

## RARE TANAGERS IMPORTED INTO BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS IN 1973

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The ban on importation of birds into the United States imposed at the end of 1972, has resulted in an increased import of Central and South American birds into west European countries, and large consignments of neotropical birds including tanagers have reached Belgium and the Netherlands.

Most of the tanagers were from Ecuador and Colombia, but small consignments were also obtained from Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru.

The following list gives the rare species (or subspecies) which were included in these imports :

Mexico : *Piranga bidentata*.\*

Colombia : *Tangara vitriolina*,\* *Piranga olivacea*,\* *Piranga flava*,\*  
*Cissopis leveriana*, *Schistochlamys melanopis*.

Ecuador : *Tersina viridis*, *Chlorochrysa calliparaea*, *Euphonia minuta*,\* *Tangara rufigula*,\* *Tangara labradorides*,\* *Tangara pulcherrima*,\* *Tangara xanthogastra*, *Thraupis cyanocephala*,\* *Anisognathus lacrymosus*, *Buthraupis montana*, *Calochaetes coccineus*,\* *Heterospingus xanthopigijs*.\*

Bolivia : *Tangara argyforenges*,\* *Tangara vassorii (atrocaerulea)*,\*  
*Tangara xanthocephala (lamprotis)*,\* *Anisognathus flavinuchus (flavinuchus)*,\* *Delothraupis castaneoventris*.\*

Brazil : *Euphonia musica*, *Euphonia pectoralis*, *Tangara seledon*,\*  
*Tangara desmaresti*,\* *Tangara cyanocephala*,\* *Tangara preciosa*,\*  
*Thraupis ornata*,\* *Stephanophorus diadematus*,\* *Orthogonys chloricterus*.\*

Paraguay : *Tangara seledon*,\* *Tangara cyanocephala*,\* *Thraupis sayaca*.\*

Peru : *Tangara chilensis (chlorocorys)*.

\* Species kept and studied by the author.

The Swallow Tanager (*Tersina viridis*) is widespread throughout the tropical part of South America; nevertheless, this remarkable cavity-breeding tanager is rarely imported. This species has diverged so far from the tanagers in its habits and structure, that it is placed in a separate subfamily; although the colour and feather texture is also found in certain callistes, and the sexual dimorphism is like that in the Blue Dacnis (*Dacnis cayana*). Its bill is rather like that of a calliste, but much broader at the gape, which is an indication of its fly-catching habits. In captivity it does well on the usual tanager diet.

The Blue-hooded Euphonia (*Euphonia musica*) is the only one of

the genus with a distinct light to purplish blue crown and nape in both sexes. This euphonia is distributed in approximately eleven isolated populations throughout Central and South America, and the West Indies.

The Chestnut-bellied Euphonia (*Euphonia pectoralis*) is steel blue above; the lower breast, belly and under tail-coverts, dark chestnut with a small patch on the sides of the breast orange-yellow. This euphonia is closely related to the Rufous-bellied and the Golden-sided Euphonias (*Euphonia rufiventris* and *E. cayennensis*). As suggested by their names, the colour difference between the males of *Euphonia rufiventris* and *E. pectoralis*, is the rufous ochraceous and the dark chestnut underside respectively. These three *Euphonia* species probably originated from one common superspecies, which evolved into three distinct species, after being geographically divided into three populations.

The White-vented Euphonia (*Euphonia minuta*) is very small (less than 4 in.). It is one of the two smaller euphonias occurring in Colombia and Ecuador. The other species is the Fulvous-vented Euphonia (*Euphonia fulvicrissa*), which has never been imported. As indicated by their names, the males are distinguished by the white and rufous under tail-coverts respectively. The female *Euphonia fulvicrissa* has a distinct rufous forecrown and is more dark olive than the female *Euphonia minuta*.

The Orange-eared Tanager (*Chlorochrysa calliparaea*) is the most widespread of the very delicately coloured *Chlorochrysa*. These difficult tanagers are highly insectivorous, and require a large variety of live food. They are especially fond of fruit flies (*Drosophila*), ant pupae and mealworm pupae.

The Peruvian Paradise Tanager (*Tangara chilensis chlorocorys*) differs from the regularly imported nominate race by having a more yellow instead of crimson rump.

The Green-headed Tanager (*Tangara seledon*) is closely related to, but not so beautifully coloured as the Seven-coloured or Superb Tanager (*Tangara fastuosa*). Both species are extremely hardy, but tend to be rather pugnacious in a mixed collection.

The Red-necked Tanager (*Tangara cyanocephala*) is a small calliste, with a beautiful head pattern of blue and red. These tanagers are rather sensitive in regard to nutrition, and require careful acclimatisation. They were bred in 1967 by Mrs. K. M. Scamell (England).

The Orange- or Brassy-breasted Tanager (*Tangara desmaresti*) is very delicately coloured and timid. The sky blue forecrown and eye ring give it a somewhat gentle appearance. *Tangara desmaresti* should not be confused with the so-called Desmarest's Green Tanager (*Tangara gyrola viridissima*).

The few shipments of typical southern Brazilian tanagers (*Tangara*

*seledon*, *T. cyanocephala* and *T. desmaresti*, and also *Stephanophorus diadematus*) which arrived during the past months, were often heavily infected with salmonellosis or aspergillosis.

The Yellow-bellied Tanager (*Tangara xanthogastra*) belongs to the group of "spotted" tanagers, which also includes the Spotted, Speckled and Dotted Tanagers (*Tangara punctata*, *guttata* and *varia*). *Tangara xanthogastra* (5 in.) looks like a small, more yellowish green *Tangara guttata* (6 in.). Its belly is a beautiful yellow, in contrast with the white ones of *Tangara guttata* and *punctata*.

The Rufous-throated Tanager (*Tangara rufigula*) resembles a rufous *Tangara guttata*, but has a black crown, and a distinct rufous throat. The colour pattern is also more scaly, rather than spotted.

The inverse colour pattern of the "spotted" callistes is found in the Beryl-spangled Tanager (*Tangara nigroviridis*), which has a black ground-colour, covered with bluish-green spots.

The Orange-crowned Tanager (*Tangara xanthocephala lamprotis*) differs from the Yellow-crowned Tanager (*Tangara x. xanthocephala*) in having an orange instead of the yellow crown, thus giving it a more Flame-faced Tanager appearance (*Tangara parzudakii*).

The Metallic-green Tanager (*Tangara labradorides*) is a small silvery green calliste, with a typical black head colour pattern. This species was found to be rather delicate, being insectivorous and fond of ant pupae and white mealworms.

The Rufous-headed or Scrub Tanager (*Tangara vitriolina*) was found in large numbers in shipments from Colombia. This tanager can be confused with the northern subspecies of the Cayenne Tanager (*Tangara cayana*). But the upperparts are silvery straw coloured in *Tangara cayana*, and silvery green in *Tangara vitriolina*.

The Chestnut-backed Tanager (*Tangara preciosa*) is one of the typical south Brazilian species, which is imported only occasionally. The male has a bright coppery chestnut head and mantle, an ochraceous to greenish lower back and bluish-green underparts. The female is mostly green, only the crown and nape being coppery chestnut.

The subspecies *atrocaerulea* of *Tangara vassorii* differs from the uniform shining purple-blue nominate race, the Blue and black Tanager by having a conspicuous silvery straw-coloured nuchal patch and a more or less spotted underside.

The Green-throated Tanager (*Tangara argyforenges*) is very rare. The male is remarkably coloured, being mostly black with a silvery green throat, and silvery straw-coloured flanks and back. The female is mostly green, silvery on throat and breast, yellowish on back and flanks. A male of this species, together with certain other tanagers from Bolivia, were purchased from Ch. Cordier (Cochabamba, Bolivia) by Antwerp Zoo (Belgium). The whole shipment consisted of seldom seen species or subspecies.

The Golden-collared Tanager (*Tangara pulcherrima*) has been previously classified as a honeycreeper (*Iridophanes pulcherrima*), where it was placed between the *Cyanerpes* honeycreepers and the *Dacnis*, together with the Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*). Recently it was transferred by Storer to the genus *Tangara*. The status of this tanager remains dubious; the bill form is somewhat intermediate between *Chlorophanes spiza* and *Tangara vassorii*, while in general behaviour and feeding preferences, it follows the Green Honeycreeper, both being very fond of nectar and fruit flies, and flying in the same swift, fluttering manner. However, its colour pattern closely resembles that of the Black-headed Tanager (*Tangara cyanoptera*), with which it also shares sexual dimorphism. Although most handbooks do not mention any sexual difference, the female *Tangara pulcherrima* differs from the male in that it lacks the golden collar, and has a greenish back and a greyish breast and throat.

The Diademed Tanager (*Stephanophorus diadematus*) is a remarkable species with a stout, bullfinch-like bill, which is rather unusual for this family. The snow-white crest, crimson in the centre, is raised with little provocation. The female has a less brilliantly coloured crest. This tanager was bred by Mrs. K. M. Scamell in 1965.

The Bolivian subspecies, *flavinuchus*, of the Blue-winged Mountain Tanagers (*Anisognathus flavinuchus*) differs from the more commonly seen subspecies, in having a black back and shining blue rump and the yellow crown patch is also narrower. The Blue-winged Mountain Tanager was bred in the Keston Foreign Bird Farm (England) in 1962.

The Lacrymose Mountain Tanager (*Anisognathus lacrymosus*) is closely related to, and has about the same colour pattern as, the Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager (*Anisognathus igniventris*), except for a tear-like orange spot below the eye. Both *Anisognathus* species were placed by de Schauensee in one genus with the previous *Compsocoma* species (*Compsocoma flavinucha* and *notabilis*), although both groups of mountain tanagers differ greatly in general behaviour, e.g. perching position, calling activities, etc. The Hooded Mountain Tanager (*Buthraupis montana*) is a sturdily built bird (8 in.), with a black, blue and yellow colour pattern. This species is protected and is therefore rarely imported.

The Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager (*Delothraupis castaneoventris*) is a very rare species, previously called *Dubusia*, and recently placed by Storer in a separate genus of its own again. The silvery blue crown, the black sides of the head and especially the conspicuous black moustachial streak give it a rather untanager-like appearance. This mountain tanager is highly insectivorous and moves through the vegetation in a quick, stealthy manner, always on the lookout for insects.

The Ornate or Golden-chevroned Tanager (*Thraupis ornata*) is the

only *Thraupis* with a sharp, pointed bill; even so its behaviour is typical of the *Thraupis* species. This tanager was bred to the second generation by H. Murray (England).

The Sayaca Tanager (*Thraupis sayaca*) is a duller version of the Blue-grey Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*), to which it is closely related, and which it replaces in the southern part of tropical South America. The Blue-capped Tanager (*Thraupis cyanocephala*) is a delicately coloured species. As with all this genus, the species mentioned are not difficult to feed.

The Vermillion Tanager (*Calochaetes coccineus*) is a very rare and beautiful species, related to *Ramphocelus*. It resembles the Masked Crimson Tanager (*Ramphocelus nigrogularis*), but only the mask, throat, wings and tail are black; the mantle and centre of the belly being vermillion. The red colour in both species is caused by a different carotenoid, being astaxanthin in the *Ramphocelus* species and canthaxanthin in *Calochaetes*. The Summer Tanager (*Piranga flava*) is the only all rosy red tanager with a pale bill. The Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) is slightly larger, and has a dark bill with a conspicuous notch in the upper mandible.

The Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) resembles the Brazilian (Scarlet) Tanager (*Ramphocelus bresilius*) in colour, but not in general behaviour. *Piranga olivacea*, like all the genus, has a light, swift flight. It is the only tanager which moults into winter plumage, when it differs from the female by having black instead of brown wings and tail. This North American *Piranga* was imported from its wintering grounds in Colombia. When no artificial colour food is given, the red colour of both species fades during the first moult in confinement, and is replaced by dull grey. The Stripe-backed or Flame-coloured Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*) arrived in a shipment of grosbeaks (*Pheucticus* species) from Mexico. Typical of this large tanager is the double-toothed bill, the distinct white wing-bars and especially the black tail with white on the tips below. It has a sharp and metallic call-note.

All *Piranga* species are very fond of live food (mealworms, ant pupae, maggots, etc.) and seem to take little fruit.

The Olive-green Tanager (*Orthogonys chloricterus*) is olive tinted, with greenish upperparts and yellowish underparts. This large tanager from southern Brazil, has a long tail and slender black bill.

The male Scarlet-browed Tanager (*Heterospingus xanthopygius*) is mostly black with yellow shoulders and rump, and white pectoral tufts. The conspicuous eye-tufts are made up of feathers varying in colour from yellowish white to scarlet, and which spring from behind the eye. The female is greyish black above, and dark grey below, with a yellow rump and white pectoral tufts. The Danish veterinary surgeon and tanager specialist E. Nørgaard-Olesen, owned a female some

years ago. This tanager is fond of live food, and all kinds of berries. The male proves rather pugnacious and attacks other tanagers alighting on the feeding table, even the larger *Ramphocelus* and *Thraupis* species.

The Magpie Tanager (*Cissopis leveriana*) is unusual in that it has pure glossy black and white plumage, and a long graduated tail. It is the largest of all tanagers (11 in.).

The male Black-faced Tanager (*Schistochlamys melanopis*) is grey, with an extensive black mask. The female is olive green, somewhat paler below. This tanager belongs to a transital genus between the tanagers and the cardinal finches (Cardinalinae), including saltators, cardinals and certain grosbeaks. This species includes some seed in its diet.

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### BREEDING THE BLUE-CROWNED CHLOROPHONIA

#### *Chlorophonia occipitalis*

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Blue-crowned Chlorophonias are outstandingly beautiful, being a brilliant emerald green, with bright blue caps, and rings of a similar blue colour round the back and sides of the neck. The flight and tail feathers end in black tips, while with the hens the green underneath merges into a beige colour towards the tail. The cock bird sports a bright yellow waistcoat and in addition to his blue neck ring he has some dark brown round the front of his neck.

The birds are approximately six to seven inches long. They have no song but chatter away in a most conversational manner interrupted with occasional inelegant squawks. They are extremely energetic, especially in the evening when they fly restlessly from one end of the aviary to the other. I cannot imagine them thriving or being happy in a cage.

Although they only infrequently take a bath in spite of the fact that one is always provided, there is nothing they like more than a heavy