

REDISCOVERY OF *HELEODYTES CHIAPENSIS* AND
TANGARA CABANISI

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DURING the summer of 1937, while collecting birds in the State of Chiapas, southern Mexico, I had the good fortune to secure seven specimens of *Heleodytes chiapensis* (Salvin and Godman) and a single skin of *Tangara cabanisi* (Sclater). Both of these so-called 'lost species' had previously been known only from the unique types collected many years ago.

Heleodytes chiapensis was described in 1891 from a specimen obtained at Tonalá, Chiapas, by W. B. Richardson. It was not again mentioned in the literature until the third volume of Ridgway's 'Birds of North and Middle America' appeared in 1904. Ridgway had to content himself with a quotation of the original description, since he had not seen the type in the British Museum. He stated, however, that it was unfortunate that the describers did not point out any characters by which *chiapensis* could be told from the races of *H. rufinucha*. When Hellmayr came to treat the wrens in his 'Catalogue of the Birds of the Americas' in 1934, he also had not seen the type of *chiapensis*. For this reason Ridgway's statement misled him into considering *chiapensis* identical with *Heleodytes rufinucha nigricaudatus* Nelson. Since *chiapensis* was of earlier date than *nigricaudatus*, he employed the combination *Heleodytes rufinucha chiapensis* (Salvin and Godman) for the Chiapas race of *rufinucha* with *nigricaudatus* Nelson as a synonym. Within the last few months, however, van Rossem has examined the type of *chiapensis* in London and states that it is specifically distinct from *Heleodytes rufinucha*, although he, too, fails to mention characters by which the two birds can be told apart.

My series of four adults and three birds of the year was taken between June 27 and July 27, 1937, at Finca Esperanza, a coffee plantation inland from the town of Escuintla in the District of Soconusco, Chiapas. A comparison of these birds with specimens of *Heleodytes rufinucha nigricaudatus* shows at the first glance that the two are specifically distinct. In the first place *chiapensis* is much larger, being about twice the bulk of *rufinucha*. In *chiapensis* the pileum and hind neck are entirely black, and this color even extends down on to the upper portion of the back; in *rufinucha* only the pileum is black, and the hind neck and upper back are chestnut in color. The remiges of *chiapensis* have only small imperfect bars which are confined to the outer webs, with a faint trace of dusky barring on both webs of the tertials in fresh plumage. The wing-coverts, back, and upper tail-coverts are plain chestnut. The whole effect is of a plainly colored unbarred bird. The forms of *rufinucha* are heavily barred with blackish and buffy on the

wings and upper tail-coverts, and the barring even encroaches to some extent on the lower back. In *rufinucha*, moreover, the ground color of the tail is black, while in *chiapensis* the tail is mainly russet with narrow bars of dusky.

I found *H. chiapensis* in a variety of habitats at Esperanza. It occurred in the rain forest, where family groups were wont to clamber in and about the vines festooning the trees. At other times its loud ringing song was heard from thorny hedgerows surrounding a pasture which had been cleared from the forest. It was even seen upon occasion about the buildings of the patio at Esperanza, and a not infrequent sight was one of these birds poking its head inquisitively out of the chicken coop, where, I was told, it came to suck hens' eggs. This alleged habit has given the bird its local name, 'chupa huevos.'

By June 27, the first day spent in the field, the young of the year were already full grown, although still retaining the soft fluffy feathers of immaturity on the crissum. The adults at this time were badly worn: the throat was almost bare, and the wings and tail were much abraded. The last adult specimen was collected on July 20, when a complete molt was commencing.

My specimens of *chiapensis* were all taken in the Humid Tropical Zone at 500 feet elevation. I did not find *Heleodytes rufinucha nigricaudatus* at Esperanza, although it did occur at Escuintla and at Colonia Soconusco, only a few kilometers away, but at lower altitudes (elevation 100 to 200 feet) and in a different life zone, the Arid Tropical, instead of the Humid Tropical. The annual rainfall at Esperanza is about 110 inches. Precipitation is much less on the coastal plain where *nigricaudatus* occurs.

For the sake of completeness, I append the synonymy and description of this wren.

HELEODYTES CHIAPENSIS (Salvin and Godman)

Campylorhynchus chiapensis Salvin and Godman, Ibis (6) 3: 609, October, 1891 (Tonalá, Chiapas; type in British Museum).—Dickey and van Rossem, Publ. Field Mus. Nat. Hist., zool. ser., 23: 431 in text, March 21, 1938 (crit.).

Heleodytes chiapensis Ridgway, Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 50, pt. 3, 504, 1904 (crit.).—van Rossem, Bull. Brit. Ornith. Club, 59: no. 416, 10, November 17, 1938 (crit. and meas. type).

Heleodytes rufinucha chiapensis Hellmayr, Publ. Field Mus. Nat. Hist., zool. ser., 13: pt. 7, 145, 1934, part (as to type only).

Postocular stripe, pileum, and hind neck blackish brown (fading to more brownish in worn plumage), the black extending on to the upper back, where gradually merging into cinnamon russet of back and upper tail-coverts, the latter occasionally with the faintest indication of dusky cross-bars; rump occasionally with concealed dusky-bordered small white spots; remiges dark brown, all except the outermost primary edged with cinnamon russet, the edgings increasing in extent on inner flight feathers and usually broken by narrow indistinct bars of dusky; tertials wholly cinnamon

russet, crossed by narrow indistinct dusky bars; primary coverts blackish, narrowly edged with cinnamon russet; remaining wing-coverts plain cinnamon russet like back, but the greater coverts more or less suffused with dusky like upper back; central pair of rectrices dull russet, with rather indistinct narrow dusky bars; remaining rectrices blackish brown, edged with dusky-barred russet on outer web, and with a broad oblique subterminal band of white (rather buffy in fresh plumage) on both webs, except on second pair from inside, where confined to inner web; outer pair of rectrices similar, but mottled or irregularly barred on outer web with dusky, russet, and buffy; lores pale dusky; superciliary stripe, auricular region, sides of neck, and entire under parts, including under wing-coverts and axillars, plain white, changing to pinkish buff on flanks and to cinnamon-buff on crissum, on which parts some of the feathers have a dusky streak or bars along shaft; thighs buffy, with a patch of russet or dusky or both on heel joint; bill (in skin) blackish, horn color on lower surface of basal portion of mandible; feet grayish brown.

The sexes are alike, and the young differ only in having the superciliary stripe more buffy. An immature male collected on June 27 weighed 49.6 grams.

Measurements (in millimeters) of adults are as follows:

	Wing	Tail	Culmen from base	Tarsus	Middle toe
♂	93	82	29.5	33	21
♂	93	83	28	30	20
♂	93	83.5	31	30	20.5
♀	88	78.5	29	30.5	20.5
♀ (type) ¹	85	74	26.1	29	19

¹ Ex van Rossem; bill measurement is of exposed culmen.

My specimen of *Tangara cabanisi*, an immature female, was taken at an altitude of 5,500 feet on Mount Ovando, near Escuintla, Chiapas, on August 29, 1937. I shot it from the top of a tall tree on the edge of a small clearing in the cloud forest. It was alone, and no others were seen subsequently although a thorough search of the vicinity was made during the next week. As this is the first example to be taken since the original specimen was collected over seventy years ago at Costa Cuca, Guatemala, it is exceedingly unfortunate that both the type and my bird are immature. My specimen is duller than Sclater's figure of the male type (Ibis, 1868, pl. 3) and has much less blue on the pileum and shoulders, which are largely gray. The auricular region in my bird is dusky with grayish shaft-lines, instead of being the greenish yellow of the plate. There are only a few blackish subterminal spots on the upper breast, which is marked by dusky shaft-lines. The flanks are tinged with pale blue, not yellowish green. The measurements are somewhat smaller than those of the type as given by Hellmayr (Cat. Birds Americas, pt. 9, 139, note, 1936) namely: length in flesh, 157 mm.; extent, 265; wing, 82; tail, 53.5; culmen, 11; tarsus, 19; middle toe, 13. My bird had the skull unossified and was undergoing a body molt. Its soft parts were colored as follows: iris dark brown; bill dusky horn, whitish at

base of lower mandible; legs and feet blue-gray (brownish in dried skin) with orange soles.

It is interesting to note that Salvin and Godman predicted that this species might eventually turn up in Chiapas.

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