

BABBLERS

Family TIMALIIDÆ

Vol. I., p. 217; Vol. II., p. 177.

THE babblers form a large, heterogeneous assembly of birds, whose affinities are with the thrushes, warblers and shrikes. The characters are so variable that the group is difficult to define, and, indeed, no known definition would exclude certain allied genera now relegated to other families.

In size the babblers are usually small, and the largest species do not exceed the size of a jay. The wings are short and round and fit closely to the body. Flight is, as a rule, not strong. The legs and feet are robust. The bill is usually fairly strong. The nostrils are often concealed by short feathers, and strong rictal bristles are often present. The tail of twelve feathers is usually, but not always, of a normal square or rounded shape. In a few genera it is greatly lengthened. The plumage is usually soft and loose. The colour is so varied that it defies description; some genera are dull, others very gaily clad. The sexes are usually much alike, and the juveniles do not differ greatly from the adults.

The eggs are very variable. In some groups they are immaculate white or blue, and in others heavily marked. The nesting habits are just as diverse.

The species are forest birds and resident wherever they are found. No true migration is known within the family.

The family is a very large one and is scattered over the warmer parts of the Old World. In Malaysia, babblers are especially abundant, and in the forests of the Malay Peninsula about fifty species are found. These include some of the most characteristic of Oriental birds. A number of the local forms are strictly confined to the mountains, but, nevertheless, babblers remain a common and conspicuous feature of bird life in the lowland forests.

KEY TO THE MALAYAN LOWLAND BABBLERS

1	{	Chin and throat, brick-red .	<i>Eupetes macrocercus macrocercus</i> , p. 275.
		Chin and throat, dark grey .	2
		Chin and throat, black .	3
		Chin and throat, whitish to pale yellow	5

2	Breast, tawny	<i>Stachyris nigriceps davisoni</i> , p. 294
	Breast, grey, like the throat.	<i>Cyanoderma erythroptera erythroptera</i> , p. 301
	Breast, deep chestnut	<i>Stachyris poliocephala poliocephala</i> , p. 295
3	Breast, white, heavily streaked with black	<i>Stachyris maculata pectoralis</i> , p. 298
	Breast, brown	<i>Macronus ptilosus ptilosus</i> , p. 303
	Breast, grey.	4
4	Mantle, reddish brown, wings not spotted	<i>Stachyris nigricollis</i> , p. 296
	Mantle, olive-brown, wings spotted	<i>Stachyris leucotis leucotis</i> , p. 297
5	Breast and abdomen, pale yellow	<i>Mixornis gularis</i> subsp., p. 302
	Breast, deep chestnut	6
	Not as above	7
6	Crown, black	<i>Dryocataphus capistratus nigricapitatus</i> , p. 281
	Crown, brown	<i>Thringorhina striolata guttata</i> , p. 300
7	Upper parts, bright yellowish green	<i>Erpornis xantholeuca interposita</i> , p. 305
	Mantle and back, brown, heavily squamated with darker brown	<i>Turdinus macrodactylus</i> subsp., p. 285
	Mantle and back, brown, streaked with white	<i>Kenopia striata</i> , p. 302
	Crown sharply divided across, orange-chestnut and black	8
	Not as above	9
	Smaller: wing, 2.8 to 3.15 in.; crown feathers fringed with black	<i>Horizillas cinerea cinerea</i> , p. 289
8	Larger: wing, 3.2 to 3.6 in.; crown feathers not fringed with black	<i>Horizillas magna magna</i> , p. 287
9	Bill long and curved; head with long, broad white eye-stripes	10
	Bill short; head with no conspicuous white eye-stripes	11
10	Mantle, olive-brown.	<i>Pomatorhinus olivaceus fastidiosus</i> , p. 278
	Mantle, reddish chestnut	<i>Pomatorhinus montanus occidentalis</i> , p. 277
11	Top of head, reddish chestnut, contrasting with brown mantle; throat or breast streaked with a darker colour	12
	Not as above	14

12	Very small: wing about 2.25 in.	<i>Stachyridopsis rufifrons poliogaster</i> , p. 301	
	Much larger: wing about 2.75 in.		13
13	A broad buff eye-stripe extending to the nape	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps subochraceum</i> , p. 281	
	A short white eye-stripe from bill to eye only		<i>Timalia pileata intermedia</i> , p. 279
14	A distinct broad grey band across the breast	<i>Ophrydernis albugularis albugularis</i> , p. 292	
	Sides of head, grey, sharply contrasted against brown crown; tail very short		<i>Anuroopsis malaccensis malaccensis</i> , p. 293
	Otherwise		15
15	Throat, pale buff	<i>Alcippe poioicephala davisoni</i> , p. 293	
	Throat, white to greyish white		16
16	Sides of body heavily washed with buff; back, olive-brown		17
	Not as above		18
17	Tail shorter, 1.5 to 1.7 in.	<i>Malacocincla sepiaria tardinata</i> , p. 283	
	Tail longer, 2.1 to 2.3 in.	<i>Malacocincla abbotti</i> subsp., p. 282	
18	Crown, pale rufous brown	<i>Erythrocichla bicolor</i> , p. 286	
	Crown conspicuously darker than the mantle	<i>Horizillas affinis affinis</i> , p. 290	
19	Not as above		19
	Throat lightly streaked with grey	<i>Horizillas magnirostris magnirostris</i> , p. 291	
	Throat not streaked		20
20	Bill long; tail short; crown and mantle, brown	<i>Æthostoma rostratum rostratum</i> , p. 284	
	Bill short; tail normal; crown, greyish; mantle, olive-brown		<i>Alcippe cinerea cinerea</i> , p. 294

Eupetes macrocerus macrocerus

The Malayan Eupetes or Rail-Babbler

Vol. II., p. 189.

Eupetes macrocerus Temminck, *Pl. Col.*, 516, 1831, p. 204 (Sumatra).

Eupetes macrocerus, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 338.

Eupetes macrocerus macrocerus, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 284.

Malay Name.—Burong gëmbala këra (the monkey's herdsman). The name needs confirmation.

Description.—An aberrant, long-necked babbler, quite unmistakable in

appearance and superficially rather like a highly coloured, long-tailed rail. Bill straight and slightly flattened; legs long with short feet; a long, bare, bright blue patch on either side of the neck; feathers of the head, short and silky or velvety, and on the sides of the forehead growing towards the centre and slightly backwards; remainder of the plumage long, loose and soft. General colour, bright cinnamon-rufous with a brick-red throat. Sides of the head, black; a broad white stripe behind the eye.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead to above the level of the eyes, dark brownish orange, brightest on the sides; crown and nape, reddish chestnut, brightest on the crown and narrowing on the nape; above and behind the eye a broad white stripe, extending to the nape; lores, sides of head and neck, velvety black. Chin, throat and fore neck, brick-red, palest on the chin and upper throat; remainder of plumage, bright ochraceous brown, slightly rufous on the wings and tail, duldest on the back, mixed with pure grey on the lower abdomen and washed with bright rufous-orange on the breast and upper abdomen. Concealed parts of wing quills, hair-brown; outer edges of the outer quills slightly ochraceous; wing lining, grey, the under wing coverts mixed with rufous.

Immature.—Rather different; duller than the adult; sides of forehead, grey; crown and nape, chocolate-brown; chin and throat, white, turning to brown on the fore neck; remaining under parts, dark grey; rest of the plumage as in the adult, but duller. Birds changing from immature to adult plumage have the forehead mixed with orange and the fore neck and breast patched with the bright feathers of the adult plumage. Birds younger than that described above are uniformly sooty black on the under parts, except for the throat, which is white.

Note.—The amount of grey on the abdomen of adult birds is very variable and depends largely on how much the plumage is disturbed. A large amount of surface grey possibly indicates a trace of immaturity.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown; lids, black; bill, black; feet, slaty to grey-black; bare skin on sides of neck, bright blue to purplish violet, perhaps shading into livid white.

Dimensions.—Total length, 11.2 to 11.5 in.; tail, 4.8 to 5 in.; wing, 3.75 to 3.9 in.; tarsus, 1.8 in.; bill from gape, 1.3 to 1.45 in. The series examined is not sufficiently large to demonstrate a constant difference in size between the sexes, and, furthermore, in most skins the wings are difficult to measure.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Bandon in Peninsular Siam, south through the lowlands on both sides of the Peninsula to Malacca. No formal record from Kelantan, Trengganu or Johore, but almost certainly occurring in these states. Not recorded from any of the islands.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra and Great Natuna Island. A very slightly different subspecies occurs in Borneo.

Nidification.—Not recorded. Very young birds were taken in Bandon, Peninsular Siam, in July, and immature birds, changing from juvenile to adult plumage, from the Malay States, are dated November and February.

Habits.—This curious rail-like babbler is essentially a bird of the untouched,

thick, tall, old forest of the lowlands, and, normally, it seems not to occur above about 2500 ft., although it certainly strays just above that altitude on the mountains of the Selangor-Pahang boundary. It is entirely a ground-bird with much the habits of a pitta and fond of the vicinity of fallen trees. It runs with great speed and is very shy and hard to collect. Since the days of the old Malacca professional plume-hunters it has been rare in collections. At its known northern limit on the mountain of Kao Nawng, in Bandon, it is reported as fairly common. From Korinchi, in Sumatra, Robinson and Kloss report it as a noisy and fairly common ground-bird in scrub jungle, concealing itself with great rapidity at the least alarm.

Pomatorhinus montanus occidentalis

The Malay Chestnut-backed Scimitar-Babbler

Vol. II., p. 191.

Pomatorhinus montanus occidentalis Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Fed. Mal. States Mus.*, xi., 1923, p. 51 (Selangor, Malay States).

Pomatorhinus borneensis (pt.), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 410.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Bill long and curved; upper parts and flanks, reddish chestnut; remaining under parts and a broad eye-stripe, white.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead, crown, lores and ear coverts, black, the crown faintly washed with greyish olive. A broad white stripe extends from the base of the bill over the eye to the nape. Mantle, back, rump, sides of neck, sides of breast and the flanks, broadly bright reddish chestnut; upper and under tail coverts, brownish olive tinged with rufous; remaining under parts from chin to abdomen, white. Thighs, greyish black. Wings and tail, blackish brown, faintly washed with greyish olive, the exposed portion of the inner wing coverts and the innermost secondaries entirely brownish olive; edge of wing and wing lining, neutral grey with a brownish patch on the under wing coverts. In certain lights there is an indication of regular narrow dusky barring on the tail quills.

Immature.—Like the adult, but duller; rufous parts of plumage, paler and less extensive on the sides of the body.

Soft Parts.—Iris, straw-colour, dull yellow or pale brown; bill, whitish to greenish horn-colour, the basal half of the upper mandible, dark brown; feet, greenish slate, plumbeous or blue-slate.

Dimensions.—Total length, 7·7 to 8 in.; tail, 3·25 to 3·5 in.; wing, 3·3 to 3·5 in.; tarsus, 1·15 to 1·3 in.; bill from gape, 1·05 to 1·15 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Both sides of the Peninsula from Johore in the extreme south, north to Upper Perak. Not on any of the islands.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra. The typical race is found in West Java, and other subspecies inhabit East Java with Bali; and Borneo.

Nidification.—Unrecorded. A female collected on 21st November in Negri Sembilan contained an oviduct egg.

Habits.—This babbler is usually seen in small parties working through the undergrowth in forest either in the lowlands or, more usually, in sub-montane country between about 1500 and 2500 ft., but sometimes as high as 4000 ft. It is especially abundant on the Negri Sembilan hills, where it may be seen dodging about in the ferns and thick undergrowth by the sides of the jungle paths.

Pomatorhinus olivaceus fastidiosus

Hartert's Scimitar-Babbler

Vol. II., p. 192.

Pomatorhinus schisticeps fastidiosus Hartert, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, xxxvi., 1916, p. 81 (Trang, Peninsular Siam).

Pomatorhinus olivaceus fastidiosus, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 285.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Very like the last-described species (*P. montanus occidentalis*), but slightly larger and with the upper parts olive-brown, not bright rufous.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead and crown, dusky olive, becoming narrowly black on the sides, the forehead with narrow black shaft stripes. A broad white band from the base of the bill over the eye to the nape; lores and ear coverts, black; the ear coverts succeeded by a reddish-chestnut patch on the sides of the neck. Upper parts, including wings, olive-brown, sometimes slightly ochraceous, a narrow, ill-defined, obsolete rufous collar across the nape; concealed parts of wing quills, dull brown. Tail, blackish brown washed with olive, most strongly on the basal half, and regularly barred with obsolete, narrow dusky bars only visible in certain lights. Chin, throat, breast and upper abdomen, white; sides of the breast, flanks, lower abdomen, thighs and under tail coverts, dusky brownish olive, washed with rufous on the sides of the body and often with reddish-chestnut streaks or patches.

Immature.—Like the adult, but paler. The upper parts are more ochraceous and the crown is browner and less olive.

Soft Parts.—Iris, pale orange or yellow; in one male, lavender; bill, yellow, black at the extreme base of the upper mandible; feet, pale greenish slate (*Robinson and Kloss*).

Dimensions.—Total length, 8.4 to 9 in.; tail, 3.45 to 3.6 in.; wing, 3.55 to 3.75 in.; tarsus, 1.2 to 1.3 in.; bill from gape, 1.15 to 1.2 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From the northern limit at the Isthmus of Kra south to the province of Trang, in Peninsular Siam.

Extralimital Range.—Allied races of *olivaceus* are found along the Tenasserim-Siam hill-ranges to the Shan States and Kachin Hills. Exactly where the present form meets the typical *olivaceus*, which was described from Yea, in Tenasserim, I cannot say, but specimens from Tenasserim south of Tavoy are *fastidiosus*. A form described from Maprit, Patiyu, just north of our area, is very closely allied; it extends through Siam to Annam. The view here

taken of the distribution of the "species" is a conservative one, and other more widely spread forms of the *schisticeps-nuchalis-montanus* association could doubtless be included.

Nidification.—Davison found a nest in January at Pakchan, in thick bamboo jungle, on the ground, at the foot of a small screw-pine. He describes the nest as follows: "It was a large globular structure, composed externally of dry bamboo leaves, and well secreted by the mass of dry bamboo leaves that surrounded it: it was in fact buried in these, and if I had not seen the bird leave it, it would most undoubtedly have remained undiscovered. Externally it was about a foot in length by nine inches in height, but it was impossible to take any accurate measurement, as the nest really had no marked external definition. Internally was a lining about half an inch thick, composed of thin strips of dry bark, fibres, etc. The entrance was to one side, circular, and measuring 2.5 in. in diameter; the egg-cavity measured four inches deep by about three in height." The nest contained three pure white eggs. The measurements of two are given as 1.1 and 1.09 in. in length by 0.75 in. in breadth.

Habits.—In Peninsular Siam this bird occurs in the plains and also as high as 5500 ft. on the mountains of Nakon Sritammarat. According to Hume, in Central and Southern Tenasserim it is confined to the less-elevated ranges and the neighbourhood of their bases. I have never met with the species in the field and therefore know nothing of the habits. In Tenasserim, Davison usually met with it in pairs, but sometimes found several together. He records it as "not uncommon in thin tree jungle, bamboo jungles and even well-wooded gardens near forest." Again: "The habits of all Scimitar Babblers are much alike. They live on the ground or in shrubs very close to the ground, only very occasionally mounting trees. They conceal themselves so well that they are seldom seen; but when seen they generally perform fantastic motions, spreading out the tail and drooping the wings. They have different calls, which resolve themselves, however, into variations of the words *hoot-hoot-hoot* constantly repeated. They frequent the very thickest pieces of jungle, not only where the bushes themselves are thick, but where the low undergrowth is entangled and intricate."

Timalia pileata intermedia

The Red-capped Babbler

Timalia pileata intermedia Kinnear, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, xlv., 1924, p. 9 (Taung Hoo, Burma); Stuart Baker, *Nid. Birds Ind. Emp.*, i., 1932, p. 189.

Timalia pileata (pt.), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 507; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 132; Oates, in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1889, p. 90.

Timalia jerdoni, Oates, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 29.

Timalia pileata jerdoni, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.),

i., 1922, p. 227; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, vi., 1924, p. 287

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Sexes alike. Forehead, narrowly, and a short stripe over the eye, white; crown, deep rufous-chestnut; remaining upper parts, including wings and tail, pale olive-brown washed with fulvous, the tail showing dusky bars in certain lights; lores, black. Sides of the head, chin, throat and breast, white, the hinder ear coverts washed with grey; the sides of the neck, grey, and the breast finely streaked with black; remaining under parts, pale rufous-buff.

Immature.—A late juvenile has the upper parts paler than the adult: pale brownish buff tinged with rufous; crown, brownish orange; sides of the head and under parts, white, faintly tinged with rufous on the sides of the body. There are no black streaks on the breast.

Soft Parts.—Iris, crimson; bill, black; feet, brownish olive to grey-brown. In the juvenile the iris is brownish grey, the upper mandible black, the lower mandible fleshy with a dusky tip, the gape yellow and the feet fleshy brown.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6.7 in.; tail, 2.9 in.; wing, 2.45 in.; tarsus, 0.95 in.; bill from gape, 0.8 in. (Siamese specimens).

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—In the British Museum there is a specimen of this bird said to have been obtained at Malacca many years ago by Capt. Pinwill. The label is said to be in the collector's own handwriting, but as the species has never turned up again in the Malay Peninsula, not even in the northern (Siamese) portion where it might be expected to occur, it seems likely that a mistake in labelling has occurred, and I now rather doubt if the species occurs on the mainland south of the Isthmus of Kra.

Extralimital Range.—Most of Burma, Siam and the northern part of French Indo-China. Also in Yunnan and the extreme south of China. Replaced in the hill tracts from Nepal to Assam and again in the southern part of French Indo-China by other subspecies. The typical form of the species is found in Java.

Nidification.—In Pegu, according to Oates, a domed nest of bamboo leaves is placed on or near the ground, in the fork of a shrub, and always surrounded by long grass. The three or four eggs are white, with brown speckles and a few grey markings. They measure about 0.75 by 0.6 in.

Habits.—I have never seen this species in the field and must quote Davison, who, writing of the bird in Tenasserim, says: "In the dense kine grass at Pahpooon this species was not rare, but very difficult to obtain, owing to the grass being so thick that it was impossible to see more than a foot or two, so that when one did see the bird it was too close to fire, and on trying to increase the distance the bird was lost sight of. As far as I have observed, they keep in pairs and exclusively to dense grass jungle."

*Pellorneum ruficeps subochraceum***The Malay Striped Babbler**

Vol. I., p. 222.

Top of the head, chestnut-rufous; remaining upper parts, dull brown; chin and throat, whitish; remaining under parts, pale buff with broad, heavy, short streaks of dark brown. A broad streak of buff over the eye.

Total length, about 6.5 in.; wing, 2.7 in.

A common babbler in the north of the Peninsula, but not found south of Perak. It is usually seen in bushes and seems to avoid the old forest, preferring secondary growth.

Mr V. W. Ryves found a nest in Perak at the end of June. It was on the ground, under dead bushes in a patch of jungle. The three eggs were white, thickly speckled with dark reddish spots.

*Drymocapthus capistratus nigricapitatus***The Malayan Black-capped Babbler**

Vol. II., p. 205.

Brachypteryx nigrocapitata Eyton, *Proc. Zool. Soc.*, 1839, p. 103 (Malacca).

Drymocapthus nigricapitatus, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 554; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 145; Oates, in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1889, p. 102; Oates, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 37.

Pellorneum nigricapitatum, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 246; Stuart Baker, *Nid. Birds Ind. Emp.*, i., 1932, p. 212.

Drymocapthus capistratus nigricapitatus, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 292.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—General plumage, rusty brown, breast paler; crown, black; throat, white; a conspicuous grey eye-stripe.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead and crown, black; lores, a broad supercilium and the ear coverts, pale grey with fine white streaks, the hinder part of the ear coverts washed with chestnut; a short moustachial stripe, black; chin and throat, white, the sides of the throat often washed with pale chestnut; remainder of plumage rufous-brown, darkest on the upper parts, especially on the lower back and tail, lightening to orange-rufous on the fore neck and breast, and becoming less chestnut and duller brown on the flanks, abdomen, thighs and under tail coverts. Feathers of the mantle with very thin, obsolete, paler shaft stripes, wing feathers duller on their concealed portions, and wing and tail quills with narrow, scarcely noticeable, chestnut outer edges. Under wing coverts, mixed grey and brown; wing lining, neutral grey, the quills narrowly edged pale pinkish buff.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown or red; upper mandible, black; lower mandible, whitish to pale slate-colour, with a black tip; feet, pale brown, purplish brown to dark grey.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6.3 to 6.7 in.; tail, 2.25 to 2.3 in.; wing, 2.6 to 2.85 in.; tarsus, 1.2 to 1.3 in.; bill from gape, 0.85 to 0.95 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From the northern limit down both sides of the Peninsula south to Johore. A specimen in the British Museum is recorded as having been collected by Wallace in Singapore, but I have never seen the species on the island and know of no other specimens from this locality. Not recorded from any of the other small islands.

Extralimital Range.—Attains its northern limit in South Tenasserim; also found in the North Natuna Islands and Billiton. The form found in Sumatra and the neighbouring island of Banka is very similar, if not identical. Other subspecies are found in Borneo. The typical race inhabits Java.

Nidification.—The only record of which I have any knowledge is that of a nest found by Davison at Klang, in Selangor. "I was passing through some very dense jungle, where the ground was very marshy, when one of these birds rose from the ground about a couple of feet in front of me, and alighted on an old stump some few feet away. On examining the place from which the bird rose, I found the nest placed at the base of a small clump of ferns, and concealed by a number of overhanging withered fronds of the fern. The base of the nest, which rested on the ground, was composed of a mass of dried twigs, leaves, etc.; then came the real body of the nest, composed of coarse fern roots, the egg-cavity being lined with finer roots and a number of hair-like fibres. It looked compactly and strongly put together, but on trying to remove it, it all came to pieces. When the bird saw me examining the nest it fluttered to within a couple of feet of me, twittering in a most vehement manner, feigning a broken wing to try and draw me away. The nest contained only two eggs, which were slightly set" (*Davison*). Hume describes these eggs as "extremely regular ovals, scarcely smaller, if at all, at one end than at the other. The shell is very fine and fragile, but has only a slight gloss. The ground-colour appears to have been creamy white, but the markings are so thickly set that little of this is anywhere visible. First, pale inky-purple spots and clouds are thickly sprinkled over the surface, and over this the whole egg is freckled with a pale purplish brown. They measured 0.82 in. in length by 0.62 and 0.63 in. in breadth."

Habits.—This babbler is common in the lowlands of the Peninsula, but does not normally ascend the hills beyond about 2500 ft. It is a bird of the old forests and is essentially a ground-bird, rather shy and usually seen alone in the thick undergrowth. Davison refers to "a long-drawn single note."

Malacocincla abbotti olivacea

Strickland's Brown Babbler

Vol. I., p. 227; Vol. II., p. 199.

A dull-plumaged, short-tailed species, with a rather heavy bill. Upper parts, olive-brown, very slightly darker on the head and faintly rufescent on the upper tail coverts and tail. Lores and an indication of a stripe over the eye, greyish white; chin and throat, dull white; remaining under parts, buff,

becoming bright rusty brown on the sides of the body, brightest on the flanks and under tail coverts.

Total length, about 6.5 in. ; wing, 2.9 in. ; tail, 2.1 to 2.3 in.

A common bird in the lowlands of the Peninsula, more numerous near the coasts than inland and in secondary growth than in older forest. It enters gardens and cultivated areas wherever there are plenty of bushes, in which it is usually seen near the ground.

In Negri Sembilan Mr V. W. Ryves found a clutch of three eggs at the beginning of April in an open nest which had a foundation of dead leaves, an inner cup of compactly woven rootlets and a lining of fine, hair-like fibres. It was about eighteen inches from the ground, in a thick clump of creepers and ferns growing by the side of a small stream on the edge of a ravine overgrown with thick jungle.

In the north of the Peninsula, south to, roughly, the latitude of Penang, the present form is replaced by the slightly brighter typical form, *M. a. abbotti*.

Malacocincla sepiaria tardinata

Hartert's Brown Babbler

PLATE 19 (*lower figure*)

Vol. II., p. 200.

Malacocincla sepiaria tardinata Hartert, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, xxxvi., 1915, p. 35 (Gunong Tahan, Malay States) ; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 290.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—This bird is so much like Strickland's brown babbler (*Malacocincla abbotti olivacea*), described in Vol. I., p. 227, of this work, that a very careful examination is necessary before the two species can be separated. Comparing the two birds, the present species is very slightly less brightly coloured on the under parts, especially on the flanks and lower abdomen, which are browner and less tawny in colour. The upper parts are rather darker and the crown forms a distinct, darker cap against the mantle and is not merely very slightly darker than the mantle ; the thin, pale shaft stripes on the forehead and crown are less conspicuous ; the grey eye-stripe is more pronounced, but the character is by no means as decisive as Robinson's remarks in Vol. II., p. 200, would indicate, because, actually, *M. a. olivacea* also has a small, ill-defined, grey supercilium ; and the thin, pale shaft stripes on the mantle are less noticeable. There would also appear to be some difference in the colour of the soft parts, for whereas in long series of *abbotti* and its southern race, *olivacea*, the feet are recorded as fleshy or brownish in colour, in the few skins of *sepiaria* on the labels of which field notes occur the feet are recorded as fleshy lavender-grey or pinkish grey. Furthermore, although in the field notes I cannot discern a difference in the colour of the bill, there appears to be one, for whereas in *abbotti* the lower mandible dries uniformly dull yellow, there is always a dark line on the ridge (gonys) in *sepiaria*. Tail much shorter than in the subspecies of *abbotti*.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Upper parts, including wings and tail, dark olive-brown, slightly richer in tone and inclined to rufescence on the upper tail coverts and tail; feathers of the mantle with scarcely noticeable pale shaft stripes; crown washed with grey and forming a fairly distinct dark cap against the mantle; forehead and crown with thin, obsolete, pale shaft stripes. Concealed parts of wing quills, dull brown; under wing coverts, buff. Lores and an ill-defined supercilium, grey; chin, throat, breast and centre of the abdomen, dirty white, washed with pale grey-brown across the breast; sides of the breast and flanks, pale brown, becoming richer, more rusty, on the lower flanks and under tail coverts.

Immature.—Very like the adult, but the upper parts rather more rufous and less olive.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown or dark red; upper mandible, blackish; lower mandible, grey; feet, fleshy lavender to grey.

Dimensions.—Total length, no exact field measurements available but probably about 6 in.; tail, 1.5 to 1.7 in.; wing, 2.8 to 2.9 in.; bill from gape, 0.85 to 0.95 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Patani; Perak; Selangor; Pahang.

Extralimital Range.—North-East Sumatra and Central Annam. The typical form inhabits West Java, and other very similar subspecies are found in East Java and Bali, and in the remainder of Sumatra and Borneo.

Nidification.—Unknown.

Habits.—This species was formerly confused with the very similar Strickland's brown babbler (*Malacocincla abbotti olivacea*), and some of the references in literature to the latter species not improbably apply to the bird under consideration at present, which in our experience is a much rarer bird and, unlike *olivacea*, never found in gardens, on coastal islands or in cultivated areas. It is essentially a bird of the old forest, which *olivacea* sometimes enters, and the two species have been collected close together. It seems to have a preference for submontane localities, being not uncommon at Ginting Bidei, in Selangor, 2600 ft. We have other specimens from near Kuala Lumpur, in Selangor; from Bentong and Ulu Liang, in Pahang. It is also known from the foothills of Gunong Tahan on the Kelantan side; from Perak and from Bangnara, in Patani, which last-named place seems to mark its northern limit. Like its relative it is a shy bird that lurks in bushes just above the ground, trying to keep out of sight of the observer.

The bird figured in the plate is a male from Ginting Bidei, Selangor.

Æthostoma rostratum rostratum

Blyth's Babbler

Vol. I., p. 229.

In fresh plumage the upper parts are a deeper, darker brown than in most of the jungle-babblers, slightly rufescent on the rump and tail, but the bird rapidly fades to a paler olive-brown. Under parts, white, washed with grey on the sides of the body. In the field the white throat shows up fairly

sharply against the dark sides of the head and the rather long legs appear almost white. Tail, short; bill, relatively long and slender and about equal in length to the head.

Total length, about 6 in.; wing, 2.9 in.; tail, 2.1 in.; bill from gape, 0.9 in.

A common but very locally distributed species in the lowlands of the Peninsula, where, according to my experience, it is usually seen fairly low down in the mangroves over mud. It is more numerous near the coasts than in inland districts, in which latter localities it is found in bushes in thick, low vegetation on the banks of the large rivers. Mr V. W. Ryves seems to have been the first to discover the nest and eggs. He found two eggs in a nest in Negri Sembilan on 6th April. I identified a bird shot off the nest. Mr Ryves describes the nest as cup-shaped and loosely constructed of dead leaves and strips of dried palm-fronds, with a rough lining of fine fibres and rootlets. It was placed fifteen inches from the ground in the base of a ground-palm, growing on the edge of a stream in thick secondary forest. The eggs are "pale greenish ground, spotted and blotched with dark greenish brown markings."

Turdinus macrodactylus macrodactylus

The Large-footed Babbler

Vol. II., p. 205.

Malacopteron macrodactylum Strickland, *Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist.*, xiii., 1844, p. 417 (Malacca).

Turdinus macrodactylus, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 548; Oates, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 36.

Turdinus macrodactylus macrodactylus, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 290.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—A short-tailed babbler with the upper parts deep brown, streaked with black and fulvous, and the under parts greyish. Throat, white, with an ill-defined black margin.

Adult male.—Upper part of head, nape, mantle, upper back, scapulars, lesser and median upper wing coverts, fulvous-brown, the feathers conspicuously edged with black and with thin buff shaft stripes. Lower back, rump and upper tail coverts, dark rich brown with some obsolete, large fulvous spots and a few indistinct darker fringes to the feathers. Primary and major upper coverts, wing quills and tail, chestnut-brown, darkest on the tail, concealed portions of wing quills, smoky brown. Loes, white; ear coverts, black, perhaps mixed with a little brown; sides of the head, brownish white squamated with black; chin and throat, white with a few thin black shaft stripes and margined by a thin, broken black band which coalesces with the black ear coverts. Breast and abdomen, pale grey, the feathers with a broad, darker grey, submarginal band, sides of the breast and flanks fulvous-brown with thin buff shaft stripes; thighs and under tail coverts, fulvous-brown, the latter with buff edges and thin buff shaft stripes. Under wing coverts,

whitish, patched with grey and brown. Wing lining, neutral grey, the edges of the quills, rufous-buff.

Adult female.—The black margin to the throat seems even less distinct in females than in males, but there is very little difference between the sexes and perhaps larger series than I have at my disposal would show that there is none.

Immature.—In an immature bird the upper parts are much less boldly spotted than in the adult. Chin and throat, white; breast, pale brown with obsolete spots; flanks, brown, turning to rufous-brown on the under tail coverts; centre of the abdomen, white. Ear coverts, brown. There is no black band circling the throat.

Soft Parts.—I cannot trace a reliable record.

Dimensions.—Total length uncertain; tail, 2.3 to 2.4 in.; wing, 3.35 to 3.7 in.; tarsus, 1.2 to 1.3 in.; bill from gape, 1 to 1.1 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Ghirbi and Tung Song in Peninsular Siam south to Johore. Found on both sides of the Peninsula. Junk Zeylon, but not any other coastal island.

Birds from Peninsular Siam are very slightly greyer in the general tone of the under parts than specimens from the Malay States, and have been named *T. m. bakeri* Hachisuka (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.*, xlviii, 1926, p. 54: Trang).

Extralimital Range.—Certain Bornean and Sumatran forms can be regarded as the geographical representatives of the present bird.

Nidification.—Oates describes two eggs obtained by Davison at Klang in Selangor, on 12th April, as follows: "Of a blunt oval form, and only moderately glossy. The ground is white, and this is spotted, streaked and smeared with rich maroon and pale pink. Some of the markings resemble scrawls and hieroglyphics. In addition, and at the large end of the egg, there are numerous spots and blotches of dull purple. The eggs bear a close general resemblance to those of *T. abbotti*, but are much larger. They measure, respectively, 0.92 by 0.7; 0.96 by 0.68 in." I have seen juveniles taken in Pahang and Selangor in May, June and July.

Habits.—Very little is known about the habits of this rather uncommon babbler. It is widely but very locally distributed in the lowlands of the Peninsula, and most of the specimens I have seen come from swamp forest. Nevertheless, it has been taken in old forest in the hills (Ginting Bidei) and it breeds in both kinds of country. It is a ground-bird of the deep forests.

Erythrocichla bicolor

The Ferruginous Babbler

Brachypteryx bicolor Lesson, *Rev. Zool.*, 1839, p. 138 (Sumatra).

Erythrocichla bicolor, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 551; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 152; Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 258.

Erythrocichla bicolor bicolor, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 290.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—A long-legged, short-tailed species. The whole of the upper parts, rufous; under parts, white, suffused with brown on the breast and flanks.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Upper parts, pale rufous-brown, brightest on the forehead, crown and wings, and turning to bright ferruginous on the tail and upper tail coverts. The crown is sometimes slightly darker than the mantle and thus forms an ill-defined cap. Top of the head and mantle with very thin, pale, almost indistinguishable shaft stripes; concealed parts of wing quills, blackish brown, the innermost edge smoky, faintly tinged with pinkish buff. Some concealed feathers on the lower back have silky white tips, usually hidden, but sometimes showing as an ill-defined whitish band across the rump. Ear coverts, sides of the head and neck, a ring round the eye, and the thighs, pale fulvous-rufous, lighter than the back; lores and under parts white, sometimes slightly creamy, washed across the breast with pale rufous-buff to form an indistinct pectoral zone tinged with brown on the sides of the breast; flanks and under tail coverts often faintly tinged with rufous-buff. Edge of the wing and under wing coverts, whitish buff.

Immature.—The juvenile is very like the adult, but is brighter, nearer to ferruginous on the upper parts. The mantle and crown are almost as bright as the tail.

Soft Parts.—Iris, usually pale brown, but sometimes reddish brown and, rarely, red; upper mandible, pale brown or horn-colour, the culmen usually darker; lower mandible, paler, flesh-colour or greyish, sometimes slightly yellow at the base; feet, pale brown or, more usually, flesh-colour.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6.5 to 7 in.; tail, 2.7 to 2.9 in.; wing, 3.05 to 3.4 in.; tarsus, 1.2 in.; bill from gape, 0.9 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From the northern limit at the Isthmus of Kra to the extreme south of Johore. Not reliably recorded from any of the small coastal islands.

Extralimital Range.—The south of Tenasserim. Sumatra and Borneo.

Nidification.—Unknown. I have seen juveniles taken in the Dindings, Perak, late in July.

Habits.—Fairly common throughout the low country of the Peninsula wherever there is thick forest, but not ascending the hills much above sea-level and less common in the north than in the south. It is usually seen in low bushes, or in undergrowth near the ground.

Horizillas magna magna

The Larger Red-headed Tree-Babbler

PLATE 20 (*lower figure*)

Vol. II., p. 201.

Malacopteron magnum Eyton, *Proc. Zool. Soc.*, 1839, p. 103 (Malacca).

Malacopteron magnum, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 564; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 151.

Horizillas magna magna, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 257.

Horizillas magna, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 293.

Ophrydornis magnus magnus, Stuart Baker, *Nid. Birds Ind. Emp.*, i., 1932, p. 221.

Malay Name.—Murai rimba (see footnote, p. 258).

Description.—Upper parts, olive-brown; lower parts, white, streaked with grey on the throat and breast. Forehead and crown, bright chestnut; nape, black.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead and crown to well behind the level of the eyes, bright orange-chestnut, succeeded by a black patch on the hinder crown and nape. Remaining upper parts, including the wings, olive-brown, slightly greyish on the mantle and turning to fulvous-brown on the rump; upper tail coverts and exposed edges of the tail, ferruginous; concealed parts of tail quills less bright, of a duller brown and slightly dusky towards the tips. Concealed parts of wing quills, blackish brown, the inner edges of the feathers, smoky. Sides of the head embracing the eye, pale grey with thin white streaks, the ear coverts tinged with brown. Under parts, white, the throat and fore neck heavily streaked with dark grey, the sides of the neck, the breast and the flanks suffused with grey. Thighs, mixed brown and white. Edge of the wing and under wing coverts, mixed white and grey.

Soft Parts.—Iris, reddish brown or red; bill, grey or horny brown, the lower mandible paler. Sometimes the upper mandible is brown and the lower mandible greyish; feet, pale slate to blue-slate.

Dimensions.—Total length, 7.1 to 7.5 in.; tail, 2.75 to 2.95 in.; wing, 3.2 to 3.6 in.; tarsus, 1.1 in.; bill from gape, 0.9 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—The whole length of the Peninsula from the northern to the southern limit, on both sides. There is no reliable record from any of the islands.

Extralimital Range.—Extends north to South Tenasserim. Sumatra, Nias Island, most of Borneo and the North Natuna Islands. Another subspecies is found in North Borneo. A Palawan form can also be regarded as a subspecies of *magna*.

Nidification.—From the Malay Peninsula no details are known. A Sarawak nest with eggs taken in March is described by Mr E. C. Stuart Baker as “cup-shaped, made of dead leaves, grass and dead moss, lined with roots, and was built in a thick bush in dense forest.” The eggs are described as: “The ground-colour is a rich salmon-pink with a crimson flush at the larger end. The markings consist of wavy lines and a few spots of deep crimson-brown, fairly numerous at the larger end and sparse elsewhere.” They measure about 0.8 by 0.6 in.

Habits.—This babbler is very common in the inland, lowland forests of the Peninsula, but is more abundant in the Federated Malay States and Johore than in the northernmost parts of its range. It occurs on the lower levels of the foothills but does not normally ascend them above about 1500 to 2000 ft. It is essentially a bird of the forest and the secondary growth near forest, but is rare, or absent, in the immediate vicinity of the coasts or cultivation. It

frequents the lower trees and bushes and I have never seen it on the ground. Davison aptly remarks: "About Malacca, where it is common, I found that it kept to the forests, singly, in pairs or in small parties, hunting about in the leaves and bushes in a desultory sort of way, and not in the systematic fashion that *Cyanoderma* and *Alcippe* do, though, of course, this latter often or generally comes down to the ground, which the present species, I think, never does. It has not much of the habits of the Timaline birds, but more resembles the Bulbuls in its deportment. So far as I am aware it is solely insectivorous."

The bird figured in the plate is a male from Pahang.

Horizillas cinerea cinerea

The Smaller Red-headed Tree-Babbler

PLATE 20 (*upper figure*)

Vol. II., p. 200.

Malacopteron cinereus Eyton, *Proc. Zool. Soc.*, 1839, p. 103 (Malacca).

Malacopteron cinereum, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 565.

Horizillas cinerea cinerea, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 293.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Like the last-mentioned species, *Horizillas m. magna*, but smaller, the breast much less heavily streaked and the feathers on the crown narrowly margined with black.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead and crown to well behind the level of the eyes, orange-chestnut, the feathers with narrow black edges, producing a squamate effect, most marked behind the eyes; a brownish-black patch on the hinder crown and nape. Remaining upper parts, including the wings, olive-brown, slightly greyish on the mantle and tinged with fulvous on the rump. Upper tail coverts and tail, ferruginous-brown. Concealed parts of wing quills, blackish brown, the inner edges of the feathers, smoky. Lores and a broad supercilium, dirty white with conspicuous whitish shaft stripes; ear coverts, brownish white with pale shaft stripes. Under parts, including edge of the wing and under wing coverts, white, sometimes with a few obsolete greyish streaks on the fore neck; sides of the breast sometimes suffused with greyish brown; flanks, faintly washed with pale grey. Thighs, white or pale brown.

Immature.—Like the adult.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown, reddish brown or crimson; eyelids, yellowish brown or pale olive; bill, greyish horn to dark blue-slate, the under mandible lighter and sometimes whitish; feet, fleshy to pale grey, sometimes whitish.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6.3 to 6.7 in.; tail, 2.35 to 2.5 in.; wing, 2.8 to 3.15 in.; tarsus, 0.8 in.; bill from gape, 0.8 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Bandon in Peninsular Siam down both sides of the Peninsula to Johore. Not known from any of the islands.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra and the larger islands of the Rhio-Lingga Archipelago. Borneo. Another subspecies is found in the North Natuna

Islands, and rather more distinct forms in Java and French Indo-China can also be linked up as subspecies.

Nidification.—On 18th June Mr A. T. Edgar found a nest of this species in Perak, placed in the fork of a sapling, about four feet from the ground, on the edge of the forest. The base of the nest was dry leaves; then came a layer of strips of the leaves of a small palm and coarse grass blades and, finally, an inner, circular, cup-shaped pad of fine fibre. The egg-chamber was lined with brown, downy seeds. Mr Edgar describes the two eggs as: "whitish ground-colour, densely and evenly marked all over with spots of rich red-brown and underlying markings of pale grey. The shell is fairly tough and rather glossy." Measurements, 0.90 and 0.87 by 0.62 and 0.65 in.

Habits.—A common bird with habits essentially like those of the preceding species (*H. m. magna*). The two species can be seen in the same tree.

The bird figured in the plate is a male from the Selangor-Pahang boundary

Horizillas affinis affinis

The Small Tree-Babbler

Trichastoma affine Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xi., 1842, p. 795 (Singapore).

Malacopteryx affine, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 569.

Horizillas affinis, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 294.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—In size and general appearance much like the last-mentioned species, *Horizillas c. cinerea*, but without the chestnut on the top of the head; also so like the brown-headed tree-babbler (*Horizillas m. magnirostris*), described on p. 228 of the first volume of this work, that the two species are sometimes hard to tell apart. Compared with *H. magnirostris* the present species has a less robust bill; the lower throat and breast are less conspicuously streaked; there is no malar stripe and the top of the head is darker than the mantle, thus forming a distinct cap.

Adult.—Sexes alike. General colour above, olive-brown, tinged with fulvous on the lower back. Top of the head, blackish brown, forming a cap, but the degree of darkness subject to much individual variation; upper tail coverts and tail, ferruginous, the edges of the tail quills very slightly paler. Concealed parts of wing quills, dusky brown, the inner edges smoky. Lores and a narrow indistinct supercilium, whitish; sides of the head, whitish; ear coverts, grey-brown; under parts, including edge of wing and under wing coverts, white, washed with ashy grey across the breast and on the flanks. Fore neck with a few ashy grey streaks.

Note.—Adults of this species are subject to rather more individual variation than is normal in these small dull-coloured babblers, and occasionally birds of either sex may be found in which the crown is deep, sooty black and darker than is usual. Such individuals are inclined to have the tail darker, more brownish chestnut and less brightly ferruginous than in normal

specimens; the streaks on the fore neck and the greyish wash across the breast are also, relatively, strongly marked. On such a bird Davison's "*Malacopteryx melanocephalum*" is based.

Immature.—Like the adult, but paler: the coronal cap less blackened and therefore less pronounced; the tail quills brighter ferruginous; wing quills edged with ferruginous-brown, not olive; fore neck without streaks.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown; bill, slate to grey-blue sometimes tinged with green; the lower mandible usually paler, the upper mandible sometimes almost black; feet, grey to bluish slate.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6.1 to 6.6 in.; tail, 2.55 to 2.8 in.; wing, 2.75 to 3.1 in.; tarsus, 0.85 in.; bill from gape, 0.8 in. Females seem to average a trifle smaller than males: one very small bird has the wing measuring only 2.65 in. in length.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Bandon in Peninsular Siam down both sides of the Peninsula to Johore. The species has also been recorded from Penang and Singapore Islands, but I know of no recent record from these islands.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra and Borneo. Only doubtfully known from Java. A closely allied subspecies is found on the Banjak Islands, West Sumatra.

Nidification.—A late juvenile from Bandon, Peninsular Siam, is dated 16th June. Mr A. T. Edgar has found eggs in April in Perak. The nest was three feet from the ground in a triangle formed by the stems of two saplings and a creeper, in flat forest. It was a loose, shallow structure with a base of dead leaves, a layer of strips of dry leaves and then a pad of fibre on which the two eggs were laid. The eggs were long ovals, glossy and very fragile. They measured 0.88 and 0.86 by 0.62 and 0.60 in. Mr Edgar describes his eggs as follows: "The ground-colour was pink, with a dense cap on one egg, and a zone on the other, of deep red-brown and purplish brown, deepening almost to black. On the rest of the surface were numerous pin-spots, blotches and smears of various shades of reddish brown, and an occasional underlying smear of lilac."

Habits.—A common bird in the lowland forest and scrub, where it is met with in small parties frequenting the smaller trees and bushes. The food is, at least, largely insectivorous. The species is most numerous in inland localities and is least numerous in the northernmost parts of its range. Normally it is not found much above 1500 ft. on the foothills, but occasionally it strays a thousand feet higher in fine weather.

Horizillas magnirostris magnirostris

The Brown-headed Tree-Babbler

Vol. I., p. 228; Vol. II., p. 200.

Upper parts, pale earthy brown with an olive tinge; upper tail coverts and tail, rufous-brown. An indistinct moustachial stripe, dark grey. Under parts, white, with a faint buffy grey zone across the breast, a slight wash of

dull buff on the flanks, and the throat not very distinctly streaked with dark grey. A narrow white ring of feathers encircles the eye.

Total length, about 6.5 in. ; wing, 3.2 in.

Common in the lowlands of the Peninsula in swamp jungle and secondary growth and less numerous in old forest. It is usually seen in flocks in the lower trees. A bare description of the eggs has been published, but nothing seems to be known of the breeding habits.

Ophrydornis albogularis albogularis

The White-throated Babbler

Setaria albigularis Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xiii., 1844, p. 385 (Singapore).

Malacopteryx albigulare, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 568.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Upper parts, olive-brown ; lower parts, white, with a grey band across the breast and the flanks washed with tawny buff ; crown and cheeks, blackish. A characteristic feature of the species is a row of lengthened, stiff, pointed and upward-growing feathers situated between the eye and the bill, above the lores. Bill rather more flattened and flycatcher-like than in the preceding genus, *Horizillas*.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead and crown, blackish grey ; remaining upper parts, including wings, olive-brown, tending to rufous-brown on the lower back and upper tail coverts. Tail, dull brown, the quills narrowly edged with rufous-brown and the outer feather with a very narrow whitish fringe. Lesser wing coverts washed with grey ; concealed parts of wing quills, blackish brown, the inner edges of the feathers, smoky. Lores and ear coverts, blackish grey. A white stripe runs from the base of the bill to above the eye. A row of a few stiff feathers on the sides of the forehead, above the lores, whitish, tipped with buff. Under parts, white, strongly and broadly washed with tawny-buff on the flanks. A broad band across the breast, pale grey. Under tail coverts, tawny-buff ; thighs, greyish brown. Edge of the wing, whitish ; under wing coverts, grey-brown tinged with buff.

Soft Parts.—Iris, crimson ; upper mandible, black ; lower mandible, grey ; feet, bluish grey.

Dimensions.—Total length, 5.75 to 6.3 in. ; tail, 2.05 to 2.15 in. ; wing, 2.8 to 2.95 in. ; tarsus, 0.85 in. ; bill from gape, 0.7 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Perak ; Pahang ; Selangor. The type was said to have come from Singapore but is much more likely to have originated on the adjacent mainland. Also recorded from "Malacca."

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra. Another subspecies is found in Borneo.

Nidification.—Unrecorded.

Habits.—We are almost entirely ignorant of the habits of this bird. It has turned up in several places in the lowlands of Perak ; in the forest at the foot of Gunong Tahan ; and Davison got it at Klang in Selangor. Over all

its range in the Malay States, Sumatra and Borneo the species seems rare and very locally distributed. I have never seen a specimen in the flesh or in the field.

Anuropsis malaccensis malaccensis

Hume's Short-wing

Vol. I., p. 221; Vol. II., p. 212.

A curious little bird with long, whitish legs and a very short tail. Upper parts, brown: sides of the head and a streak over the eye, grey. Throat and middle of the abdomen, white; remaining under parts, pale tawny.

Total length, 5.5 in.; wing, 2.7 in.; tail, about 1.6 in.

This is a very common jungle babbler, often seen on or near the ground in the lowland forests, damp and dry. The eggs have been described, but little is known of the breeding habits.

Alcippe poiocephala davisoni

Harington's Tenasserim Nun-Thrush

Vol. II., p. 202.

Alcippe phaeocephala davisoni Harington, *Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.*, xxiii., 1915, p. 453 (Tavoy).

Alcippe phayrii, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 623 (pt.); Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 158 (pt.); Oates, in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1889, p. 108; Oates, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 43.

Alcippe poiocephala davisoni, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 279; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 295; Stuart Baker, *Nid. Birds Ind. Emp.*, i., 1932, p. 248.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Upper parts, olive-brown; crown, grey; under parts, pale fulvous-buff.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead, crown and nape, dull grey with an olive tinge; in some specimens there is a faint black line on either side of the nape, originating behind and above the eye and fading out on the mantle; mantle, olive-brown, turning to fulvous-brown on the lower back, rump and upper tail coverts. Tail feathers, dull brown, the centre feathers washed with olive and the outer edges of the other feathers, olive-brown; the outer feathers with a very narrow fringe, especially on the inner edge, of whitish buff. Wings, ochraceous brown, barely tinged with olive, the concealed parts of the feathers blackish brown, the inner edges whitish buff. Lores, whitish; ear coverts and cheeks, olive-buff. Under parts, including edges of wing and under wing coverts, buff, becoming almost white, or creamy, on the centre of the breast and abdomen, and deepest, almost tawny-buff, on the flanks, thighs and under tail coverts.

Soft Parts.—Iris, grey, or sometimes brown; bill, blackish horn, darker on the culmen, yellowish near the gape; feet, pale brown or pinkish (*Robinson and Kloss*).

Dimensions.—Total length, 6.1 to 6.5 in. ; tail, 2.5 to 2.6 in. ; wing, 2.65 to 2.9 in. ; tarsus, 0.85 in. ; bill from gape, 0.7 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Occurs only in Peninsular Siam from the northern limit at the Pakchan estuary south to Nakon Sritammarat and Trang.

Extralimital Range.—Tenasserim. Other subspecies extend the range of the species to Tonkin, the Shan States, Assam, and through the Central Provinces to South-India. I also regard a Javan form as only subspecifically distinct from *A. poioicephala*.

Nidification.—There is no record from the Malay Peninsula. In Tenasserim it is said to nest in forest, the small cup-like nest being placed in ferns, bushes or bamboos a few feet from the ground. According to Mr E. C. Stuart Baker, two, rarely three, eggs are laid, measuring about 0.76 by 0.58 in. In colour the eggs are salmon-pink or creamy in ground-colour, blotched with grey and spotted with brown.

Habits.—This is a common bird in the low-country forest of Peninsular Siam, except in the south, and on the hills up to an altitude of about 4000 ft. In some localities it is submontane in habitat. Robinson describes it as almost the commonest bird in the jungle on the mountain Kao Nawng in Bandon, "keeping generally to the bushes and smaller trees." Like other members of the genus in Malaysia this babbler is essentially a bird of the forest. In Tenasserim it is said to occur only where the country is well-wooded, and to avoid the dry deciduous jungles.

Alcippe cinerea cinerea

The Malay Nun-Thrush

Vol. I., p. 226; Vol. II., p. 202.

A species of sombre plumage with no conspicuous distinguishing characters. Top of the head and nape, dark grey tinged with brown ; remaining upper parts, olive-brown, slightly rufescent on the upper tail coverts and tail. Under parts, whitish, tinged with grey on the sides of the neck and breast and with brown on the flanks.

Total length, about 5.5 in. ; wing, 2.7 in.

This babbler is common in old forest in lowland and submontane localities, but it is not commonly seen in cleared areas, cultivation or secondary growth.

There is no record of the nest and eggs from the Peninsula.

Stachyris nigriceps davisoni

The Malayan Grey-throated Babbler

Vol. II., p. 206.

Top of the head, blackish grey streaked with white ; remaining upper parts, olive-brown ; chin and upper throat, grey ; remaining under parts, pale tawny, most richly coloured on the breast.

Total length, about 5.25 in. ; wing, 2.4 in.

In the Malay States this babbler is found plentifully in the bushes and

undergrowth of sheltered, old submontane forest, but it seems not to come down into the absolute lowlands except in Peninsular Siam. It is common on some of the hills in the south of Johore and breeds in the Selangor Mountains in April.

*Stachyris poliocephala poliocephala*¹

The Malayan Grey-headed Babbler

Vol. II., p. 208.

Timalia poliocephala Temminck, *Pl. Col.*, 593, fig. 2, 1836 (Bencoolen, West Sumatra).

Stachyris poliocephala, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 534.

Stachyris poliocephala diluta, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 297.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Upper parts, dark brown; under parts, bright chestnut; head, grey, streaked with white. Not unlike *Stachyris nigriceps davisoni*, described in Vol. II., p. 206, but larger and without the white malar patch and the general plumage not pale tawny, but bright rusty or ferruginous brown.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Head all round, grey, darkest, almost black, on the crown and palest, ashy grey, on the throat, turning to deep sepia on the hinder crown and nape; forehead, feathers of the fore part of the crown, chin and throat, edged with white, causing a streaked appearance, boldest on the throat; remaining upper parts, including wings, deep brown, inclining to chestnut on the upper tail coverts and tail; tail quills very narrowly fringed with chestnut, and the primaries pale chestnut on the outer webs. Concealed parts of wing quills, dusky brown, the innermost edges, whitish rufous. Under wing coverts and edge of wing, mixed neutral grey and rufous. Remaining under parts, deep bright brownish chestnut, the flanks and abdomen washed with olive-brown.

Immature.—The juvenile has the head all round, grey, tinged with brown on the crown, unstreaked; the remainder of the plumage, chestnut, brightest and palest on the under parts. It, therefore, differs mainly from the adult in lacking the white streaks on the head and in being paler in colour. An older bird is like the adult, but has the brighter juvenile plumage showing through in patches on the upper parts.

Soft Parts.—Iris, yellow; upper mandible, black; lower mandible, bluish slate; feet, olive.

Dimensions.—Total length, 5.25 to 5.7 in.; tail, 1.95 to 2.1 in.; wing, 2.6 to 2.8 in.; tarsus, 0.95 in.; bill from gape, 0.8 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From the state of Trang in Peninsular Siam southwards down both sides of the Peninsula to Johore. Not recorded from any of the small islands.

¹ The name used in Vol. II. is *S. p. diluta*, but it has since been shown that the birds called *diluta*, described from Perak, Malay States, cannot be separated from West Sumatran birds which represent the original *poliocephala*.

Extralimital Range.—Most of Sumatra. Borneo. North-East Sumatra is inhabited by a closely allied subspecies.

Nidification.—Unknown. A nestling from Ginting Bidei, Selangor, 2300 ft., is dated 30th May. A much older, immature, bird of the year was taken in the same place on 21st May.

Habits.—A common bird in the lowland forests of the south, but rarer near the northern limit of its range. It does not ascend the hills above about 2500 ft. It has been recorded from between 3000 ft. to 4000 ft. on Gunong Tahan, but I suspect an error in labelling the specimen as none of a very large series of specimens from the Malay States, including some from Gunong Tahan, has been taken at such a high altitude. It frequents dense secondary growth where there are sheltering trees and undergrowth, but I have never seen it in cultivated areas. Dr E. Jacobson records that he has found fruit in the stomach of this species, which has always been supposed to be insectivorous in diet.

Stachyris nigricollis

The Black-necked Babbler

PLATE 21 (*lower figure*)

Vol. II., p. 209.

Timalia nigricollis Temminck, *Pl. Col.*, 594, fig. 2, 1836 (Borneo).

Stachyris nigricollis, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 535; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 297.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Upper parts, maroon-chestnut; lower parts, grey; throat, black margined with white; a white malar patch and a white streak above and behind the eye.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead, black, finely streaked with white; crown, dark rufous-brown, becoming blackish grey on the sides; remaining upper parts, including the wings, deep reddish or maroon-chestnut; tail quills, brown edged with reddish chestnut; concealed parts of the wings, blackish brown, the inner edges of the wing quills, smoky, perhaps tinged with rufous. Lores, ear coverts, chin, throat and fore neck, black, a narrow crescentic band of white feathers, broadly tipped with black, separating the black fore neck from the slate-grey breast and abdomen. A short, broad line above the ear coverts, and a roundish patch on the cheeks, near the base of the bill, white. Lower abdomen, under tail coverts and thighs, dark rufous brown to chestnut-brown; flanks sometimes washed with the same colour.

Soft Parts.—Iris, red; eyelids, black; bill, black, slaty at the base of the lower mandible; feet, grey-black to olive-black.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6.1 to 6.3 in.; tail, 2 to 2.2 in.; wing, 2.65 to 2.8 in.; tarsus, 0.9 in.; bill from gape, 0.8 in. The series examined is not large, but it suggests that males average slightly larger than females.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From the state of Trang in Peninsular Siam down both sides of the Peninsula to Malacca. I can find no formal record from Johore, but the species almost certainly occurs there. There is

a trustworthy record from Penang Island, and an old and very doubtful one from Singapore Island.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra and Borneo.

Nidification.—Mr A. T. Edgar has found eggs in Perak at the beginning of June. He describes the nest as placed on the ground, in dense undergrowth, in forest on a hillside. It was a flat, circular pad of fibrous material, the strips being coarser and broader on the ground and becoming shorter and finer higher up. The egg-chamber was lined with slender strands of blackish fibre. The nest was domed with a loose canopy of dry leaves, taken from some large-leaved plant, which fell away as soon as the nest was touched. The two eggs were pure white, long ovals, pointed at the small end, slightly glossed and with a close-textured, but not very tough, shell. They measured 0.8 and 0.84 by 0.54 and 0.56 in.

Habits.—A common bird in the low-country forest, especially in the Federated Malay States. Near the northern limit of its range in Peninsular Siam it is rarer. It has been recorded from the Batang Padang mountains in South Perak, but this occurrence seems to be exceptional and, normally, the bird does not seem to ascend the hills higher than about 1500 ft. Even at this altitude it is not common, and the favourite localities are the damp, or even swampy, jungles away from the hills. It is found on the ground and in the undergrowth and low bushes.

The bird figured in the plate is a male from Trang, Peninsular Siam.

Stachyris leucotis leucotis

The Malayan White-eared Babbler

PLATE 21 (*upper figure*)

Vol. II., p. 208.

Timalia leucotis Strickland, *Contr. Orn.*, 1848, p. 63, pl. 12 (Malacca).

Stachyris leucotis, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 537.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Not unlike the preceding species (*Stachyris nigricollis*), but the upper parts rufous-brown, not reddish chestnut, and with the sides of the neck spotted with white, and the wings with buff. Under parts, grey; throat, black; feet relatively large; lores and feathers of the forehead stiff and upstanding.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead, olive-grey, the feathers with slightly darker centres; crown and sometimes fore part of the mantle, brownish olive, passing into rufous-brown on the back and turning to dark chestnut-brown on the upper tail coverts and tail; very rarely there are a few obsolete, large buff spots, with narrow black edges, on the scapulars and back; tail feathers tipped with pale rufous. Lores, white, sometimes tinged with rufous; ear coverts, pale grey with a large white patch over the ear; supercilium, chin and throat, black, the two black areas connected by a broad, vertical black bar on the sides of the neck behind the ear coverts; the supercilium and bar on the neck with large, guttate, white spots. Line of junction between

the black throat and grey breast occasionally flecked with white. Breast and upper abdomen, dark slate-grey, sometimes with a few thin, whitish, obsolete, pale shaft stripes. Lower abdomen, flanks, thighs and under tail coverts, rufous-brown, the under tail coverts with broad, subterminal, buff or whitish rufous bars, and thighs sometimes with a few large spots of the same colour. Wings, rufous-brown, brightest on the outer edges of the quills and washed with olive on the lesser coverts. Wing coverts tipped with large spots, varying in colour from cream-buff to pale rufous, all very narrowly black-edged; primary coverts and all wing quills with terminal bars of the same colour; wing quills slightly dusky subterminally. Concealed portions of wing quills, blackish brown; wing lining, the same, the quills edged with dusky rufous; edge of wing and axillaries, buffy; under wing coverts, mixed buff and neutral grey.

Immature.—Very like the adult, but the forehead and crown purer grey, the upper parts more brightly rufous and with no distinct spots on the wings, these being replaced by pale rufous areas only slightly paler than the wing in general.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown; upper mandible, black; lower mandible, grey to plumbeous; feet, olive-brown or brown.

Dimensions.—Total length, 5·6 to 6 in.; tail, 1·8 to 1·9 in.; wing, 2·5 to 2·75 in.; tarsus, 0·85 in.; bill from gape, 0·8 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From the state of Trang, in Peninsular Siam, south down both sides of the Peninsula to Johore. Not recorded from any of the small islands.

Extralimital Range.—Does not occur outside the Malay Peninsula, but a closely allied subspecies is found in Borneo.

Nidification.—Unknown.

Habits.—A common but very locally distributed bird in heavy lowland forest throughout the Malay States, and much rarer in the northern parts of its range than in the south. It shows a predilection for the foothills of the main range and for the hills in Negri Sembilan, and it is common in Johore, but nowhere does it ascend the hills higher than about 2500 ft. Essentially it is a denizen of the ground in tall, old forest away from open country and cultivated areas.

The bird figured in the plate is a male from Negri Sembilan.

Stachyris maculata pectoralis

The Red-rumped Babbler

PLATE 22 (*lower figure*)

Timalia pectoralis Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xi., 1842, p. 793 (Singapore).

Stachyris maculatus (pt.), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 538.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Upper parts, olive-brown; rump, bright rufous. Under

parts, whitish, spotted with black on the breast. Chin and throat, black. Feathers of the lower back and rump lengthened and hair-like.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead and fore part of crown, black, streaked with pale grey; nape, mantle, upper back and wings, olive-brown, the mantle and wing coverts with a grey bloom, the innermost wing quills the brownest and their edges sometimes tinged with rufous. Concealed portion of wing quills, blackish, the innermost edges smoky. Lower back, rump and upper tail coverts, orange-rufous. Tail quills, dark olive-brown, faintly dusky at the tips and on the concealed portions; the edges of the basal half, or sometimes more, rufous, less strongly coloured on the outer feathers. Lores and supercilium, black; ear coverts and sides of the neck, dark grey; fore part of cheeks, chin, throat and fore neck, black; from the lower throat downwards, the feathers broadly edged with white; breast and abdomen, dirty white, heavily spotted with long black spots, the spots obsolete on the abdomen, which is tinged with pale brownish buff. Sides of the breast, greyish brown; flanks and under tail coverts, brownish buff. Axillaries and under wing coverts, neutral grey tinged with buff.

Note.—In old museum skins there is no grey bloom on the mantle, and the upper parts are often quite yellowish brown.

Immature.—The youngest juvenile examined has the upper parts brighter than in the adult and even the mantle is tinged with rufous. The under parts appear to have been pale grey from chin to breast, whitish in the centre of the abdomen and pale fulvous-rufous on flanks, vent and under tail coverts. A few black feathers of the adult plumage have appeared on the throat and fore neck.

Soft Parts.—Iris, pinkish white to pale yellow; upper mandible, black; lower mandible, bluish slate; feet, greenish slate to plumbeous; bare orbital skin and region of the gape, blue; bare skin on the sides of the neck, turquoise.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6·7 to 7·3 in.; tail, 2·6 to 2·85 in.; wing, 3·2 to 3·4 in.; tarsus, 1 in.; bill from gape, 0·9 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Bandon in Peninsular Siam, south down both sides of the Peninsula to Johore. There is an old record from Singapore Island. Not recorded from any other of the small coastal islands.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra and the Rhio Archipelago. The typical subspecies is Bornean, and other races have been described from the Banjak and Batu Islands off the west coast of Sumatra.

Nidification.—Mr V. W. Ryves tells me that he has found the nest of this species in Pahang at the end of March. There were three pure white eggs. The nest was a loosely constructed globe of dead leaves placed about twenty-four inches from the ground, in a thick tangle of creepers and dead leaves in heavy jungle.

Habits.—A common bird in the low-country jungle of the south, but rarer in the northern parts of its range. It is purely a bird of the forests and not of the cultivated areas. It is usually seen in small parties in the undergrowth.

The bird figured in the plate is a male from Perak.

*Thringorhina striolata guttata***Tickell's Spotted Babbler**

Vol. II., p. 209.

Turdinus guttatus Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xxviii., 1859, p. 414 (Tenasserim).

Stachyris guttata, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 535.

Thringorhina guttata, Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 155; Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 262.

Thringorhina striolata guttata, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 298.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Rufous-brown above, orange-chestnut below; chin, white; sides of the neck heavily spotted with white.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead, black, streaked with white; remaining upper parts, rufous-brown, palest on the mantle and back, darkest on the crown and becoming almost dark chestnut on upper tail coverts, tail and wings; feathers of the crown with narrow dusky fringes and with thin black shaft stripes on the fore crown; concealed parts of wing quills, blackish brown, innermost edges pale smoky brown. Lores, white, streaked with black; chin, throat and a large spot under the eye, white; a broad black moustachial streak; ear coverts, hair-brown, white on the hinder and lower margins; a broad supercilium and a large patch on the sides of the neck behind the ear coverts, composed of lengthened white feathers with black edges, a few such feathers also occur on the mantle connecting the neck patches; remaining under parts, orange-chestnut, washed with dull brown on the flanks, thighs and under tail coverts; edge of wing and under wing coverts, mixed pale chestnut and white. In fresh skins there is a distinct olive tinge on the mantle, back and flanks. Some specimens show thin white shaft stripes on the breast.

Soft Parts.—Iris, sepia or red; bill, slate; culmen and nostrils, black; feet, greenish olive or greenish grey (*Robinson and Kloss*).

Dimensions.—Total length, 6.1 to 6.5 in.; tail, 2.1 to 2.3 in.; wing, 2.55 to 2.7 in.; tarsus, 0.9 in.; bill from gape, 0.8 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Occurs only in Peninsular Siam, whence we have specimens from our northern limit at Tasan, south to Nakon Sri Tammarat and the state of Trang.

Extralimital Range.—Occurs as far north as Mt Muleyit. Other subspecies are known from the northern parts of French Indo-China, and Sumatra.

Nidification.—Unknown. Messrs Robinson and Kloss collected a nest and eggs of the typical form in Sumatra, and record the nest as cup-shaped and composed of bamboo leaves. The three eggs were "glossy white, blunt ovals, only slightly smaller at one end than the other." Size, 0.85 by 0.66 in.

Habits.—From Kao Nawng, in Peninsular Siam, Robinson records this babbler as very common, keeping to bushes and low trees in parties of two or three. The same author considers that it is less terrestrial in its habits than

its close allies of the genus *Stachyris*, although it is sometimes seen on the ground. Writing of the species in Tenasserim, Davison says that it affects the forests in general, "even where these are comparatively open, or composed to a great extent of bamboo, it may be found. It goes about in small parties and keeps much to the undergrowth, but I have never seen it on the ground. Its food consists, so far as I have observed, of insects."

Cyanoderma erythroptera erythroptera

The Red-winged Babbler

Vol. I., p. 224; Vol. II., p. 212.

Forehead, sides of the head, throat and breast, dark grey; abdomen, pale dull buff; upper parts, chestnut-brown.

Total length, about 6 in.; wing, 2.5 in.

This babbler is common in small flocks in the drier parts of the lowland secondary areas, avoiding the higher trees and the older forest.

Mr A. T. Edgar sends me the following note: "On 11th August a nest was being built by four individuals, between a creeper and two saplings, eighteen inches from the ground, in jungle. The nest was later destroyed by a heavy fall of rain. On 24th May of the next year there was a nest with two eggs in a similar situation but slightly higher above ground. It was a loosely made ball of dry and skeleton leaves, with a loosely lined egg-chamber of fine rootlets and fibre." Another nest was five feet from ground-level in a thorny rattan, also in jungle. Eggs in February and May. The eggs are pure white and glossed. In size they average 0.66 by 0.50 in.

Mr V. W. Ryves has found eggs in Negri Sembilan in March, April and June. He describes them as "white with a faint bluish tinge." The nests were from eight to ten feet from the ground in tangles of creepers in thick secondary jungle.

Stachyridopsis rufifrons poliogaster

Hume's Grey-bellied Babbler

Vol. II., p. 209.

Top of the head, chestnut-red; remaining upper parts, pale olive-brown, lighter on the wings and tail. A stripe over the eye, grey; chin and upper throat, white with thin black streaks; lower throat and breast, orange-buff; remaining under parts, pale grey.

A small species. Total length, about 4.5 in.; wing, 2.1 in.

This tiny babbler is very rare in the Peninsula and very few specimens have been obtained, all in submontane localities, from South Perak to Johore. As these, however, include the low hills in the south of Johore I have included notice of the species in this volume in the hope of eliciting further information. It is said to be a bird of the undergrowth in forest, and Robinson suggests that its limited range is probably correlated with the presence of certain bamboos. In the north of Peninsular Siam another subspecies occurs, *S. r. obscura*, which is rather paler on the upper parts. Nest and eggs unknown.

*Mixornis gularis pileata***The Malay Yellow-breasted Babbler**

Vol. I., p. 223; Vol. II., p. 212.

Top of the head, dark chestnut; upper parts, paler chestnut-brown washed with olive; under parts, pale sulphur-yellow, thinly but boldly streaked with black on the throat and breast.

Total length, about 5·2 in.; wing, 2·2 in.

This is one of the commoner lowland babblers, and it is usually to be seen in small flocks in the bushes wherever there is any extent of secondary growth. It prefers the vicinity of the coasts to the hill country, and more open country to the old forest. The rough, domed nest of grass, etc., has been found with eggs from February to July. Mr A. T. Edgar gives the size of local eggs as about 0·71 by 0·5 in.

North of about the latitude of Penang the streaks on the under parts are thinner and the upper parts are slightly less richly coloured. This northern form is known as *Mixornis gularis connectens*.

*Kenopia striata***The Striped Babbler**

PLATE 19 (*upper figure*)

Vol. II., p. 209.

Timalia striata Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xi., 1842, p. 793 (Singapore).

Kenopia striata, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 573; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 298.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Crown, black; remaining upper parts, rufous-brown; under parts, white; upper parts heavily streaked with white and flanks with pale brown.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead and crown, black; mantle to upper tail coverts, rufous, brownest on the mantle, palest and brightest on lower back and rump, deepest and almost dark chestnut on the upper tail coverts; wings and tail, olive-brown; innermost secondaries, rufous-brown; centre tail feathers tinged with rufous, especially on the edges; in certain lights obsolete narrow black bars can be seen on the tail quills; the whole of the upper parts conspicuously marked with white, on the crown and mantle with ovate spots which become scarcer, narrower and longer on the back; upper tail coverts with a few narrow pale streaks; wing coverts boldly spotted with white; innermost secondaries with a few elongate spots. Lores, whitish rufous; supercilium, white; ear coverts, white finely streaked with black; feathers on sides of the neck and breast, white with bold black margins; remaining under parts, including cheeks, creamy white; flanks streaked and washed with rufous-brown; breast feathers sometimes narrowly fringed with black; edge of wing and under wing coverts, mixed black and white.

Immature.—A very young but fully feathered juvenile is much like the adult, but the spots on the crown are tinged with rufous.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown; bill, black, whitish or flesh-coloured at the base of the lower mandible; feet, pale flesh-colour.

Dimensions.—Total length, 5.55 to 5.9 in.; tail, 1.9 to 2.1 in.; wing, 2.55 to 2.8 in.; tarsus, 0.8 in.; bill from gape, 0.7 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Trang, in Peninsular Siam, south down both sides of the Peninsula to the extreme south of Johore. Not recorded from any of the islands except in the case of the type which was said to have come from Singapore. I suspect that the specimen actually came from the mainland.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra and Borneo.

Nidification.—Unknown. A juvenile from Pahang is dated 18th November.

Habits.—The striped babbler is not common in the Malay Peninsula, but is possibly more abundant in the extreme south than elsewhere. A number of specimens have also been obtained at Rawang in the lowlands of Selangor. It has been recorded from as high as 4000 ft. on Gunong Tahan, but my belief is that the actual specimen came from a much lower altitude. It is a ground-bird with a decided preference for the tangled, lower jungle of the swampy country rather than the drier, heavier forests of tall trees, in which, however, it is, on occasions, also found. Robinson has noted a partiality for thorny undergrowth. It has never been met with in cultivated areas.

The bird figured in the plate is a female from the Krau river, Western Pahang.

Macronus ptilosus ptilosus

The Malayan Fluffy-backed Babbler

PLATE 22 (*upper figure*)

Vol. II., p. 212.

Macronus ptilosus Jardine and Selby, *Ill. Orn.*, 1835, pl. 150 (Malacca); Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 583 (pt.).

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—Top of the head, bright chestnut; throat, black; remainder of plumage, fulvous-brown; the feathers growing from the upper part of the flanks and the back greatly lengthened, hair-like and with thickened white shafts.

Adult.—Sexes alike. Forehead and crown, bright chestnut; mantle, back and wings, fulvous-brown, darkest on the wings; concealed parts of the wing quills, blackish brown; upper tail coverts, rufous-brown; tail, dusky brown, almost black. Lores, a ring round the eye, cheeks, chin and throat, black; a small white spot on either side of the lower throat; in the middle of the lower throat, white bases to the feathers sometimes show through as an indistinct patch when the plumage is disturbed; ear coverts, sides of the neck and the under parts, fulvous-brown, brightest, almost orange-brown, on the breast; flanks and lower under parts, darker and very faintly olive;

middle of the breast and abdomen, dark grey; under wing coverts, brownish grey.

Immature.—Very like the adult, but duller and without the orange tinge on the breast.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown or chestnut; bill, black; feet, dark slate to black; bare orbital skin, turquoise; skin of the throat, cobalt.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 6.4 in.; tail, 2.4 in.; wing, 2.55 to 2.8 in.; tarsus, 0.9 in.; bill from gape, 0.8 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Bangnara, Patani, Peninsular Siam, south down both sides of the Peninsula to Johore. Penang Island. There are also some old records from Singapore, but I know of no reliable recent record from this island.

Extralimital Range.—Sumatra. Slightly different subspecies occur in Borneo, Billiton and Banka.

Nidification.—Mr A. T. Edgar reports eggs from Perak at the beginning of February. The nest was in flat jungle, placed in a low-growing palm, about two feet from the ground. It was ball-shaped and about four inches in diameter. The bottom and back of the nest were stiffened by an outer layer of tough dry leaves. Inside this was a layer of strips of dry palm leaf. The egg-chamber was of the same material but shredded finer. The oblong entrance was across the centre of one side and about two and a half inches high. The two eggs were creamy white before blowing, but pure white when blown, and spotted with small dots and pin-points of red-brown, more numerous and larger at the thick end of the egg. The shell is thin and translucent. Size, 0.84 and 0.82 by 0.57 in.

Mr V. W. Ryves describes a nest with two eggs, found in Negri Sembilan at the end of March, as a cup of dried grass and fibre, domed over with dead leaves. It was placed at the foot of a sapling, on the ground, in thick secondary forest.

Habits.—A common bird of the low-country jungle, especially where there is much undergrowth, and occasionally ascending the foothills to a height of about 2000 ft. It is of a confiding nature and is usually met with in small parties, slipping through the tangled vegetation just above the ground. From Sumatra, Dr E. Jacobson reports it as living in swampy jungle.

The species is common in the old forest at the foot of the Negri Sembilan hills, where the birds are found in small parties consisting of three or four adults hunting for food, quite close to the ground in the ferns and thick undergrowth fringing the jungle paths. Deep gullies filled with ferns are also favourite haunts. They are tame little birds, sometimes dodging about through the tangled vegetation almost at one's feet. Nevertheless, I found them difficult to collect because of their great activity and the denseness of the foliage. One of the calls is a short, monosyllabic note, but another, which is quite unmistakable, ends with a churring note.

The bird figured in the plate is a male from Kledang Hill, Perak.

*Erpornis xantholeuca interposita***The White-bellied Herpornis**

Vol. I., p. 218; Vol. II., p. 185.

The head with a noticeable crest. The whole of the upper parts are yellowish olive, and the under parts, white with a greyish tinge.

Total length, about 4·8 in. ; wing, 2·7 in.

Although common in the tall old forest of submontane areas, this babbler is rarer at sea-level, and I doubt if it occurs in the lowland swamp jungle. It is usually seen in flocks in the smaller trees. Mr A. T. Edgar has sent me some notes on the nidification of this species.

On 6th January he found a nest in hillside jungle, about 800 ft. above sea-level, in Lower Perak (Dindings). The nest was in a fairly open situation, and placed eighteen feet from the ground, near the end of a leafy horizontal branch of a small tree. It was a deep cup hanging between the two arms of a forked branch. Across the top it measured just under 2 in. ; the inside depth was 1·5 in. It was made of small dry leaves, held together by sparse strands of finely shredded brown fibre, which was also used to bind the rim to the supporting twigs. The outside of the nest and the binding were compacted with cobwebs, which were so plentiful that the nest appeared white when seen from below. The nest lining was strands of a fine, whitish, fibrous material. The three fresh eggs were oval, glossy, rather pointed at one end, and with a finely textured and relatively hard shell. The ground-colour was pure white (faintly pink when unblown), spotted all over with pale red-brown, most plentifully at the larger end. Measurements 0·69, 0·67, 0·66 by 0·52 in. The bird sat very close. Both sexes help in the nest-building, but one was seen to do most of the work.