

## *Euphonia violacea* (Violaceous Euphonia)

Family: Fringillidae (Finches)

Order: Passeriformes (Perching Birds)

Class: Aves (Birds)



**Fig. 1.** Violaceous euphonia, *Euphonia violacea*.

[<https://www.beautyofbirds.com/violaceouseuphonias.html>, downloaded 9 March 2017]

**TRAITS.** *Euphonia violacea* is one of many species of euphonias. The adult male is 10-11.5 cm long and approximately 14g in weight. He has a solid black beak and is bicoloured, with a deep glossy purplish/blue above with some white panels on the underside of its large tail-feathers, while its underparts are a rich yellow/orange colour (Figs 1 and 2) (Restall et al., 2007). The adult female has a length of 10cm and an approximate weight of between 13.5-16.5g, up to 19g when laying. Her beak is blackish or blue grey in colour the body is a uniform olive-green above with mostly olive-yellow to deep yellow below (Figs 1 and 3). The wings of both sexes range from 54-62mm (Hilty, 2003).

**DISTRUBUTION.** *Euphonia violacea* is resident in South American countries only and has made its presence seen in Trinidad, Venezuela, Brazil, Paraguay and northeastern Argentina (Fig. 4) (Ffrench, 2012).

**HABITAT AND ACTIVITY.** This species enjoys tropical environments such as the canopy of humid forests, mangroves, forest edges, isolated trees and shrubs in clearings, cultivated areas and even savannas. Both the male and female forage alone, but also sometimes in pairs and small flocks and even join mixed species flocks with other euphonias (Martinez, 2014). Violaceous euphonias tend to nest in very inaccessible places, the females building the nests (Hilty, 2003).

**FOOD AND FEEDING.** The violaceous euphonia consumes a variety of small fruits, and rarely eats insects as compared to other bird species. The fruits are mostly mistletoes, epiphytic cactus, and *Cecropia* fruit which are suited for them because of their simple digestive tract. Along with insects it has been seen to consume terrestrial snails in Brazil. The nestlings consume fruit from both male and female, as well as worms (Martinez, 2014; Ffrench, 2012).

**REPRODUCTION.** The breeding of the violaceous euphonia takes place during the first 8 months of the year which would be from January-August, with its peak from May to July in Trinidad (Ffrench, 2012). However the breeding would vary for the different countries; in Brazil, October is reproductive month, compared to Suriname where it is February, April and November. There are between 2-5 hatchlings per clutch. Only the female incubates, but both the male and the female provision the nestlings (Johnson, 2010). The nesting period is 21 days in which the male does the protecting of both female and the nest. The nest is made of dead leaves, rootlets and moss lined with ferns and grass (Ffrench, 2012).

**BEHAVIOUR.** When feeding it usually clings with its head and body pointed downwards, ingesting the pulp and seeds of the fruit while dropping the skin to the ground. Some remain in mated pairs for the entire year. In a courtship display the male usually wants to show off to the female by flicking its wings and flying around and frequently bowing to show its crown colour. Females are attracted to the males that have the brightest colours and shows off the most. The sound of this species is very distinctive, and it also gives imitations of other birds especially in Trinidad. When escaping or evading predation a loud chatter or chirp is given as a warning or distraction display; buzzes, chatter notes, chi-chi-chi, pee-eep and short trills are also characteristic (Hilty, 2003; Ffrench, 2012; Martinez, 2014).

**APPLIED ECOLOGY-** This species is listed as of Least Concern as it is common in all the specified countries that it takes up residence in. The species shows no signs of major decrease (IUCN, 2016).

## REFERENCES

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**Fig. 2.** Male violaceous euphonia (*Euphonia violacea*).

[<https://www.beautyofbirds.com/violaceouseuphonias.html>, downloaded 9 March 2017]



**Fig. 3.** Female violaceous euphonia (*Euphonia violacea*).

[<https://www.beautyofbirds.com/violaceouseuphonias.html>, downloaded 9 March 2017]



**Fig. 4.** Distribution map of the violaceous euphonia.

[<http://www.planetofbirds.com/passeriformes-fringillidae-violaceous-euphonia-euphonia-violacea>, downloaded 9 March 2017]

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