

ORIOLES

Family ORIOLIDÆ

Vol. I., p. 271.

OF the four species of this family that are known in the Malay Peninsula, one, *Oriolus chinensis indicus*, is a common winter visitor to the greater part of the country, though rarer in the south. A second, *Oriolus xanthornus*, once called *O. melanocephalus*, does not extend south into the British sphere, and is probably in part a winter visitor in Peninsular Siam, though possibly resident throughout the year in the north of the district. Both these birds are "Golden Orioles" in the popular acceptance of the word. The two other species are resident throughout the year, and do not migrate.

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF ORIOLES HERE DESCRIBED

1	{	With no yellow on plumage	2	
	{	Plumage partly yellow	3	
	{	Almost entirely black		<i>Oriolus cruentus malayanus</i> (female and young), p. 266
2	{	Breast and wing coverts, brilliant } crimson }		<i>Oriolus cruentus malayanus</i> (adult male), p. 265
	{	Head, black; back, bright yellow		<i>Oriolus xanthonotus xanthonotus</i> (adult male), p. 266
3	{	Head and back, olive-green		<i>Oriolus xanthonotus xanthonotus</i> (female and young), p. 266

Oriolus cruentus malayanus

The Malayan Black-and-Crimson Oriole

PLATE 22 (*upper figure*, male; *lower*, female)

Oriolus cruentus malayanus, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus.*, xi., 1923, p. 56 (Semangko Pass, Selangor-Pahang boundary, 2500 to 4500 ft.).

Oriolus consanguineus (*nec* Wardl.-Rams.), Sharpe, *P.Z.S.*, 1887, p. 434; Bonhote, *P.Z.S.*, 1901 (1), p. 59; Ogilvie-Grant, *Fascic. Malay., Zool.*, iii. 1906, p. 68.

Oriolus cruentus consanguineus, Meinertzhagen, *Ibis*, 1923, p. 92 (part.).

Description.—*Adult male*.—Glossy black with a greenish cast; primary coverts, decomposed, deep blood-red, the primaries beneath them white; a large patch of deep crimson on the breast, bases of the feathers, white; inner aspect of the wing, sooty brownish black.

Adult female.—Almost as glossy as the male above, but with no trace of blood-red on the primary coverts; lower breast and belly, greyish, broadly mottled with black, and with a faint suggestion of wine-red on the edges of the feathers.

Immature.—Like the female, but duller, the feathers of the lower surface paler and greyer, sometimes with rusty edges, the red feathers gradually appearing in the young males, the primary coverts being the last to become completely red, it being probably quite two years before the fully adult plumage is completely acquired.

Soft Parts.—Iris, chestnut; "red" (*Wray*); bill and feet, pale bluish horn.

Dimensions.—Total length, 9 to 9.5 in.; wing, 5.2 to 5.7 in.; tail, 3.9 to 4.1 in.; tarsus, 0.9 to 1 in.; bill from gape, 1.25 in.; culmen, 1 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Northern Perak to Southern Selangor, at high elevations.

Extralimital Range.—The bird described is peculiar to the Malay Peninsula; it is a member of an Indo-Malayan group, having representatives in the mountains of Java, Sumatra and Borneo, with more distant relatives in the Himalayas, Indo-Chinese countries, South China, Formosa and Hainan.

Nidification.—Unknown.

Habits.—Fairly common along the whole length of the main range, from Northern Perak to Southern Selangor, less so in the Larut Hills, and as yet unrecorded from Pahang, this handsome oriole is rarely, if ever, found below about 3000 ft., though *Wray* records having received a specimen from quite a low altitude in Kinta, Perak.

The bird is quiet and retiring in its habits, and comes but little into notice. It lives in heavy forest, alone or in pairs, keeping to the big trees, or to the creepers with which these are clothed, and is not seen in scrub or the stunted forest near the crests of the hills. In diet it is exclusively fruit-eating, living largely on the berries of various species of *Melastomaceæ*. It is occasionally, but rarely, seen on the ground, and is very silent, though it is said to have a rather sweet low whistle, which I, personally, have not heard.

The male bird figured, about one-half natural size, is the type of the subspecies from Fraser's Hill, near the Semangko Pass, Selangor-Pahang boundary, February 1908; the female is from Cameron's Highlands, September 1905.

Oriolus xanthonotus xanthonotus

The Malay Black-headed Oriole

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This species should perhaps be mentioned here, as, though normally a low-country bird, it sometimes strays a long way up the hills, as high as 4000 ft., and may be met with at any of the hill stations, the more so as it is not nearly so shy a bird as the black-and-crimson oriole.

It is a smaller bird than that species—wing not more than 4.5 in.; the head is black in the male, with the back bright yellow, and the under surface striped with black-and-white; in the female the whole upper surface is olive-green.