

A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES OF MEXICAN FLYCATCHER

BY JOHN T. ZIMMER

FOR a number of years I have had in my study a specimen of a flycatcher from Mexico that has been a source of much speculation and considerable study. I have shown it to various visitors at different times and have written to Dr. Hellmayr for possible information he might have on some other specimen of similar identity, but up to date I have not been successful in finding anything which throws any light on this bird. It was originally identified as *Myiochanes richardsonii* and is labeled as that form. I discovered it in a tray of *Empidonax traillii*. Actually the bird has no close relationship to either of these genera, nor does it appear to be referable to any other genus of the Tyrannidae. Probably its nearest relative is *Xenotriccus* of Guatemala, but that relationship is not close enough to warrant placing the Mexican bird in that genus.

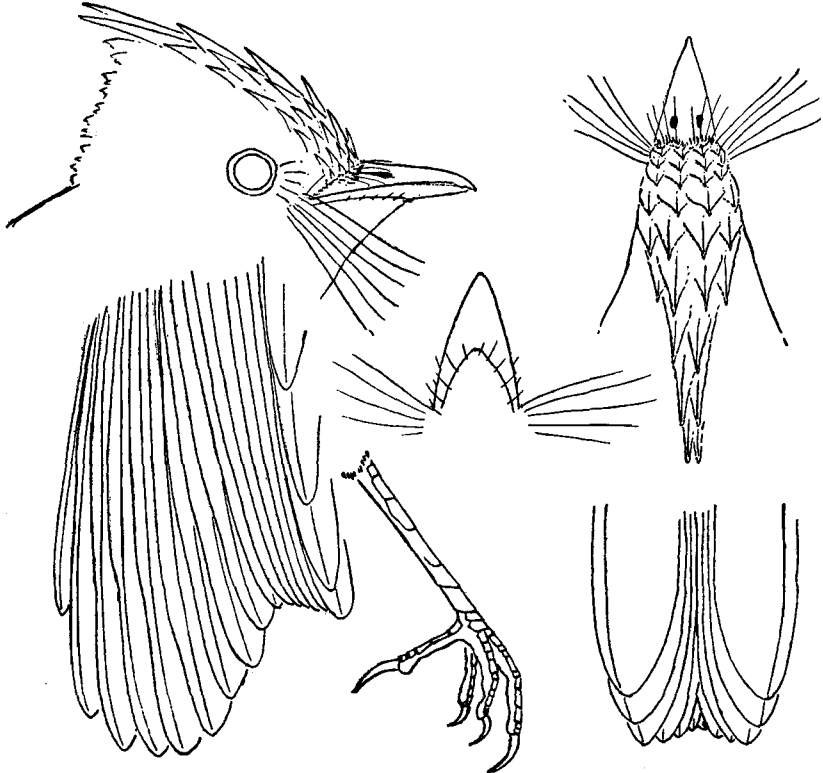
Superficial resemblances in color and size to *Myiochanes* and *Empidonax* may easily have caused the misidentification of other specimens of this interesting bird which may be present in other collections from the highlands of central Mexico. The description of the present specimen thus may serve to call attention to the form and bring to light further information about it.

Aechmolophus new genus

Small Tyrannidae (wing about 70 mm.) related to *Xenotriccus* but differing by having the bill flatter, the rictal bristles shorter, the crest decidedly longer, the outer (tenth) primary longer (shorter than the second but longer than the first), the ninth also longer, and the tail slightly shorter than the wing and much less strongly rounded than in *Xenotriccus*.

Bill (from concealed base) about as long as the head, moderately flattened, with lateral outlines very slightly convex; culmen slightly, not sharply, ridged and abruptly decurved at tip, with a small but distinct subterminal notch on the tomium; width of bill at posterior end of nostrils equal to half the length of the exposed culmen; width of bill at base equal to the length of the gonyx and just over half the length of culmen from concealed base; exposed culmen shorter than middle toe with claw and longer than outer toe with claw; nostrils oval, quite exposed except for overhanging bristles, without a distinct fossa but with a narrow superior membrane and a short (basal) inferior one; position of nostrils midway between culmen and tomium and midway between concealed base and tip of maxilla; mandible more flattened than maxilla and different in color. Feathering on top of head with acute tips, forming a greatly elongated crest, the longest feathers of which spring from the posterior part of the forehead and reach to the anterior part of the mantle; feathering of point of chin, lores, and post-nasal region strongly bristly. Tarsus long and moderately strong, one and one-half times as long as the middle toe with claw; not perfectly exaspidean since the scutes on the basal end of this member do not reach the posterior margin where there are suggestions of a second row of scales (this condition is more marked in *Xenotriccus* where the posterior edge of the basal half of the tarsus has a row of broad but rather well-defined scales, quite distinct from the anterior

row); middle toe fused to outer toe for most of the basal joint; hind toe with claw slightly shorter than middle toe with claw. Wing and tail of nearly equal length, the wing slightly longer; wing rounded, with outermost primary (tenth) longer than the first, shorter than the second, and 12 mm. shorter than the longest; ninth longer than the fourth, eighth longer than the fifth, sixth and seventh subequal and longest; longest secondaries 9.5 mm. shorter than the longest primaries, 3 mm. longer than



TEXT-FIG. 1.—Characters of *Aechmolophus mexicanus*. $\times 0.7$.

the shortest (first) primary. Tail slightly double-rounded; outermost pair of rectrices 4 mm. shorter than the longest pair, 3 mm. shorter than the middle pair. General plumage full; coloration rather dull brown and yellowish white.

The wing-formula suggests *Cnemotriccus* as do some other proportions, but the bill of the present genus is flatter, less ridged on the culmen, more convex in lateral outline, and with more exposed nostrils. Relationship to *Cnemotriccus* may, however, be indicated.

***Aechmolophus mexicanus* new species**

Type, No. 428,549, American Museum of Natural History, from Cuernavaca, Mexico, altitude 5000 feet. Adult male, collected April 9, 1908, by Austin Paul Smith; original No. 9931.

Diagnosis.—Superficially somewhat similar in general appearance to *Contopus cinereus brachytarsus* of Central America but differing in having the crest very much

longer, the sides of the head grayer, the throat and breast less deeply yellow, the pale wing-bars stronger (crossing both webs of the coverts at their tips), the under wing-coverts paler and more yellowish, the eye-ring uninterrupted, the outer margin of the outermost rectrices distinctly pale, the tail nearly as long as the wing, and the bill narrower and less sharply ridged on the culmen and with the nostrils more exposed, the wing much more rounded, and the tarsi much longer.

Range.—Known only from Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Description of Type.—Forehead grayish brown with narrow whitish or yellowish lateral margins; rest of forehead and central part of crown dusky brown with traces of paler and more grayish margins; feathers progressively more elongate back to an imaginary line across the anterior third of the orbits where the median feathers are 22.5 mm. in length (30 mm. from exposed base of culmen), forming a very strong, pointed crest (the feathers of the entire crest from the forehead to the crown are sharply pointed and the longer ones rather lanceolate, but a certain amount of this may be due to abrasion which may also have shortened the crest somewhat); from the center of the crown to the occiput, the feathers progressively shorten and reduce the crest to normal plumage which is, however, particularly full, like the rest of the body plumage; lores and post-nasal feathering whitish with strong, black bristles; a very narrow but complete ring of whitish around the eye; malar region dull grayish brown; auriculars somewhat buffy brown; sides of crown and occiput, postocular region, sides of neck, and hind neck dull grayish brown; mantle dull, light brown (darker than 'light brownish olive'); lower back, rump, and upper tail-coverts a little paler. Chin whitish, with black, bristly tips on anterior margin; throat with a faint tinge of light yellow; breast and sides dull, tinged with brownish, forming a not very conspicuous pectoral band; belly, flanks, and under tail-coverts pale 'Marguerite yellow'; thighs brownish. Wings 'hair brown'; primaries with narrow whitish outer margins; secondaries with pale outer margins stronger but not reaching tips of the wing-coverts, thus leaving a dark basal patch; tips of secondaries more broadly whitish; tertials with pale outer margins; greater and median upper wing-coverts dusky brown, with rather broad, dull-whitish tips (across both webs), forming two conspicuous wing-bars; lesser coverts colored like the mantle; under wing-coverts and axillars 'Marguerite yellow'; inner margins of remiges narrowly pale, dull yellowish, not reaching the tips of the feathers. Tail 'hair brown,' with outer margins of outer rectrices narrowly whitish and with suggestions of pale tips on all of the feathers; inner margins of rectrices (except middle pair) narrowly and inconspicuously paler. Maxilla dark brown; mandible dull yellowish; feet dark brown.

Wing, 70.5 mm.; tail, 69.5; exposed culmen, 11.3; culmen from base, 15.5; tarsus, 18.

Remarks.—The general appearance of *Aechmolophus mexicanus* is so plain and lacking in distinctive pattern that at first glance it might be confused with one of various small and dull-colored members of the family Tyrannidae. The extremely long and pointed crest, however, at once marks the bird as unusual and a closer examination reveals the combination of characters that prevents association with any of the known genera.

It is hoped that future collecting will produce additional specimens of this curious species if, indeed, examples are not already preserved under wrongly applied names.

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