TROGON MERIDIONALIS, Sw.

J. Gould & W. Hart del. et lith.

Walter imp.

TROGON MERIDIONALIS, Swains.

Little Trogon.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

Trog. capite pectoreque purpureis, aliquando viridi tinctis; auribus guttureque nigris; dorso saturatè aureo-viridi; alis nigrescenti-brunneis, remigibus albo marginatis, secundariis tegminibusque pulverulenti-cinereis; ventre aurantiaco; rectricibus intermediis duabus duarumque utrinque proximarum pogoniis externis viridibus, harum pogoniis internis nigris, his omnibus nigro apiculatis, reliquis albo nigroque fasciatis.

Rostrum plumbeum, ad apicem pallidius; pedes saturatè plumbei.

Œm. Saturatè cæruleo-cana, ventre aurantiaco; alis nigris, secundariis tegminibusque albo transversim lineatis; remigibus extimis utrinque tribus ad basin nigris, pogoniis externis albis nigro fasciatis.

Male.—Crown of the head and chest rich purple, changing to greenish purple in some specimens; throat and ears black; back and upper tail-coverts dark green tinged with gold; wings blackish brown, the primaries edged with white, secondaries and lesser wing-coverts finely powdered with grey; breast and underparts rich orange; middle tail-feathers deep green, two next on each side green on their outer webs and black on the inner, all six tipped with black, three outer feathers on each side strongly barred with lines of black and white; bill lead-colour, lighter at the tip; feet dark lead-colour.

Female.—Whole of the head, chest, back, and six middle tail-feathers dark bluish grey; the three lateral feathers on each side black at their base, their outer edges white barred with black; wings black, secondaries and lesser wing-coverts finely marked with transverse lines of white; under surface orange; bill dark horn-colour.

Total length $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches; bill 1; wing $4\frac{1}{2}$; tail $4\frac{3}{4}$ tarsi $\frac{1}{2}$.

Trogon meridionalis. Swains. An. in Menag. p. 332.

— *sulphureus.* Spix, Av. Sp. Nov. vol. i. pl. 38, p. 48?—Scl. & Salv. Nomencl. p. 104.

—Gray, Hand-l. i. p. 83.

Aganus caligatus. Cab. & Heine, Mus. Hein. Th. iv. p. 186.

? — *devillii.* Cab. & Heine, Mus. Hein. Th. iv. p. 191.

? — *crissalis.* Cab. & Heine, Mus. Hein. Th. iv. p. 190.

? *Trogon violaceus.* Gm. Syst. Nat. i. p. 404.

Aganus violaceus. Cab. & Heine, Mus. Hein. Th. iv. p. 190.

Trogon sulphureus. Spix, Léotaud, Ois. Trin. p. 101.

This species is very sparingly dispersed over the northern parts of Brazil, but is more abundant in Cayenne, Trinidad, and the adjacent islands. It is one of the commonest species in our cabinets, there being few collections sent from the last-named countries which do not contain examples.

The birds figured by Dr. Spix under the name of *Trogon sulphureus* are in all probability intended for this species, but in several particulars do not accord with it: I have therefore considered it best to adopt the name assigned to it by Mr. Swainson, who has paid much attention to the South-American members of this group.

The sexes offer the usual differences in the colour of their plumage, the male being clothed above with rich green, while the female has the same parts dark bluish grey: the young during the first year are like the female.

Thus much, excepting the synonymy, was said in the first edition of this Monograph; and I really have not much more to add, further than that my figures are made from Trinidad specimens. In order to throw as much light as possible on this somewhat intricate subject I have availed myself of Mr. Salvin's experience, which is embodied in the following note:—

"The first point to look to in determining a member of this very difficult section of the Trogonidae is to see if the crown of the head is *black* or *blue*. If the former, the bird doubtless belongs to *T. caligatus*, i. e. the *caligatus* of the second edition of this work. If the head is blue the bird belongs either to *T. meridionalis*, to *T. ramonianus*, or to a race closely allied to one or other of these birds—the difference between the two named being further shown by the wing-coverts of the former being mottled grey and black, while in the latter these are almost wholly black. It is not always possible to distinguish birds belonging to the blue-headed group with certainty, as not unfrequently specimens occur which have the wing-coverts only slightly mottled, thus showing that indications are not wanting to prove that *T. meridionalis* and *T. ramonianus* gradually merge into one another. This fact determined Mr. Selater and myself to place both under the name *T. meridionalis* in our 'Nomenclator Avium Neotropicalium.'

"To *Trogon meridionalis* the name *T. violaceus* of Gmelin has been applied by several authors; but this is a point I think that can never be satisfactorily determined; and as Gmelin's name is introduced with a description so manifestly inaccurate, for instance where he speaks of its yellow eyebrows! the selection of the first name, about which there can be no doubt, is by far the preferable plan to be adopted. This undoubtedly is Swainson's title bestowed upon this bird in 1838. It has been suggested (Mon. Trog. ed. 1, t. 9) that Spix's name *T. sulphureus* might be intended for this species; and so far as the female is concerned I am inclined to think this may be so; but the male, I have less doubt, belongs to *T. atricollis*; so that the name *T. sulphureus* had best be dismissed also.

"Swainson's bird, which is still extant in the museum of the University of Cambridge, is said to have been obtained in the Bahama Islands by Mr. Lees. This locality is doubtless incorrect, as is also shown by other birds described by Swainson from Mr. Lees's collection, and there is every reason to suppose that the specimen really came from Trinidad or Venezuela.

Most unfortunately for the puzzling synonymy of this group of Trogons, Messrs. Cabanis and Heine did not consult the first Part of this edition of the 'Trogonidae' when compiling their account of the family in the fourth part of the 'Museum Heineanum'; its existence was doubtless unknown to them. They would probably have been saved the attempt made to fix the name *caligatus* to a blue-headed bird from Cartagena, and also the description of the true *T. caligatus* of Central America under the new name of *Aganus braceatus*. Other species of this form are described by the same authors, the validity of which I have no means of testing beyond the published descriptions. These are:—*Aganus lepidus*, from Ecuador, which appears to me more likely to be *T. caligatus* than any thing else; *Aganus crissalis*, from Bahia, whence I have never yet seen specimens (this bird is described as having a blue head); *Aganus devillii*, based upon a description by MM. Deville and Des Murs of a bird from Santa Maria, on the Upper Amazons, and supposed by them to be *Trogon meridionalis* of Swainson. Further research will be necessary to establish these supposed species.

"To M. Léotaud we are indebted for a knowledge of the habits of this bird, as observed by him in the island of Trinidad. He says it leads the same kind of life as *T. viridis*."

The figures in the accompanying Plate are life-size, and from Trinidad specimens.

Gould, John. 1875. "Little Trogon, Trogon meridionalis, Swains." *A monograph of the Trogonidæ or trogons* 4, -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.323657>.

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