LEISTES.—ICTERUS.

Fuscescento-niger plerumque ochraceo indistincte striatus; cauda frequenter pallide fusco transvittata, campetrio alari et corpore medio subitus a mento ad medium ventrem cocineis; rostro corneo, pedibus corylinis. Long. tota 6-5, alæ 3-6, caudæ 2-4, rostri a rictu 0-75, tarsi 1-1.

♀ supra nigricans, cervino variagata, stria verticalis supercilii et corpore subitus cervices, pectoris lateribus et hypochondriis nigro guttulatis; campetrio alari cocineo, rostro pallide corneo. Long. tota 5-4, alæ 3-2, caudæ 2-0. (Deser. maris et feminine ex Mina Chorcha, Panama. Mus. nostr.)

Hab. PANAMA, Mina de Chorcha (Arcé²), Lion Hill (M'Leannan⁶).—SOUTH AMERICA from Colombia⁶ to Ecuador⁶, Amazonas Valley⁶, and Guiana¹³.

A well-known species of the northern portion of South America, ranging across the continent from the mouth of the Amazon to Ecuador and Colombia; it just enters our region in the State of Panama, whence we have specimens both from the line of the railway and from the neighbourhood of Chiriqui. Nothing has been recorded of its habits.

Subfam. IV. ICTERINÆ.

Nares plus minusve membrano obtectæ; mesorhinion altum, hand dilatatum, rotundatum; tarsi breves, cauda rotundata.

ICTERUS.


It is now, we believe, generally admitted that the genus Icterus cannot be satisfactorily divided, though several attempts have been made to do so. Cassin, who carried this subdivision to the greatest extent, split up Icterus into three genera, and each of these into a number of sections or subgenera; but this treatment of the genus has not met with much favour. Mr. Sclater, in the ‘Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum,’ vol. xi., placed all these names as synonyms of Icterus, and adopted the three sections of it tentatively proposed by Messrs. Baird, Brewer, and Ridgway in the ‘History of North-Amercian Birds.’ The definitions of these divisions are hardly satisfactory, for it will be seen that the first (A) and the third (C) only differ by one having the culmen and gonys “straight” and the other “nearly straight,” and this character is hardly borne out by an examination of specimens.

So intimately connected are the extreme forms of Icterus that we do not see our way to attempt grouping them by any but colour-characteristics, and such as are shown by the difference or similarity of the sexes. These are mere guides to the determination of the species, and only serve to indicate the relationship of the species grouped together, rather than that of the groups themselves.

The species of Icterus are for the most part very well defined, if we make some allowance for differences of size and intensity of colour.

Of the thirty-eight species included in Mr. Sclater’s Catalogue, to which we now add one, no less than nineteen belong to our region *. The rest are distributed throughout

* The habitat, Panama, of I. dubusi is not sufficiently authentic for us to include the species in this work.