

GUATEMALA, Acapam, Pacific coast (*O. S.* <sup>4 5 18</sup>); NICARAGUA, Los Sábalos (*Nutting* <sup>13</sup>).—TRINIDAD <sup>18</sup>; WEST INDIES <sup>18</sup>.

The "Black Skimmer," or "Scissor-bill," is distinguished by the broad white edging to the secondaries and by the white under wing-coverts; the tail-feathers are white, with more or less brown in their centres.

Grayson states that he has observed the species in Western Mexico near San Blas during the summer months, where it was not very numerous, being, doubtless, chiefly a winter visitor to Central America. On the western side it has been observed by Sumichrast on the coast of the Gulf of Tehuantepec, and Salvin procured specimens on the Acapam Lagoon about two leagues from Chiapam on the Pacific coast of Guatemala <sup>4 5 18</sup>. From the eastern side of our region *R. nigra* has been recorded by Mr. Dresser and Dr. Berlandier. The latter regarded it as a rare species on the Mexican coast, and met with only one example near Tampico <sup>14</sup>. Dr. Gaumer states that on the northern coast of Yucatan many thousands could be seen at any time at the mouths of the rivers <sup>12</sup>. It has also been met with by Mr. Nutting at Los Sábalos, a place situated about thirty miles from the Lake of Nicaragua on the River San Juan <sup>13</sup>.

The Skimmer is seldom seen at sea, except when crossing from island to island on migration. It is a coast-frequenter, often collecting in enormous numbers, and is met with occasionally in small parties round the shores of inland lakes and along the larger rivers. *R. nigra* has all the habits of a Tern, making no nest beyond a depression in the sand, and breeding in large communities. It feeds on small fish, following them on the surface of the water and catching the minute fry with its scissor-like bill; in a similar manner it will plough up the mud in search of small molluscs. This bird has a strong flight, capable of being maintained against the most violent gale <sup>14</sup>.

The eggs vary from a long and narrow to a broad pointed oval form, the ground-colour being creamy or very pale buff, sometimes with a pinkish tinge. The markings consist of spots and blotches of black or reddish-brown, sometimes forming confluent patches, and the underlying pattern is dark purple <sup>19</sup>.

## 2. *Rhynchops melanura*.

*Rhynchops melanura*, Swains. Classif. Birds, ii. p. 373 <sup>1</sup>; Saunders, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xxv. p. 156 <sup>2</sup>.

*R. nigrae* similis, sed secundariis angustius albo marginatis, rectricibus saturate brunneis, angustissime albido limbatis, subalaribus fumoso-cinereis distinguenda. Long. tota circa 15.5, alæ 12.5, caudæ 4.7, rostri 3.2 tarsi 1.1. (Descr. av. adult. ex Cozumel I. Mus. nostr.)

*Hab.* MEXICO, Cozumel I., off Yucatan (*Gaumer* <sup>2</sup>).—COASTS AND RIVERS OF SOUTH AMERICA <sup>2</sup>.