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Yellow-billed toucanets (*Aulacorhynchus sulcatus calorhynchus*)

Stock#: 60718
Map Maker: Hart / Gould
Date: 1870 circa
Place: London
Color: (See Description)
Condition: VG
Size: 14.5 x 22 inches sheet size
Price: SOLD



Description:

A superb original watercolor of a toucan for an unpublished work by John Gould.

An exquisite, finished watercolor by William Hart, prepared for John Gould, depicting two toucanets, one of which with wings extended, each perched on a separate branch, with intertwined flowering vines. This drawing is the final preparatory watercolor for an unpublished lithograph. [A pencil sketch, likely by John Gould](#), upon which the present drawing is based, is now in the Sauer Collection at the University of Kansas (Gould 2041). The drawing contains several pencil amendments, likely written by Gould or an assistant. Upper right: "Vol 20 - Tab 5481" (Presumably referring to the *Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum*.) Upper left: "10 Feathers in Tail not 12." This is quite an emphatic correction of Hart, who had



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failed to correctly translate Gould's original sketch, which clearly showed only 5 tail feathers on one side. The superfluous feather is further crossed out. In 1874, Gould published an article in *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* (volume 14, page 183), describing three new species of green toucanets. In that article he describes the bird pictured in this painting:

XXV.--- *On three new Species of Toucans pertaining to the Genus Aulacorhamphus*. By JOHN GOULD, F.R.S. &c.

THE remarkable South-American family of Rhamphastidae, or Toucans, of which about six kinds were known to Linnaeus, now amount to over fifty very distinct species, each possessing good and tangible specific characters. The entire family has been subdivided into five groups, to which the following generic appellations have been applied---viz. *Rhampastos*, *Pteroglossus*, *Selenidera*, *Andigena*, and *Aulacorhamphus*.

Aulacorhamphus calorhynchus.

Entire plumage green, with the following exceptions:---above and surrounding the bare space in which the eye is placed bright blue; throat grey, washed with blue; tail-feathers green, including to blue towards the tips. Bill yellow, with the central portions of both mandibles greenish yellow, bounded behind by a narrow line of white; bare skin surrounding the eye reddish brown; legs greenish blue.

Sexes alike in colour; female rather smaller than the male.

Measurements of the male---total length 14 inches, wing 5, tail 5, bill 3 1/2, tarsus 1 1/4. *Hab.* Merida. Collected by Mr. Goering.

This is by far the finest species of the little section of the Rhamphastidae to which it belongs---a section differing from the rest of the green toucans by the tail-feathers being uniform in colour. The present species is altogether larger than that of the old *A. sulcatus*, and very different in the marking of its bill.

We know from Gould's article in *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* (volume 14, page 183) that in 1874 he had a strong interest in new toucan species. This makes sense as an approximate date for the drawings, too. The article and drawings suggest that around this time Gould may have been reassessing his second *Monograph of the Rhamphastidae*, wishing to update the work yet again. We are aware of at least six finished but unpublished toucan drawings done for Gould around this time (and possibly a seventh described in H. P. Kraus, *The Ninetieth Catalogue*). Six unpublished toucan drawings are mentioned in Henry Sotheran's *Piccadilly Notes*, Number 9, and we have been able to trace six extant drawings. We have purchased four of them, another is with the London drawings trade, and the



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other is at the University of Kansas in the Sauer Collection (Gould 1053). All of this makes for a rather exciting discovery: the final remnants of Gould's unpublished third *Monograph of the Ramphastidae*.

Provenance

John Gould's estate;

Henry Sotheran's Ltd.;

Item 1872, <i>Piccadilly Notes, Number 9</i>, London, 1933. "Six magnificent original water-colour drawings of

toucans, unpublished. £5.5s each." (See scanned catalog page.);

By repute, Mallett Antiques;

Private English collection;

Private sale, Dreweatts 1759 (2014)

Detailed Condition:

Watercolor and graphite with touches of gum arabic, on cream wove paper.