

PHAËTHORNIS NIGRICINCTUS, *Lawr.*

Belted Hermit.

Phaethornis nigrincinctus, Lawr. in Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. New York, vol. vi. p. 260.

No group of birds requires greater care in discriminating its various members than the little *Phaethorni*, of which there are evidently several very distinct species, but which, from their minute size and their very great similarity of colour, it is most difficult to distinguish the one from the other. These various species are distributed over the wide area extending from Mexico to Peru on the western, and from the Brazils to the Caraccas on the eastern part of the great continent of America. Diminutive as they all are, the present species may be regarded as the very smallest of the group. I have long had a female specimen of this little bird in my possession, sent from the neighbourhood of the Rio Negro by Mr. Wallace, but deferred describing it until I had seen the male: this sex is, I believe, at length before me, having been sent by Mr. Lawrence of New York as the type of his *Phaethornis nigrincinctus*. Both Mr. Lawrence's specimens and my own have very lengthened bills, with the yellow colouring of the under mandible extending almost to the end, in which respect they differ from all the other members of the genus, and especially from the species I have named *P. Episcopus*, but to which they are otherwise most nearly allied. Mr. Lawrence's specimen was collected by Mr. Moore while descending one of the tributaries of the Amazon from Quito to Para: we may therefore infer that the little-known countries of the Upper Amazon are its true habitat.

The male has the upper surface bright bronzy green, browner on the head; upper tail-coverts bright ferruginous; tail bronzed coppery brown, the outer margin of the external feathers, the tips of the two central feathers and the two next pairs on each side greyish white; wings purplish brown; under surface deep rufous, with a broad purplish-black band across the breast; ear-coverts black; above the eye a line of rufous; upper mandible black; lower mandible orange-red, becoming paler towards the extreme end.

The female is coppery bronze above; has the tail-feathers of a more lengthened and cuneate form and largely tipped with buff; the whole of the under surface rich buff; under mandible, with the exception of the extreme tip, yellow.

PHAËTHORNIS EPISCOPUS, *Gould.*

Bishop Hermit.

Phaethornis Episcopus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxv. p. 14.

The Little Brown Humming-bird, Edw. Nat. Hist. of Birds, vol. i. p. . pl. 32?

It will be seen that in this little section of the *Phaethorni* the males of some of the species have their breasts crossed by a distinct patch of lengthened purplish-black plumes, while in others no such mark occurs in either sex: in no instance have I seen this peculiar character carried to so great an extent as in the present bird, which I received direct from Demerara. It differs from the *P. pygmaeus* and the *P. Eremita* in the rich bronzy colouring of its upper surface and in the greater breadth of the black pectoral band, in the bronzy hue of its tail, and in the small size of its wings. There is a little bird figured and described in Edwards's "Natural History," vol. i. pl. 32, said to be from Surinam, which may or may not be the female of this species, and I merely refer to it to show that it had not escaped my attention; at the same time I must observe, that it is impossible to say which species of these little birds it is intended to represent. Besides the male, I possess an example which I consider to be a female of this species, also received from Demerara. They are the only examples I have seen; I would therefore call the attention of persons resident in the fine country of which the species is a native, to the desirability of their sending additional examples to Europe.

The male has the head, upper surface, and wing-coverts rich golden bronze; behind the eye a stripe of buff; wings purplish brown; tail deep bronzy brown at the base, changing into rich brown near the apex, and slightly tipped with grey; rump rufous; ear-coverts black; under surface deep sandy buff, crossed on the breast by a broad band of purplish-black, somewhat elongated plumes; upper mandible and apical third of the lower mandible black; basal two-thirds of the latter yellow.

The female has a cuneate tail, largely tipped with buffy white, and the under surface rufous.