

Fam. TYRANNIDÆ*.

COPURUS.

Copurus, Strickland, P. Z. S. 1841, p. 28 (type *Muscicapa colonus*, Vieill.) ; Sci. Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xiv. p. 50.

Two species constitute this well-marked genus, the ranges of which are rather curiously traced : thus the Brazilian *C. colonus* extends over a large portion of Brazil and includes the eastern slopes of the Andes ; *C. leuconotus* occurs in Western Ecuador, Colombia, and Central America as far north as Nicaragua, and passes along the northern part of South America to Guiana. Both species come within the reach of the bird-collectors of Bogota, but are doubtless found on different sides of the mountain-chain.

Copurus is a rather isolated genus with no very obvious allies. Mr. Sclater places it between *Muscipipra* and *Machetornis* in the "subfamily" Fluvicolinæ, but its short tarsi and arboreal habits are at variance with his definition of that section of Tyrannidæ.

The general coloration of the plumage of *Copurus* is black with grey or white marks on the head and back. The bill is short and broad at the base, the width at the rictus being more than two thirds the length of the tomia ; the bristles are well developed and reach beyond the nasal fossa ; the nostrils are open, nearly circular, and situated at the end of the nasal fossa ; the hook of the maxilla is rather abrupt and projects

* The Family Tyrannidæ forms one of the most important sections of the American bird-fauna and contains upwards of 400 described species, the greater portion of which belong exclusively to the neotropical region. The remainder are migrants spending their breeding-season in North America, some even reaching Sitka and Greenland in their northern flight. These migratory species almost without exception pass the winter months in Mexico, Central America, and the northern part of South America. The family is well represented in our region by about 104 species, the number of genera and species increasing rapidly in the more southern section of the region.

Tyrannidæ are found at almost all elevations, some occurring in the high pine-forests situated at 10,000 feet and upwards to the limits of vegetation, but it is in the damp forests of the lower lands, where insect-life abounds in endless variety, that the members of the family are to be found in greatest profusion and diversity.

As regards the classification of the Tyrannidæ we are conscious that much remains to be done. In the following pages we have conformed in a great measure to that recently published by Mr. Sclater in the 14th Volume of the Catalogue of Birds, which again is based upon the system adopted by Prof. Cabanis in the 'Museum Heineanum.' Where we have departed from the plan there laid down will be found under the notes attached to each genus. Our chief difficulty lies in the Subfamilies, as defined by Mr. Sclater, into which the system is divided. We find that their definitions are of little practical value, if not altogether misleading.

The subject, however, is an exceedingly complex one, and does not lend itself to subdivision into large groups owing to the multiplicity of forms which pass from one into the other by insensible steps. We have here not attempted to divide the family into subfamilies, but merely grouped the genera into what appear to be their natural affinities. It is only necessary to compare such genera as *Platyrhynchus* with *Serphophaga* (both placed in the Platyrhynchinæ), *Mionectes* with *Myiodynastes* (Elaineinæ), and *Muscivora* with *Empidonax* (Tyranninæ) to show how artificial Mr. Sclater's "Key" to the subfamilies of Tyrannidæ (Catal. p. 3) is.

We see no advantage to be derived from trying to maintain divisions which seem to be incapable of accurate definition.