

CUCKOO OR CATERPILLAR SHRIKES AND MINIVETS

Family CAMPOPHAGIDÆ¹

THIS family is a very composite one and its members have distinctly varied characters. The most striking feature possessed by all species of the family in common is contained in the plumage of the rump, which has broadened, stiffened shafts to the feathers and is thick and ample. In most other respects the family assimilates to the shrikes (*Laniidæ*).

The bill is hooked and notched, but not so powerful as in the true shrikes, and is broad at the base. The wing is pointed and has ten primaries, the first not very long, but not minute. The tail is long, usually distinctly graduated but sometimes rounded, and in some non-Malayan genera strongly forked. The relative length of the tarsi is also varied, but the feet are weaker than those of the shrikes. The nostrils are usually covered with dense plumes; weak rictal bristles are present. The sexes are always more or less different, sometimes very markedly so. Immature birds are barred or mottled, not spotted.

The nests are open cup-shaped structures of moss or grass, and are usually placed high in the outer branches of tall trees. The eggs, from two to four in number, are generally of some shade of green in ground-colour, mottled or blotched with brown or purplish. The habits are varied, most of the species are distinctly arboreal, many are gregarious, flying in large flocks, others are found in small parties and a few in pairs or singly.

The family is widely spread through all the warmer regions of the Old World and is well represented in Malayan countries, where it can be divided into two sections—the minivets nearly always with the dominant tints scarlet or yellow, and the cuckoo-shrikes more sober-coloured birds, clad in white, black or grey, or some combination of these.

About thirteen forms occur in the Malay Peninsula, of which four are described in this volume.

¹ For various technical reasons connected with nomenclature, it is doubtful if this name for the family is correct. For the present, however, I retain it.

KEY TO THE SPECIES HERE DESCRIBED

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|---|---|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | { | Size, large; wing not less than 5.75 in. | 2 |
| | | Size, smaller; wing not more than 5.3 in. | 3 |
| 2 | { | Under surface entirely uniform | <i>Coracina sumatrensis sumatrensis</i> (male), p. 194 |
| | | Under surface strongly barred in part | <i>Coracina sumatrensis sumatrensis</i> (female), p. 195 |
| 3 | { | With yellow or red in plumage | 4 |
| | | With no yellow or red in plumage | 5 |
| 4 | { | Belly, orange; under wing coverts, yellow | <i>Pericrocotus igneus</i> (male), p. 198 |
| | | Belly and under wing coverts, yellow | <i>Pericrocotus igneus</i> (female), p. 198 |
| 5 | { | Mantle, glossy black, contrasting with rump | <i>Lalage nigra nigra</i> (male), p. 195 |
| | | Mantle, not glossy black | 6 |
| 6 | { | A pure white forehead; nape, black | <i>Pericrocotus divaricatus</i> (male), p. 197 |
| | | Forehead, not white | 7 |
| 7 | { | Head and mantle, greyish | <i>Pericrocotus divaricatus</i> (female and juvenile), p. 197 |
| | | Head and mantle, brownish | <i>Lalage nigra nigra</i> (female and juvenile), p. 196 |

*Coracina sumatrensis sumatrensis***The Large Barred Cuckoo-Shrike**

Ceblypyris sumatrensis, S. Müller, *Verh. Natuurl. Geschied., Lande en Volkenk.*, 1839, p. 190 (West Sumatra).

Artamides sumatrensis, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 12.

Graucalus sumatrensis, Kelham, *Ibis*, 1881, p. 507.

Coracina sumatrensis sumatrensis, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus.*, viii. (part 2), 1923, p. 342.

Malay Name.—Punai rimba (doubtful).

Description.—*Adult male.*—Upper surface, wing coverts, head all round, throat and breast, uniform pale grey, the upper tail coverts rather lighter, with white edges. Bastard wing and primaries, black, with very narrow whitish edges; the secondaries grey on their outer, black on their inner webs. Inner aspect of the wing grey, much paler on the inner webs and whitish towards the base of the quills; axillaries and under wing coverts, obscurely barred with paler and darker grey. Centre tail feathers, dark grey with a terminal black band; remainder, black, with a greenish glaze, with pale tips, broadest on the outermost. Under surface, uniform grey, palest on the middle of the belly; the flanks and under tail coverts obscurely barred and tipped with paler grey; thighs, dark grey.

Adult female.—Differs from the male in having the under surface from the lower breast with transverse bars of black and pale grey of equal width; the under tail coverts whiter with narrower black bars; axillaries and under wing coverts boldly barred with black and white, the outer webs of the secondaries with a subterminal edging and tip of black, and a terminal one of white. All the tail feathers, black. Rump and upper tail coverts barred black and white, the bars broadest and clearest on the longest tail coverts; thighs, blackish, the feathers with narrow white tips.

Immature.—Barred above and below with black centres to the feathers, and buff or buffy white tips; wing coverts and secondaries broadly edged with buffy, narrowly outlined with black; tail feathers edged with white. Nearly adult birds have the throat and sides of the breast with indications of darker bars. Some males, otherwise adult, retain the barred upper tail coverts of the female.

Soft Parts.—Iris, pale lemon or whitish, darker in young birds; bill, black; feet, slaty black.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 12 in.; wing, 5·8 to 6·1 in.; tail, 4·3 to 4·6 in.; tarsus, 0·9 to 1 in.; bill from gape, 1·25 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Apparently not far north of Central Perak; Singapore Island, Tioman Island.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra. The form inhabiting Borneo and Palawan, —*C. s. concretus* (Hartl.)—is possibly distinct; other closely related races inhabit the Natunas and Anambas Islands.

Nidification.—Unknown. Nests of allied species are generally made high in the outer branches of lofty trees, and are very inaccessible. The eggs of birds of this genus are usually some shade of green in ground-colour, with blotches of dark brown and secondary markings of purple.

Habits.—A silent, lethargic bird inhabiting secondary jungle and dry scrub along the coast on the eastern side of the Malay Peninsula, but not common anywhere. As a rule it is found singly or in pairs in tall trees. In the interior of Pahang I once came across a flock of five or six in a coconut grove, but this is, I think, quite exceptional. The food is insects and caterpillars, often large and hairy ones, which are banged against boughs, possibly to get rid of the irritant hairs before being swallowed. The note is said to be a mellow, double whistle, but I have never heard it personally.

Lalage nigra nigra

The Pied Cuckoo-Shrike

Turdus niger, Forst., *Ind. Zool.*, p. 781, p. 41 (India).

Campophaga terat, Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 495.

Lalage nigra brunnescens, Stuart Baker, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, xliv., 1923, pp. 12-14 (Selangor).

Lalage nigra nigra, Kloss, *Journ. Malayan Branch Roy. Asiat. Soc.*, iv., 1926, pp. 158-160.

Malay Names.—Burong kapas; sĕlanchang; kuang-kuit. Both the latter names are often applied to wagtails, especially *Dendronanthus indicus*.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Forehead, and a broad stripe running above the eye to above the ear coverts, white; crown, upper back, scapulars and inner upper wing coverts, glossy black, with a greenish tinge; lower back, rump and upper tail coverts, grey; median and greater wing coverts, black, broadly bordered with white, forming bars on the wing; primary coverts, black, with narrow white edges. Primaries, glossy black; secondaries the same, with regular, narrow white edges. Inner aspect of wing, blackish, all except the outer primary, broadly white at the base; axillaries, under wing coverts and edge of wing, pure white. Tail feathers, black, the centre pair narrowly, and the others increasingly, tipped with white. Beneath, a line running from the gape to above the ear coverts, black; whole under surface, white, washed with pale grey on the breast and flanks.

Adult female.—The distribution of colours above, as in the male, but the glossy black everywhere replaced by fuscous earthy brown, darker on the head, wings and outer tail feathers; lower back and upper tail coverts, lighter brown with dusky cross-barring. Under surface, dirty white; the sides of the breast and flanks with regular, dusky cross bars; middle of the belly and under tail coverts, pure white.

Immature.—Young males are like the females; younger birds of both sexes have the cross-barring of the under surface more pronounced and a fulvous wash on the breast. The feathers of the upper parts, especially the head, have narrow white tips. Still younger birds have narrow black shaft lines on the under surface in addition to the cross bars, and the upper surface distinctly barred with dark brownish, with broad white tips to the feathers.

Note.—In all but very old males there is always a faint suggestion of cross-barring on the flanks.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark brown or hazel; bill and feet, black.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 6·7 to 7 in.; wing, 3·3 to 3·6 in.; tail, 2·5 to 2·7 in.; tarsus, 0·8 in.; bill from gape, 0·7 in. Females are a little smaller than males.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From about the latitude of Penang or a little north on the western side, and from Singgora on the east to the southern extremity; Penang and Singapore islands.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra, Western and Central Java, and possibly Southern Borneo.

Nidification.—The nests and eggs were found by Mr Kellow in the Larut district, Perak, on 17th May. The nest is described as a “slight structure made of fine sticks, fastened to a small branch with cobwebs and covered with lichens externally. The eggs, two in number, were greenish brown with brown blotches, and measured about 0·87 by 0·52 in.” (Baker). Kelham states that the bird breeds in Singapore in August and September.

Habits.—Baker (*loc. cit.*) says that this is a forest bird, not found in the open or round about villages and cultivation. In the Malay Peninsula it is never seen in heavy or dense forest, but occasionally in scrub and secondary

jungle, where it is found in low trees and shrubs. In many places, notably at Taiping and in parts of Kuala Lumpur and on the Selangor coast, it is a common garden bird, running about the lawns and searching for worms, etc., like a miniature edition of the Straits robin. It is, however, much quieter and shyer, and does not flirt its tail like that bird. It is generally solitary or in pairs. The young, according to Kelham, make "a most strange, plaintive noise like a child crying."

Pericrocotus divaricatus

The Ashy Minivet

Lanius divaricatus, Raffles, *Trans. Linn. Soc.*, xiii., 1822, p. 305 (Sumatra).

Pericrocotus cinereus, Lafresn., *Rev. Zool.*, viii., 1845, p. 94 (Luzon, Philippines); Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 489; Stuart Baker (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 334.

Malay Name.—Burong chok padang—or chok tanah (doubtful).

Description.—*Adult male.*—A narrow forehead, a stripe through the eye, the ear coverts and the back of the head and nape, glossy black; fore crown, pure white; rest of the upper surface, including the wing coverts, grey, darker on the mantle. Primaries and secondaries, blackish brown, edged with grey and with white bases, showing on the external aspect of the wing; axillaries, white; lesser under wing coverts and edge of wing, white; greater under wing coverts, blackish. Four centre tail feathers, blackish, grey towards the base; the remainder blackish with broad, oblique white tips. Whole of the under-surface white, somewhat grey on the sides of the breast and flanks; thighs, grey.

Adult female.—Only the lores black; head, uniform grey as the back; only the forehead somewhat mottled with white. Under surface, more greyish; the sides of the breast obscurely barred with this colour.

Immature.—Much more brownish above; the forehead and crown barred with dull brown and white.

Soft Parts.—Iris, very dark brown or black; bill and feet, black.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 8 in.; wing, 3·6 to 3·8 in.; tail, 3·9 to 4·1 in.; tarsus, 0·6 in.; bill from gape, 0·70 to 0·75 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout its length and on Penang, Junk Zeylon, Langkawi and Singapore islands; possibly on the other groups also.

Extralimital Range.—Breeding in Japan and Siberia, wintering in China, the Indo-Chinese countries, Borneo, Sumatra and the Philippines, and in South Tenasserim.

Nidification.—Does not breed in the Peninsula.

Habits.—A winter visitor only in the Malay Peninsula, arriving late, rarely before November, and not staying after the end of March. Very common along the coasts and on the small islands during this period, but not penetrating inland to any great distance or in any numbers. It has never been found at any height on the mountains. Young birds and females are always in the great majority. The habits are much the same as those of the fiery minivet, and,

like that bird, it is not, as a rule, seen in large flocks, except when actually migrating. Many are killed at the lighthouses in November and December.

Note.—A species closely resembling this is at times met with in the north of the Peninsula, Swinhoe's Minivet (*Pericrocotus cantonensis*). It differs in having no black on the head in any stage of plumage, and in being clay-brown on the back, lighter on the rump, not clear grey. A small patch on the wing, generally yellowish white, formed by the bases of the primaries, is, as a rule, much more clearly visible than in *Pericrocotus divaricatus*. It will be described more fully in a subsequent volume.

Pericrocotus igneus

The Fiery Minivet

Pericrocotus igneus, Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xv., 1846, p. 309 (Malacca); Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 324.

Malay Name.—Burong mas.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Head all round, mantle, scapulars and lesser wing coverts, glossy black, with a bluish tinge; median coverts, black, with orange tips; primary coverts, primaries and secondaries, black, all but the outer four primaries with a band of orange across the middle of the feather, becoming lemon-yellow on the inner webs; inner aspect of the wing, lead-grey, the band of yellow commencing on the inner web of the second primary; axillaries, orange; under wing coverts, mixed orange and vermilion, the greater ones partly black; edge of wing mixed orange and vermilion. Centre tail feathers, black, the next pair mainly black; the remainder orange, with a decreasing amount of black at the base, the outer pair almost entirely orange. The back and upper tail coverts, and the whole of the lower surface, fiery vermilion, the feathers orange-yellow at the base; thighs, blackish.

Adult female.—Above, grey, sometimes with a brownish tinge; rump and upper tail coverts, vermilion. Primaries and secondaries, brownish, with a band of orange towards the base, except on the outer primaries; axillaries and under wing coverts, deep chrome. Centre tail feathers, blackish brown, except the outermost, which is wholly orange; the next pair the same, with yellow edges; the remainder, orange, with a decreasing amount of black at the base; a stripe through the eye, fuscous; an orange superciliary stripe; ear coverts, greyish; whole under surface rich chrome, more orange on the middle of the belly and under tail coverts.

Immature.—As the female, but brownish above, the feathers with narrow white tips; beneath, paler yellow; the middle of the breast intermixed with brownish; middle of the abdomen, dirty-white; the scarlet rump patch encroached on by the greyish brown of the upper back and mantle.

Soft Parts.—Iris, greyish brown; bill and feet, black.

Dimensions.—Total length, 5·5 to 6 in.; wing, 2·85 to 3 in.; tail, 2·8 to 2·95 in.; tarsus, 0·6 in.; bill from gape, 0·65 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout its length; on Singapore Island, but not, so far as is known, on the other islands.

Extralimital Range.—South Tenasserim, Borneo, Palawan, Sumatra.

Nidification.—A nest and eggs were obtained by Mr W. A. T. Kellow in the Larut district, Perak, on 7th May. The nest is made of fine twigs and roots matted together with cobwebs and covered outside with lichen. It was built resting on a branch of a tree where it divided into three smaller branches. The two eggs were pale yellowish in ground-colour, profusely marked with brown and grey all over, and measured 0·81 by 0·6 in. (Baker).

Habits.—This is a low-country open-forest bird, fairly common on the coast, especially where there are Casuarina trees, but rare elsewhere. We have never met with it in very heavy jungle or on the mountains much above 3000 ft. It flies in flocks smaller than those of the other minivets, rarely more than five or six individuals, which seem often to be one family. The diet is entirely insectivorous, mainly ants and small beetles, which are sought for on the tree branches. Minivets, unlike many of the other cuckoo-shrikes, are never seen on the ground. There is nothing special on record as to its note. Butler records the bird from 4000 ft. on the Larut Hills in Perak, but his specimen was not preserved.