

RAMPHASTOS CARINATUS, Swainson.

Sharp-billed Toucan.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

Ramph. rostro elongato, compresso, fasciâ angustâ nigrâ basali circumdato, apice sanguineo; mandibulâ superiore viridi, culmine maculâque utrinque aurantio-flavis; inferiore cœruleâ viridi tinctâ: ater, nitidus, cervice rufo parùm tincto; gutture pectoreque luteis; fasciâ pectorali tectricibusque caudæ inferioribus coccineis; uropygio albo.

Beak very long and compressed laterally, with a narrow marginal band of black at the base; upper mandible green, with a spot of orange yellow on each side and a line of the same colour extending along the culmen throughout its whole length; lower mandible blue shaded with green; tips red; naked skin round the eye, tarsus, and toes violet; eyes light green; throat and breast delicate lemon yellow; pectoral band and under tail-coverts scarlet; uropygium white; the remainder of the plumage shining black, with a slight tinge of rufous on the back of the neck.

Total length, 20 inches; bill, 6.

Brazilian Pie. Edw., vol. 2. t. 64.

Yellow-breasted Toucan. Edw., vol. 3. p. 253. t. 329, (adult).

Ramphastos Tucanus? Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. 8. p. 362.

Ramphastos carinatus. Swains., Zool. Illus., vol. 1. pl. 45.

THERE are at present only two or three examples of this species of Toucan in the Museums of this country. The Royal collection at Berlin, however, afforded the opportunity of examining a series of specimens at one view, the minute inspection of which convinced me that, like most other species, especially those whose beaks are characterized by a variety of delicate tints, the colours of the mandibles of the present species, as well as the naked skin round the eye, undergo considerable change after death; still it is easy to observe that the original colour is very different in different individuals, whence I am led to conclude that the colours of the beak are greatly influenced by the season of the year, and are doubtless in the finest and most brilliant state during the time of pairing. In some examples the orange spot on the sides of the bill is almost wanting, and in others divided into a succession of small ones, or dilated into a broad band, occupying nearly the whole length of the mandible; but notwithstanding these variations, the present bird possesses specific characters which readily distinguish it; these consist of the carinated form of the upper mandible, the culmen of which is invariably yellow, bordered round its base by a narrow edging of black.

It is certain that Edwards saw this bird in a living state in the year 1759, and described it under the name of the Yellow-breasted Toucan. His details and figure are characterized by the accuracy which is usually found in the writings of that talented naturalist: he states that it was brought to this country from Jamaica, where it was in all probability received from the adjacent continent. Speaking of its bill, he observes, that the drawing from life of one bird of this genus is worth ten from dead specimens, as the bills always lose, after death, their natural beautiful hues. In vol. 2, pl. 64, is another drawing and description of a Toucan, which he has called the Brazilian Pie. This bird was also received from Jamaica, and in my opinion is identical with the present species, from which it is only distinguished by the colour of the throat, which is white or cream-colour, the result in all probability of disease or weakness. Mr. Swainson is the only author who has done strict justice to the present bird since the days of Edwards, by publishing a reduced figure in his "Zoological Illustrations"; but although he quotes Edwards as the first who has noticed this bird, he is silent as to the other figure alluded to. It is not figured by Le Vaillant.

The specimens in the Zoological Society's Museum and in the Berlin collection are from the southern provinces of Mexico, which may be considered its true and natural habitat.

It is called *Pito canoa* by the inhabitants of Mexico.