

THE RABIÉ PAINTINGS OF HAITIAN BIRDS.

BY ALEXANDER WETMORE.

Plates XIX-XXII.

THE Blacker Library of McGill University, through the interest of Dr. Casey Wood, has recently acquired a series of water color paintings depicting the flora and fauna of Haiti, made in the latter part of the eighteenth century by M. de Rabié, which are of considerable interest to ornithologists because of their early record of a considerable number of the interesting birds of the Haitian Republic. The drawings in question were sent to me for examination a short time ago through the courtesy of the firm of Wheldon and Wesley of London, to assist in my studies of historical records pertaining to Hispaniola. The notes made on the birds are here published at the request of Dr. Wood who has desired that the ornithological data in this unique and hitherto unknown set of Americana be placed definitely on record where it might be readily available to those interested.

The series of paintings which includes fruits and vegetables of various kinds, insects, fishes, crustaceans, and mollusks, as well as birds, is at present bound in four volumes of which one is devoted to birds. According to an inscription in the front it is devoted to a "Collection des oiseaux de St. Domingue peints d'apres nature par M^e. de Rabié, maréchal de camp, ingénieur en chef de la partie du nord de St. Domingue, mort à Paris, en 1785." The drawings of birds are marked in most cases as made "au Cap," which would signify Cap-Haïtien, except one which is labeled Fort Dauphin, and are dated from December 29, 1773 to August 19, 1784. Apparently the interest of Rabié in this work was aroused in 1771 during a sea journey, since some of his fishes are dated for that year. Apparently he was long resident in the French colony of Haiti since Moreau de Saint-Méry in the first volume of his *Description, etc.*, "de la Partie Francaise de l'Isle Saint-Domingue," published in 1797 (p. 330) has an account of Cap-Haïtien in which he describes an elaborate fountain constructed in 1769 under the direction of "M. Rabié, ingénieur."

In another place (p. 337) he notes a doorway to a church, completed in 1774 "élevé sur les plans & la direction de M. Rabié, mort ingénieur en chef de la Partie du Nord" and further (p. 424) records a structure begun in September, 1752, under plans prepared by Rabié. It appears that Rabié was long associated with the colony.

The fifty-eight plates devoted to birds are bound in a volume 10½ by 12½ inches, the binding being old with a sticker on the inside of the front cover that reads:

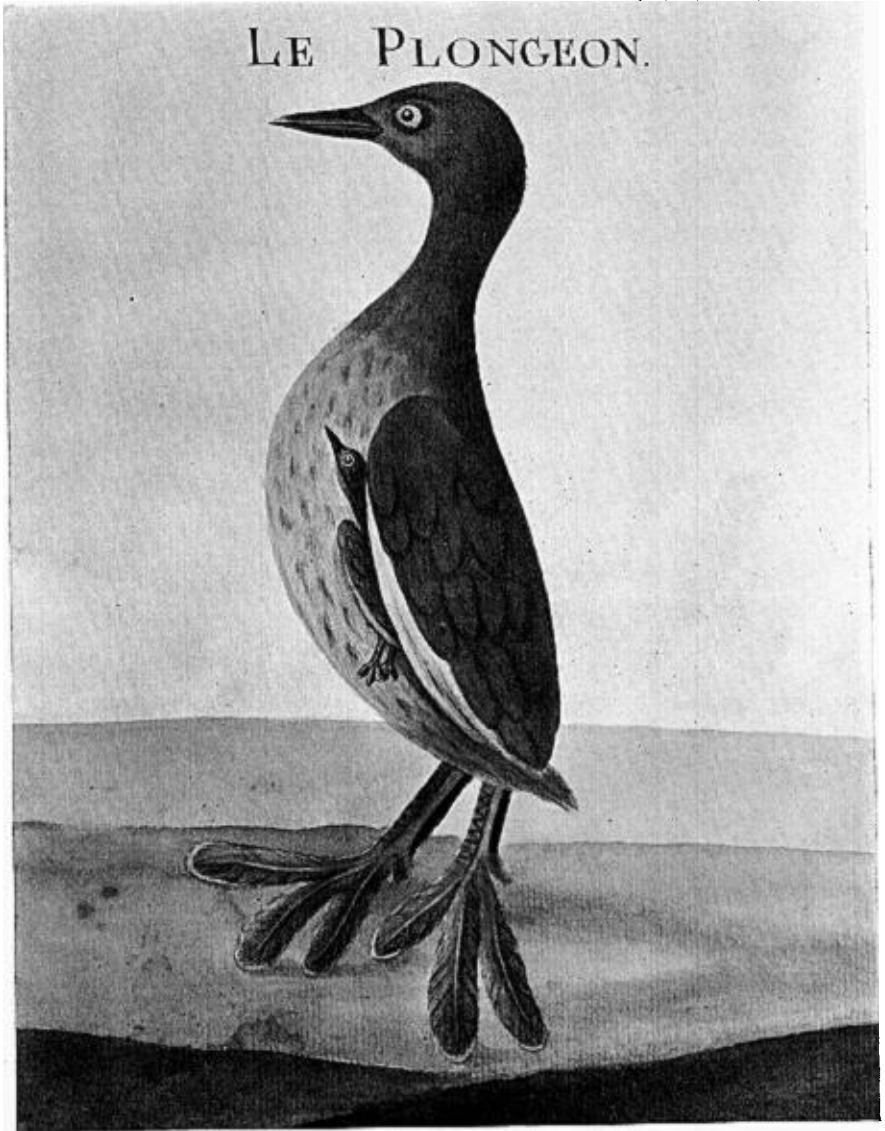
Aux deux creoles
Rue du Faub. St. Honoré, No. 60.
De La Rue, Rapetier.
Fabrique toutes sortes de Registres & Portfeu.
Fourniture de Bureaux
Tient tout ce qui à rapport au Dessin à la Pein^{re}.
à Paris.

Some of the paintings had become frayed at the edges before binding and have had the margins trimmed. In its present arrangement the drawings have been renumbered, and where part of the original inscription on the back is missing this has been carefully copied so that the entire wording has been preserved.

The birds, the majority being natural size, are shown in life-like attitudes in many cases with a landscape background. Though some are in stilted postures most of them are excellent both in form and color. Though the common birds of the island are mainly those represented there may be mentioned a Herring Gull (no. 37) the only record of this species for the island, a peculiar Goatsucker, *Antrostomus cubanensis ekmani* (no. 14) which was not described scientifically until 1929, and the Diablotin (no. 42). The majority of the paintings have obviously been taken from living individuals, and may in my opinion be accepted as definite early records for Haiti of the species represented at the localities and dates indicated.

The following list gives the plates in order, with the scientific and common names followed by a literal transcript of the inscription written on the back, where necessary accompanied by an explanatory statement by the present writer.

No. 1. *Mellisuga minima vielloti* (SHAW). HISPANIOLAN VERVAIN



WEST INDIAN GREBE.
Colymbus dominicus dominicus.

HUMMINGBIRD.—Oiseaux-mouches, mâle et femelle, leur nid, leurs oeufs, de grandeur naturelle. Sur une branche de cafeyer. Nest with two eggs of usual hummer type.

No. 2. *Anthracothorax dominicus* (Linnaeus). HISPANIOLAN MANGO HUMMINGBIRD.—Colibris, mâle et femelle, de grandeur naturelle.

No. 3. *Columba leucocephala* Linnaeus. WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON.—Ramier à tête blanche, de saline, grandeur naturelle. Le 7 juin 1775.

No. 4. *Columba squamosa* Bonnaterre. SCALED PIGEON.—Le Ramier, de grandeur naturelle.

No. 5. *Columba livia domestica* Linnaeus. DOMESTIC PIGEON.—La nonette, grandeur naturelle. (Nun with white head, tail, and ends of primaries.)

No. 6. *Amazona ventralis* (Müller). HISPANIOLAN PARROT.—Le Perroquet, grandeur naturelle.

Marked also no. 14 perroquet de St. Domingue grand nat. Cap le 10 juin, 1777 Rabié.

No. 7. *Aratinga chloroptera chloroptera* (Souancé). HISPANIOLAN PAROQUET.—La Perruche, grandeur naturelle.

No. 8. *Todus subulatus* Gray. HISPANIOLAN TODY.—Le Perroquet de terre, grandeur naturelle. *Marked also* no. 39, perroquet de terre, grand nat., au cap le—1770 Rabié.

No. 9. *Mimus polyglottos dominicus* (Linnaeus). HISPANIOLAN MOCKINGBIRD.—Le Rossignol, grandeur naturelle.

Marked also le Rossignol grand nat. au Cap le 23 juin 1777 Rabié.

No. 10. *Petrochelidon fulva fulva* (Vieillot). HISPANIOLAN CLIFF SWALLOW.—La Petite hirondelle fauve, grandeur naturelle.

No. 11. *Phaenicophilus palmarum palmarum* (Linnaeus). HISPANIOLAN PALM TANAGER.—Le Lory-diamant, grandeur naturelle.

Marked also no. 46 le lory diamen grand nat. au cap le 26 juillet 1783.

No. 12. *Buteo jamaicensis jamaicensis* (Gmelin). WEST-INDIAN RED-TAILED HAWK.—La Buse, appelée à St. Domingue mal-fini à moitié de grandeur naturelle. *Marked also*, in pencil, no. 46 La buse appelée à St. Domingue mal fini Moitié de grand nat. le 28 juillet 1783.

No. 13. *Falco sparverius dominicensis* Gmelin. HISPANIOLAN SPARROW HAWK.—Femelle. L'épervier, emouchet, ou tiercelet, aux 4/3 de grand natur. au cap le 10 juin 1777.

No. 14. *Antrostomus cubanensis ekmani* Lönnerberg. HISPANIOLAN GOATSUCKER.—(See Plate XXII). Le Peut-on voir, ainsi nomme, parcequ'il semble Dire Peut-on voir, quand il a chanté.

Also marked no. 53. Le peut-on voir, ainsi apelle parcequ'il semble dire peut-on voir, quand il a chanté. grand. nat. Cet oiseaux vit de divers qui le trouve dans le Bois pourri et d'autre insecttes, au cap. Size, color of the back, and the buff tips on the lateral rectrices indicate certainly that the bird represented is this form and not the Chuck-wills-widow. As noted previously this race was not described scientifically until 1929.

No. 15. *Corvus palmarum palmarum* Württemberg. PALM CROW.—Le corbeau, grandeur naturelle. au cap le 10 juillet 1775—Rabié. Identification based on size since the figure is too small for *C. leucognaphalus*.

No. 16. *Crotophaga ani* Linnaeus. ANI.—Le Bout de tabac, grandeur naturelle. au cap le 7 juin 1775 Rabié.

No. 17. *Coccyzus minor teres* Peters. MANGROVE CUCKOO.—Le tacco ou pie grand. nat. le 7 juin, 1775 Rabié.

No. 18. *Holoquiscalus niger niger* (Boddaert). HISPANIOLAN GRACKLE.—Le merle, grandeur naturelle.

No. 19. *Chryserpes striatus* (P. L. S. Müller). HISPANIOLAN WOODPECKER.—Le charpentier, de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 25 8bre 1775.

No. 20. *Zenaida zenaida zenaida* (Bonaparte). ZENAIDA DOVE.—La tourterelle, de grandeur naturelle. Le 5 juin, 1775.

No. 21. *Chamaepelia passerina insularis* (Ridgway). CUBAN GROUND-DOVE.—L'ortolan, de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 4 juin, 1778. Date written in pencil and indistinct, possibly not as given.

No. 22. *Oreopelia montana* (Linnaeus). RUDDY QUAIL-DOVE.—La perdrix, de grandeur naturelle. fait au cap le 25 8bre 1775 Rabié.

No. 23. *Mimocichla ardosiacea ardosiacea* (Vielliot). HISPANIOLAN THRUSH.—La grive, de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 28 juillet 1777, Rabié.

No. 24. *Numida galeata* Pallas. GUINEA HEN.—jeune pintade, aux 3/4 de grandeur naturelle 1775. A partly albino individual.

No. 25. *Vireo olivaceus olivaceus* (Linnaeus) (= *V. calidris*).—JAMAICAN VIREO.—Le pierrot—quibic, grandeur naturelle. Voyer-baraire, au cap. 16 juin, 1783.

No. 26. *Tiaris olivacea olivacea* (Linnaeus) ♂. YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUIT.—Oiseau à Canne, grandeur naturelle au cap le 27 8bre, 1775.

No. 27. *Dendroica dominica dominica* (Linnaeus). YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER.—Oiseau à Canne, grandeur naturelle. au cap le 27 8bre, 1775. Rabié.

No. 28. *Seiurus noveboracensis* (Gmelin). WATER-THRUSH.—L'hermine, oiseau à canne, grandeur naturelle. au cap le 28 8bre, 1775, Rabié.

No. 29. *Mniotilta varia* (Linnaeus). BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.—Le spectre, oiseau à canne, grandeur naturelle. au cap 13 8bre, 1775, Rabié.

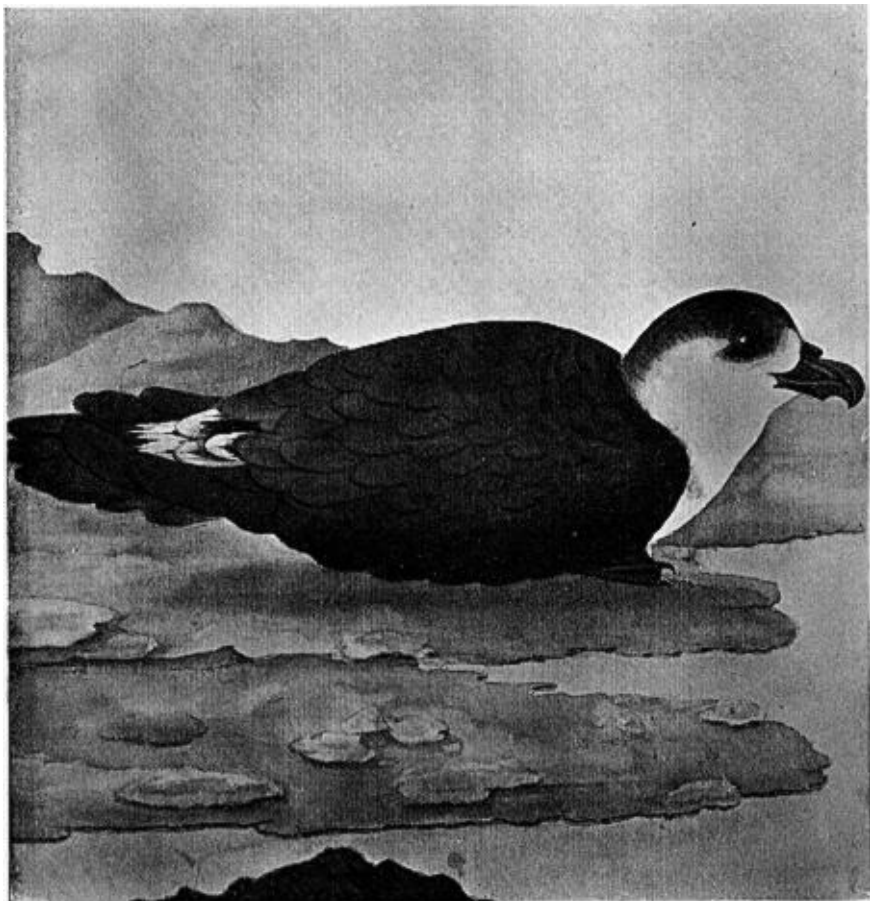
No. 30. *Dulus dominicus dominicus* (Linnaeus). PALM-CHAT. L'esclave, grandeur naturelle. Fait au cap le 14 8bre, 1775, Rabié.

No. 31. *Cairina moschata* (Linnaeus). MUSCOVY DUCK.—Le canard musqué, au 1/3 de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 25 Aout, 1777, Rabié. Male, partially albino, evidently a domesticated bird.

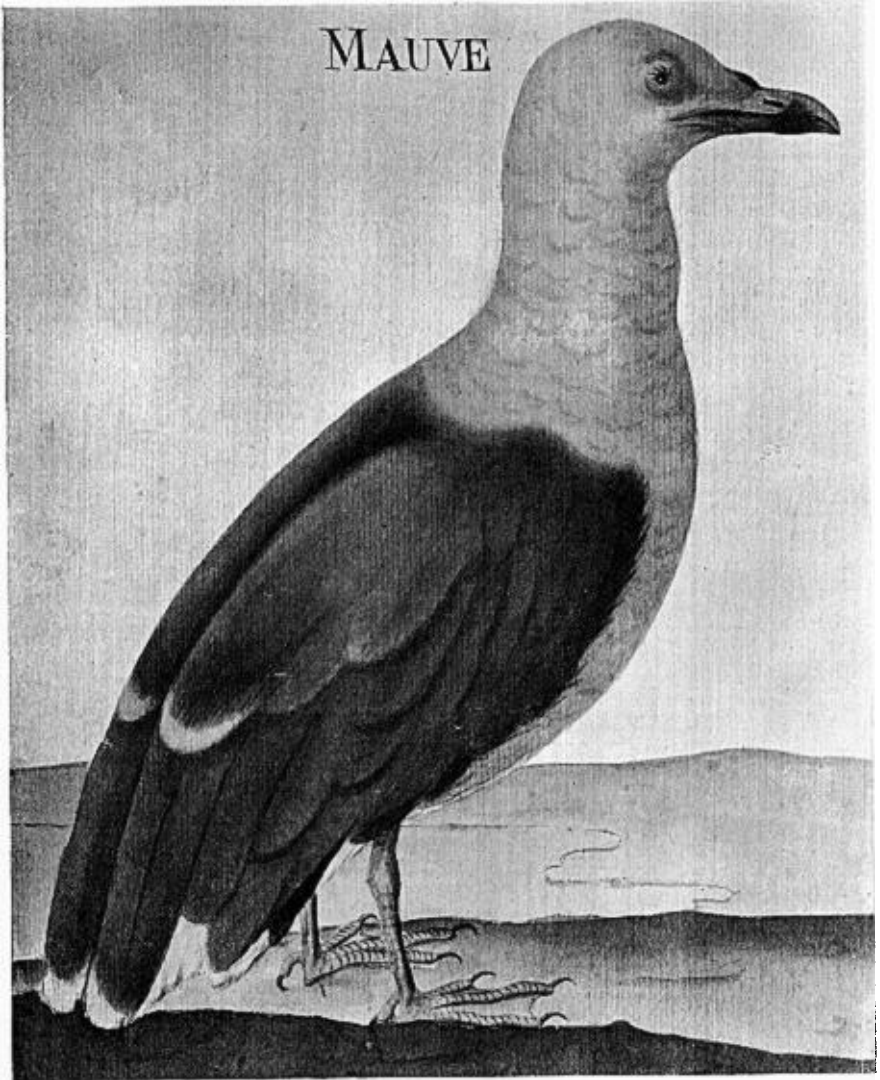
No. 32. *Dendrocygna arborea* (Linnaeus). WEST INDIAN TREE-DUCK.—Le gingeon, Rabié.

No. 33. *Querquedula discors* (Linnaeus). BLUE-WINGED TEAL.—La Sarcelle.

No. 34. *Phoenicopterus ruber* Linnaeus. FLAMINGO.—Le flamand, ou Becharu, au 1/5 de grandeur naturelle. Also marked no. 38 flaman ou



BLACK-CAPPED PETREL.
Pterodroma hasitata.



HERRING GULL.
Larus argentatus smithsonianus.

Becharu, peint d'après nature, au cinquième de grand nat. au cap le 26 May, 1783. Rabié.

No. 35. *Colymbus dominicus dominicus* Linnaeus. WEST INDIAN GREBE.—(See Plate XIX). Le Plongeon, femelle. Cet oiseau a un grand amour pour ses petits, lorsqu'elle le voit en Danger, elle les cache sous ses ailes et plonge avec rapidité, elle ne les abandonne même pas lorsqu'elle est morte.

As these Grebes carry their young on the back like other species of the family the attempt on the part of the artist to portray what was evidently a habit known only from hearsay is highly amusing.

No. 36. *Ajaia ajaja* (Linnaeus). ROSEATE SPOONBILL.—La spatule, à moitié de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 3 juin 1783, Rabié.

No. 37. *Larus argentatus smithsonianus* Coues. HERRING GULL.—(See Plate XXI). La mauve, au 2/3 de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 7 Juillet, 1775. An adult bird in full adult plumage. This is the only record known for Hispaniola for this species.

No. 38. (?) *Thalasseus sandvicensis acufavidus* (Cabot). PROBABLY CABOT'S TERN.—La Mouette, espèce de mauve, grandeur naturelle.

Drawn with clear yellow bill and black legs, but otherwise with size and color of Cabot's Tern.

No. 39. *Phaethon lepturus catesbyi* Brandt. YELLOW-BILLED TROPIC-BIRD.—Espèce de mouette, aux 3/4 de grandeur naturelle, ces oiseau Marche avec peine et en s'aubittant [spelling not certain] au cap le 1^r May, 1784, Rabié.

No. 40. *Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis* Linnaeus. BROWN PELICAN.—Le Pelican, ou grand-gosier, au 1/3 de grandeur naturelle de l'extrémité du bec, à cette de la queue, 4 pieds de longueur. Au cap le 8 aout, 1782. A bird in immature plumage.

No. 41. *Fregata magnificens* Mathews. FRIGATE-BIRD.—La frégate, au 1/4 de grandeur naturelle, six pieds six pouces. d'envergure. Au cap le 29 juillet 1783. An immature bird with pure white head.

No. 42. *Pterodroma hasitata* (Kuhl). BLACK-CAPPED PETREL.—(See Plate XX). Le Diablotin, au 2/3 de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 26 8bre, 1778, Rabié. An excellent representation of this bird.

No. 43. *Sterna antillarum antillarum* (Lesson). LEAST TERN.—L'alouette de mer, de grandeur naturelle. Au cap le 7 aout, 1783 Rabié.

No. 44. *Jacana spinosa violacea* (Cory). WEST INDIAN JACANA.—Le chirurgien, ainsi nommé parcequ'il a deux espèces de Lancette à l'épaule.

No. 45. *Aramus pictus elucus* Peters. LIMPKIN.—La poule à joly 1/2 de grandeur naturelle.

No. 46. *Butorides virescens maculatus* (Boddaert). WEST-INDIAN GREEN HERON.—Petit-crabier, espèce de héron, aux 2/3 de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 19 aout 1784. An immature bird.

No. 47. *Guara alba* (Linnaeus). WHITE IBIS.—Le Pêcheur, 1/2 de grandeur naturelle. au cap le 27 May 1775, Rabié. An immature bird with head and neck brown.

No. 48. *Plegadis falcinellus falcinellus* (Linnaeus). GLOSSY IBIS.—Le Pêcheur, espece de courli, 1/2 de grandeur naturelle. Rabié fait le 18, 7bre 1775. An adult bird.

No. 49. *Guara alba* (Linnaeus). WHITE IBIS.—Autre Pêcheur, aux 2/3 de grandeur naturelle. ces pêcheurs habitent les mangles au bord de la mer, et vivent de petits poissons, de crabes, et d'écrevisses. Au cap le 13 juillet 1783 Rabié. A young bird barely grown, with banded bill.

No. 50. *Charadrius semipalmatus* Bonaparte. SEMIPALMATED PLOVER.—Le collier, de grandeur naturelle. Au cap le 1^r aout, 1783, R.—

No. 51. *Ereunetes* sp. Le marenougouin, de grandeur naturelle. Aux cap le 29 xbre, 1773. Species not certain.

No. 52. *Himantopus mexicanus* (Müller). BLACK-NECKED STILT.—Le chevalier 1/2 de grandeur naturelle. Cet oiseau n'est palmé que du côté des ongles extérieurs, il vit de petits poissons au fort dauphin 1^r aout, 1783.

No. 53. *Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli* (Gmelin). BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.—Le Crabier. An immature bird.

No. 54. *Florida caerulea caerulescens* (Latham). LITTLE BLUE HERON.—Crabier blanc, 1/2 de grandeur naturelle. An immature bird in white dress with legs dull green and indication of downy tips on feathers of crown.

No. 55. *Ardea herodias adoxa* Oberholser. WEST INDIAN GREAT BLUE HERON.—Grand crabier, dit jacob, espece de héron au 1/3 de grandeur naturelle, 4 pieds, six pouces de l'extrémité du bec à celle des pieds. Au cap, le 4 aout 1784 Rabié. An immature bird.

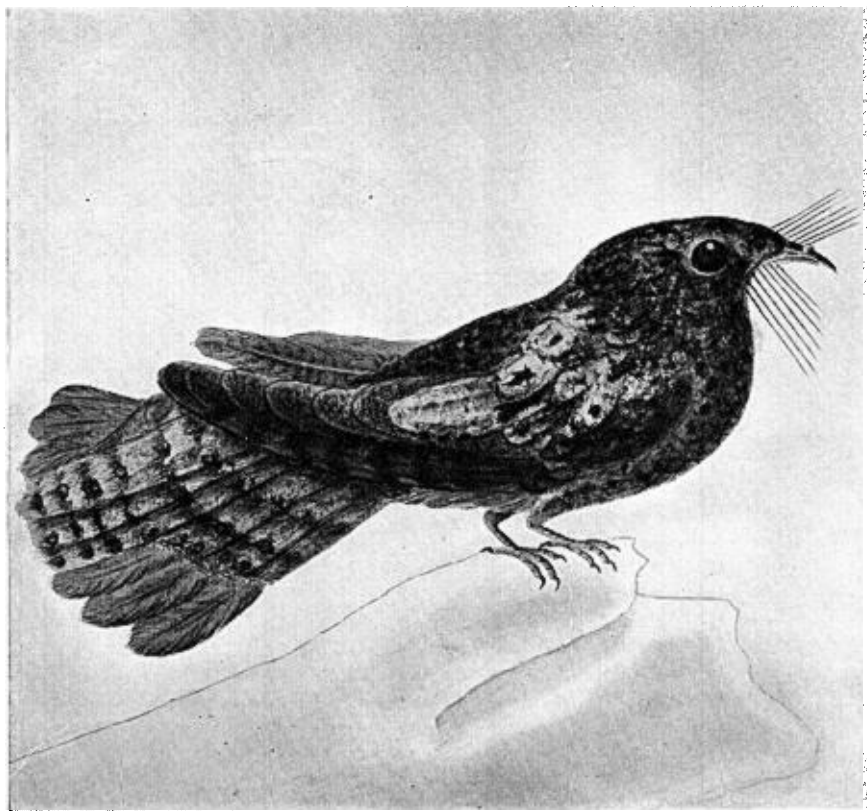
No. 56. *Casmerodius albus egretta* (Gmelin). AMERICAN EGRET.—Heron blanc, de trois pieds de haut. Also marked heron blanc de St. Domingue de trois pieds de haut. fait le 16 May, 1775 Rabié.

The bill is yellow, and the legs black.

No. 57. *Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli* (Boddaert). BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.—Le jacobin, 1/2 grandeur naturelle.

No. 58. *Ionornis martinicus* (Linnaeus). PURPLE GALLINULE.—La Poule d'eau, grandeur naturelle. Also marked no. 5, Poule d'Eau de St. Domingue grand nat. le 28, May 1775 Rabié.

*U. S. National Museum,
Washington, D. C.*



HISPANIOLAN GOATSUCKER.
Antrostomus cubanensis ekmani.