

Amazilia tobaci (Copper-rumped Hummingbird)

Family: Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

Order: Trochiliformes (Hummingbirds)

Class: Aves (Birds)



Fig. 1. Copper-rumped hummingbird, *Amazilia tobaci*.

[<http://epicureandculture.com/trinidad-the-land-of-the-hummingbirds/>, downloaded 21 February 2017]

TRAITS. *Amazilia tobaci* is a small and exquisitely coloured bird with highly iridescent plumage (Bond, 1971), about 9cm long. The upperparts are generally bronze green with pronounced coppery bronze on the rump (Fig. 1); the head and underparts are brilliant green; thighs are white; tail blackish blue; bill straight, black and approximately 19mm in length. The average length of the wing is 55mm and body weight ranges between 3.5-5g, the average weight being 4.4g (Ffrench and O'Neill, 2012). The sexes are similar in appearance (Ffrench and Neckles, 2004).

DISTRIBUTION. *Amazilia tobaci* is widespread in Venezuela and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (Fig. 2). There are several subspecies of *Amazilia tobaci*. Two of these subspecies are common to Trinidad and Tobago. *Amazilia tobaci tobaci* is confined to the island of Tobago while

the subspecies *Amazilia tobaci erythronota* ranges through Trinidad and the Bocas Islands (Ffrench and O'Neill, 2012). *Amazilia tobaci* has also been spotted on Carriacou in the Grenadines and on the island of Grenada (Lack, 1973).

HABITAT AND ACTIVITY. *Amazilia tobaci* are found in habitats such as woodlands, savannas, rainforests, plantations, parks and gardens (Erize and Rumboll, 2006). In Tobago, *Amazilia tobaci* tends to reside on exposed branches (Feinsinger et al., 1982).

FOOD AND FEEDING. Their food consists of nectar and small insects obtained by penetrating blossoms with their bills (Bond 1971). As depicted in Fig. 3, their feeding territory consists of clumps of flowers or a distribution of scattered flowers when clumps are unavailable. Since nectar is a rapidly renewed supply of food in flowers, nectar is defendable. Where there is competition for nectar on Trinidad, the species utilizes primary food plants which are suitable for their bill size, whereas in Tobago, they use flowers of varied shapes and sizes (Feinsinger et al., 1982; Keeler-Wolf, 1982).

POPULATION ECOLOGY. This species is a common resident in nature parks such as the ASA Wright Nature Centre, Trinidad. Also, in botanical gardens throughout the islands. Limited information has been published about the population size of this species. The quantification of the population of *Amazilia tobaci* have not be conducted.

REPRODUCTION. Breeding recorded in most months in Trinidad. In Tobago, nests have been found between November and June. Moults take place between May and September. As seen in Fig. 4, the nest of the *Amazilia tobaci* comprises of a tiny cup of plant thickly decorated with grey lichen and saddled on a branch approximately 1-3m above ground (Bond, 1971). *Amazilia tobaci* are also known to build nests on wires, clotheslines, trees or bushes and light fittings. An egg measures 13 x 8.5 mm. The incubation period takes about 16 or 17 days and fledging occurs between 19 and 23 days. There are usually 3 broods per season; intervals between broods vary between 1 to 4 weeks (Ffrench and O'Neill, 2012).

BEHAVIOUR. *Amazilia tobaci* is an extremely aggressive species. They are known to attack and dominate other hummingbirds and much larger species. They usually defend their breeding territory against other *Amazilia tobaci* and intruders such as other species of birds. It achieves this by flying at the intruder at high speed, colliding in mid-air with the intruder while twittering furiously throughout the attack. As depicted in Fig. 5, another strategy of *Amazilia tobaci* is to attack in several pendulum-like sweeps with the target at the lowest point of each hit. This usually occurs when a larger species has invaded its territory. In addition, *Amazilia tobaci* usually takes a bath by plunging into a stream and totally immersing itself (Ffrench and O'Neill, 2012).

APPLIED ECOLOGY. *Amazilia tobaci* has a very large range and is listed as Least Concern (LC) because it is a common and does not have the requirements for vulnerability under the range size standard (IUCN, 2012). There has been no quantification of the population of this species and there has been no major threats to the species.

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Posted online: 2017



Fig. 2. Copper-rumped hummingbird geographic distribution.

[<http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/map/?cn=Copper-rumped%20Hummingbird&sn=Amazilia%20tobaci&sc=corhum1&species=256216>, downloaded 22 February 2017]



Fig. 3. Copper-rumped hummingbird feeding on the nectar of a hibiscus flower.

[<http://www.hbw.com/ibc/photo/copper-rumped-hummingbird-amazilia-tobaci/hummingbird-feeding-hibiskus-flower>, downloaded 23 February 2017]



Fig. 4. *Amazilia tobaci* nesting.

[<https://www.fotolia.com/id/119130833>, downloaded 23 February 2017]



Fig. 5. Copper-rumped hummingbird defending its territory from another copper-rumped hummingbird.

[<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/564x/41/3b/5d/413b5d35df74ee2c9e0ada485968f41d.jpg>, downloaded 23 February 2017]

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