

GRYPUS NÆVIUS.

Saw-bill.

Trochilus nævius, Dumont, Dict. des Sci. Nat., tom. xvii. p. 432.—Temm. Pl. Col. 120. fig. 3.—

Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 548.—Ib. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxviii. p. 431.—Drap. Dict. Class. d'Hist. Nat., tom. iv. p. 320.

———— *squamosus*, Licht. in Mus. Berlin.

Grypus ruficollis, Spix, Av. Bras., vol. i. p. 79. t. lxxx. fig. 3.

Mellisuga? nævia, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xiv. p. 248. pl. 29.

Ramphodon maculatum, Less. Hist. Nat. des Col., p. 18. pl. 1.

———— *nævius*, Jard. Nat. Lib. Humming-Birds, vol. i. p. 87. pl. 1.

Grypus nævius, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 105.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 67.

SOUTHERN BRAZIL would seem to enjoy the privilege of claiming this bird as peculiarly its own, as it is from that country alone that specimens have as yet been received. I regard it as the only species of the genus that has been discovered; for although I have often thought that the smaller specimens, with more slender and more curved bills, were different, I now believe they will prove to be females of the present species. Mr. Reeves of Rio de Janeiro, who has had some opportunities of observing both the larger and the smaller birds in a state of nature, has been unable to satisfy himself whether they are or are not distinct, but is inclined to think that they are so, because he has remarked that the smaller birds arrive earlier and remain longer than the larger ones: against such an opinion, however, may be adduced the facts of their inhabiting the same locality at the same season of the year, and that in the nearly allied genera *Glaucis* and *Phaethornis*, a corresponding difference is found in the size of the sexes, the females being much less than the males. In the character and colouring of their plumage too, both the larger and smaller birds are precisely alike even to a feather; on the other hand, in the form of their bills, and in the breadth of their tail-feathers, they are very different; so much so, that many genera have been established on much slighter grounds. It will be for Mr. Reeves, or some other naturalist, who may be favourably situated for investigating the subject, to ascertain with certainty what may be the real state of the case. MM. Delalande and Natterer found this species chiefly on the mountains of Corcovado, in the vicinity of Rio de Janeiro; and in some notes kindly sent me by Mr. Reeves, respecting this and other species that have come under his observation, that gentleman says, that "it also inhabits Rio de Janeiro, but is by no means common, and is very rarely seen in the lowlands. Some years ago, when at Novo Friburgo, I had an opportunity of seeing several examples of this bird. They frequented the virgin forests, and seemed to take their food from under the branches of trees, and even at times from the stumps of decayed trees. On one occasion, after shooting a fine male bird, I discovered in its throat a small species of coleoptera, which had probably been taken from the crevices of an old tree; if such, however, be the case, the birds must be very expert in the operation of rooting out these small insects, as I observed they usually remained motionless in the air only for a second before they made the stoop, which was done so rapidly, that I often doubted, and still doubt, whether they always succeeded in capturing their prey. I never remember seeing this bird near the city. The virgin forests some ten leagues from Novo Friburgo are its favourite haunts; and it is only met with in those unfrequented localities during the months of July, August and September, and occasionally October."

I have also been favoured with some further information respecting this bird by M. Deyrolle, which, slight though it is, I have great pleasure in adding:—

"The *Grypus nævius*," says M. Deyrolle, "is common in all parts of the province of Santa Catharina in Brazil, but is more frequently met with in woody situations than elsewhere. Its flight is exceedingly noisy, very vigorous, and capable of being sustained for a great length of time, the bird rarely alighting. Its cry is so loud and piercing as to be heard above everything else, while it flutters around the flowers of various species of Orchids, from which it obtains its principal nourishment."