

# Splits, lumps and shuffles

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This series focuses on recent taxonomic proposals – descriptions of new taxa, splits, lumps or reorganisations – that are likely to be of greatest interest to birders. This latest instalment includes: a pending split in Broad-billed Hummingbird, and a likely split in Scrub Euphonia; potential splits in Wedge-tailed Sabrewing and Rufous-fronted Thornbird; four proposed splits in Black-throated Trogon and a proposed new (but highly endangered) species of trogon to boot; no lumps; and even the possibility of reversing (!) the recent lump of ‘Fulvous-throated’ Stipplethroat.

## Secrets of the *Cyananthus* hummingbirds

Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cyananthus latirostris* is a widespread species across much of Mexico, and its distribution also just spills over into the southwestern United States. This generally is a very common bird, the kind that the birder is encouraged to learn well, so as to be better able to pick out other, ‘more interesting’ species. But Broad-billed Hummingbird turns out to have some intriguing secrets of its own. Generally there are three ‘types’ of ‘Broad-bills’: the widespread, standard Broad-billed Hummingbird across most of its range (but represented by three, rather similar subspecies); a subspecies isolated on the Islas Tres Marias, off the Pacific coast (*lawrencei*); and a subspecies restricted to southwestern Mexico (*doubledayi*). The background here is the usual story: most authorities include all within a single species; some are willing to recognise two species, *latirostris* and *doubledayi* (e.g. Howell & Webb 1995, García-Deras *et al.* 2008, del Hoyo & Collar 2014); and a very few go for broke, also recognising a third species, *lawrencei* (del Hoyo & Collar 2014, Gómez de Silva *et al.* 2020). Debate over how many species to recognise features the usual sterile arguments: some sources point to apparent signs of clinal variation within *latirostris* towards *doubledayi* (Moore 1939), whereas others disagree with that assessment, and further point out that the distributions of *latirostris* and *doubledayi* come oh so close together without apparent signs of intergradation (Howell & Webb 1995).



1 Male Broad-billed Hummingbird *Cyananthus latirostris*, San Pedro Garza García, Nuevo León, Mexico, March 2021 (Daniel Garza Tobón: [BiodiversidadMexicoDGT](#)). Recent genetic work has produced unexpected revelations about the genera *Cyananthus* and *Chlorostilbon* (emeralds).