

## PTEROGLOSSUS PRASINUS, *Lichtenstein.*

### Golden-green Araçari.

#### SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

*Pter.* mandibulâ superiore flavâ, culminis strigâ, maculâ ante nares, lineâque ad tomium nigris; inferiore nigrâ, fasciâ basali flavâ: suprâ aureo-viridis, in cœruleum ad remiges et ad rectrices extrorsum transiens, harum apicibus rufo-brunneis; genis gulâque cinereis; pectore cœrulescenti-viridi, in viridem posticè transeunte; tectricibus caudæ inferioribus rufis.

Juvenis. Mandibulâ superiore ad basin rufo nebulosâ versus apicem in flavum et lutescentem vergente; inferiore totâ nigrâ: abdomine quàm in adulto obscuriore.

Upper mandible yellow with a black line along the culmen, a black spot before the nostrils, and a dash of the same colour along the edge; under mandible black with a basal border of yellow; upper surface golden green, passing into blue on the quills and lower half of the tail-feathers, which are tipped with rufous brown; naked skin round the eyes dull blueish green; cheeks and throat grey; breast blueish green, passing into green beneath; lower tail-coverts rufous; tarsi lead colour.

In the immature bird the abdomen is the same though less bright; but the upper mandible is clouded at its base with reddish, passing insensibly into yellow and greenish at the point; under mandible black.

Total length, 13 inches; bill, 3.

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THE naturalist has often to observe, that Nature never proceeds abruptly in the formation of her groups, but prepares a passage from one to another by a series of intervening gradations, embodying, though in a minor degree, the distinguishing characteristics of the two sections to which they form the connecting link: such is the case with the species before us. In my description of the *Pteroglossus sulcatus*, I hinted that at a future day it would in all probability constitute the type of a new genus; this division would be characterized by an attenuated and channelled bill, together with a more subdued and uniform style of colouring, and a short, graduated tail. To this form the Golden-green Araçari appears, at the first glance, to be related, and might with propriety be placed there in a strictly systematic arrangement; a more attentive examination, however, indicates its relationship, in an equal degree, to the more genuine *Pteroglossi*. The bill, for instance, though channelled, is only slightly so, and approaches that of the Araçaries in breadth and general dimensions; and the tips of the tail-feathers and under tail-coverts, as in most of that genus, are rufous brown.

The *Pteroglossus prasinus* is exceedingly rare; indeed, I know but of one museum in Europe possessing specimens, namely, that of Berlin; and I am indebted to the kindness and liberality of Professor Lichtenstein, who first made it known to science, for permission to examine and make drawings of the unique examples under his immediate care,—a favour for which, among many others, I beg to express my warmest thanks, and at the same time acknowledge my obligations.

Of the habits and œconomy of the Golden-green Araçari, as distinguished in the minuter details from those of its race, I have no information to communicate; there is, however, one fact, as the Plate will show, sufficiently illustrated, namely, the change which the beak undergoes, not only in size, but also in colouring, during the progress of the bird from youth to maturity,—a change not peculiar to this species alone, but characteristic of the whole family; and I may add, that it is from a want of sufficient attention to this circumstance, that many mistakes and much confusion have arisen. As regards the development of the beak, I may observe, that it is much more gradual than that of the rest of the body; for when the latter has acquired its complete dimensions, the former is little more than a third of the size it is afterwards to attain.

Inhabits Mexico.