these are hidden from view far up in the thick woods. The refreshing coolness of this road, its unbroken solitude, combined with the peculiarity and luxuriance of the vegetation, made it one of my favourite resorts. Not a tree, from the thickness of one's wrist to the gigantic magnitude of the hoary fig and cotton tree, but is clothed with fantastic parasites; *Begonias* with waxen flowers, and ferns with hirsute stems climb up the trunks; enormous *Bromelias* spring from the greater forks, and fringe the horizontal limbs; various *Orchideæ* with matted roots and grotesque blossoms droop from every bough, and long lianes, like the cordage of a ship, depend from the loftiest branches, or stretch from tree to tree. Elegant tree-ferns and towering palms are numerous; here and there the wild plantain or *Heliconia* waves its long flag-like leaves from amidst the humbler bushes, and in the most obscure corners over some decaying log, nods the noble spike of a magnificent *Limodorum*. Nothing is flaunting or showy; all is solemn and subdued; but all is exquisitely beautiful. The smaller wood consists largely of the plant called Glass-eye berry, a Scrophularious shrub, the blossoms of which, though presenting little beauty in form or hue, are pre-eminently attractive to the Long-tailed Humming-bird. These bushes are at no part of the year out of blossom, the scarlet berries appearing at all seasons on the same stalk as the flowers, and here at any time one may with tolerable certainty calculate on finding these very lovely birds. But it is in March, April and May that they abound: I suppose I have sometimes seen not fewer than a hundred come successively to rifle the blossoms within the space of half as many yards in the course of a forenoon. They are, however, in no respect gregarious; though three or four may be at one moment hovering round the blossoms of the same bush, there is no