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Notes on the Honduran Emerald.—The Honduran Emerald (*Amazilia luciae*) is a little-known hummingbird endemic to Honduras. Monroe (The Birds of Honduras, AOU monograph 7:182–183, 1968) summarized what was then known about the species, and nothing has been added since. Eleven specimens have been collected at various localities from Santa Barbara in the west to Catacamas in the east, the most recent in June 1950. Monroe (1968) speculated that *A. luciae* was "presumably a forest inhabitant and . . . possibly common locally." The AOU Check-list of North American Birds (1983) gives the habitat of *A. luciae* as "Unknown, localities generally in the humid lowlands." However, plotting the collecting localities on a habitat map of Honduras (Monroe 1968:20) reveals that all sites where *A. luciae* has been taken lie in or close to "arid and mixed scrub and thorn forest."

During two weeks in Honduras, from May to early June 1988, we found *A. luciae* to be a common inhabitant of arid thorn forest and scrub in the upper Rio Aguan valley, Department of Yoro. We began our search around Coyoles Central, 7 June 1988, assuming it to be the same "Coyoles" where Twomey and Hawkins collected the most recent specimens of *A. luciae* (hereafter also referred to as "emeralds"). Fairly large tracts of thorn forest (6 to 10 m), dominated by Mimosaceae, Cactaceae, and Euphorbiaceae, grew close to town, although the understory was grazed heavily by cattle. About 6 km west-northwest of Coyoles we located at least six emeralds in about 1 h. Few flowers were evident, and all emeralds appeared in response to imitations of Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) calls. They seemed slow to respond and usually appeared well after a mobbing band of other birds, mainly White-bellied Wrens (*Uropsila leucogastra*) and White-lored Gnatcatchers (*Polioptila albiloris*) had formed. Emeralds perched 1.5 to 8 m up in bare trees and bushes and sat for up to 30 sec before losing interest. When a pygmy-owl did appear one emerald stayed with it for several min and followed it closely from tree to tree. Other birds at the site included Cinnamon Hummingbird (*A. rutila*), Black-headed Trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*), Elegant Trogon (*T. elegans*), Northern Beardless Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma imberbe*), Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*), and Green Jay (*Cyanocorax yncas*).

Having learned a little of the habitat, we easily found emeralds in similar, but more cut-over and heavily grazed, thorn forest and scrub 4 km west of Olanchito (about 16 km east

of Coyoles). At that site we spent several h observing emeralds the morning of 8 June 1988. At least 12 to 15 individuals were present in an area 200 × 200 m. At this second site, emeralds fed at several flowering plants, namely *Pithecelobium lentiscifolium* (Rich.) C. Wright, *Aechmea* cf. *bracteata* Griseb., *Pedilanthus* cf. *tithymaloides* (L.) Poit., and a conspicuous organpipe cactus, probably *Lemairocereus* or *Cephalocereus*; the emeralds fed at heights from 0.5 to 10 m. Several birds also made prolonged insect-catching flights (up to 60 sec or longer), particularly around the trunks of organpipe cacti. One bird, watched for about 40 min, strongly defended a territory of about 10 × 10 m against at least two other emeralds which periodically came by to feed on *Pithecelobium.*

Other birds characteristic of the Olanchito site included those listed for Coyoles (except *T. elegans* and *C. yncas*) plus Thicket Tinamou (*Crypturellus cinnamomeus*), Spot-bellied Bobwhite (*Colinus leucopogon*), Striped Cuckoo (*Tapera naevia*), Lesser Ground-Cuckoo (*Morococcyx erythropygus*), Fork-tailed Emerald (*Chlorostilbon canivetii*), and *Arremonops* sp., referred to Green-backed Sparrow (*A. chloronotus*) by Monroe (1968).

During our field work, we also visited Santa Barbara and Cofradia, two other *A. luciae* localities. At both sites we found arid conditions similar to the upper Aguan valley, but most thorn forest had been cleared for grazing and what little remained was extremely dry, with few birds of any species apparent.

From close-range observations of at least 15 emeralds, we estimate that *A. luciae* is slightly smaller than *A. rutila* and in posture and habits differs little from other Middle American *Amazilia.* The sexes appear to differ only slightly, mainly in the intensity and extent of the gorget. In life the maxilla is blackish, the mandible pinkish-red with a dark tip; the bill appears relatively long and slightly decurved. A white post-ocular spot and smaller pre-ocular spot lend the species a distinctive facial expression. The upperparts are deep emerald green and the upper tail-coverts and tail are more bronzy with a blackish subterminal band on the outer rectrices. Remiges are dark brown. Seen in the right light, the gorget flashes solidly turquoise but most of the time the underparts appear pale grayish, with dark mottling on the throat and upper chest. At rest the wings fall slightly short of the distinctly cleft tail. Feet are dark gray. One bird (apparently singing) appeared in very fresh plumage. A second, relatively dull bird (female?) had the outer two primaries and several secondaries very worn and faded in contrast to the newer and darker remiges; no rectrix molt was noted on any birds.

The most commonly heard vocalizations were a hard, slightly metallic ticking call, often steadily repeated "chik, chik-chik, chik chik . . ." and a hard, slightly buzzy chattering given in flight "zzchi ---" and "chik chi zzhi ---," reminiscent of the calls of Chestnut-collared Swift (*Cypseloides rutilus*). On returning to a perch, an emerald defending its feeding territory often uttered a dry, quiet gruff warbling, possibly the song, or at least a "whisper song." During intra-specific chasing we heard a hard buzzy chatter "chirr-rr-irr-rr-rr" and a high sharp "siik" given in pursuit.

An association with arid interior valleys explains the restricted range of *A. luciae.* Given the pressures to convert much land to agricultural practices, *A. luciae* may be a threatened species. Photographs of the food plants and habitat and a copy of Webb's field sketches of *A. luciae* have been deposited at the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

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