

# WARBLERS

## Family SYLVIIDÆ

Vol. I., p. 245; Vol. II., p. 236.

THE warblers differ from their near allies, the flycatchers, in that the plumage of the young is not spotted or mottled, but is much like that of the adult, although perhaps slightly brighter.

The bill and feet are usually weak. Bristle-like feathers grow on the forehead, overhang the nostrils and occur again at the gape. The wing has ten primaries, but the first feather is usually very small, in some species not projecting beyond the primary coverts.

The tail has ten or twelve feathers and in some species it varies in length according to season.

The plumage is usually dull and there is little sexual difference in colour.

The eggs are either uniformly coloured or spotted. They are sometimes placed in normal cup-shaped nests, but some of the warblers make very elaborate domed nests, and in the tailor-birds the nests are so peculiar that they need special description.

The family is a very large one with a wide distribution in the Old World, although it is not found in the New World. Many of the species are migratory, but others are resident. Some have developed both resident and migratory forms.

About twenty-four species are known to occur in the Malay Peninsula. Half of these are migratory birds, breeding far away to the north and not appearing on our shores until the autumn. The migratory stream includes five species of willow-warblers, difficult birds to identify except in a museum. Of the resident forms the most conspicuous in the lowlands are four species of tailor-birds (*Orthotomus*). Some of the local forms are confined to the mountains.

### KEY TO THE MALAYAN LOWLAND WARBLERS

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | { Upper parts heavily streaked . . . . .                                   | 2   |
|   | { Upper parts uniform . . . . .  | 4   |
| 2 | { Under parts heavily spotted. . . . .                                     | <i>Locustella lanceolata</i> , p. 321     |
|   | { Under parts immaculate or with<br>obsolete spots on the breast . . . . . | 3   |
| 3 | { Very small: wing about 2 in. . . . .                                     | <i>Cisticola juncidis malaya</i> , p. 326 |
|   | { Much larger: wing about 2.5 in. . . . .                                  | <i>Locustella certhiola</i> , p. 321      |

4	{	Size comparatively very large: wing about 3 in. or more . . . . .	5
		Much smaller: wing much less than 3 in. . . . .	6
5	{	Bill short and thick; first primary just shorter than half length of the second	<i>Phragamaticola aëdon rufescens</i> , p. 330
		Bill longer and more slender; first primary vestigial and pin-like	<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus orientalis</i> , p. 321
6	{	Crown at least partly orange-chestnut	7
		No orange-chestnut on the head . . . . .	10
7	{	Upper parts, olive-green . . . . .	8
		Upper parts, grey . . . . .	9
8	{	Angle of wing, cream-coloured; ear coverts streaked	<i>Orthotomus sutorius maculicollis</i> , p. 322
		Angle of wing, bright yellow; ear coverts uniformly grey	<i>Orthotomus atrigularis atrigularis</i> , p. 324
9	{	Tail, bright chestnut . . . . .	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i> , p. 324
		Tail, dull olive-brown . . . . .	<i>Orthotomus sepium cineraceus</i> , p. 324
10	{	Abdomen, yellow . . . . .	11
		Abdomen, not yellow . . . . .	12
11	{	Tail very long: over 2 in. . . . .	<i>Prinia flaviventris rafflesi</i> , p. 333
		Tail normal: under 2 in. . . . .	<i>Abrornis superciliaris schwaneri</i> , p. 332
12	{	Tail very short and general appearance wren-like . . . . .	<i>Urosphena squamiceps</i> , p. 333
		Tail normal . . . . .	13
13	{	A heavy black line on each side of the crown . . . . .	<i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i> , p. 322
		Crown without conspicuous black lines . . . . .	14
14	{	Tail feathers with broad white tips and dark subterminal patches . . . . .	<i>Franklinia rufescens</i> , p. 328
		Tail uniform . . . . .	15
15	{	Upper parts, especially the rump, brownish olive or russet . . . . .	<i>Acanthopneuste tenellipes</i> , p. 332
		Upper parts, especially the rump, greenish olive . . . . .	16
16	{	A longitudinal coronal stripe, distinctly paler than the sides of the crown	<i>Acanthopneuste occipitalis coronatus</i> , p. 331
		Coronal stripe absent or scarcely noticeable . . . . .	17

17	{	First primary very small and at most	} <i>Acanthopneuste borealis borealis</i> ,	p. 330	
		not more than 3 mm. longer than the primary coverts			
18	{	First primary longer than above	} <i>Acanthopneuste nitidus plumbei-</i>	18	
		No coronal stripe			<i>tarsus</i> , p. 331
		A very indistinct and broken coronal stripe			} <i>Phylloscopus inornatus inornatus</i> ,

*Locustella certhiola* subsp.**Pallas's Grasshopper-Warbler**

Upper parts, rather dark olive-brown, tinged with grey on the nape and washed with rufous on the rump and upper tail coverts, the top of the head and the mantle heavily streaked with black. *Outer tail feathers tipped with white.* Under parts, white, washed with brownish buff across the breast and on the flanks. Young birds have a few dark brown spots on the breast.

Total length, 5.5 in.; wing, 2.5 in.

This migratory warbler turns up in small numbers at lighthouses and on small islands in the Straits of Malacca in autumn and winter. The breeding-grounds are in North-East Asia. The majority of Malayan specimens seem referable to the subspecies *L. c. minor*, but two forms occur, and the identity of birds of this species in their winter quarters is a subject needing much further study.

*Locustella lanceolata***The Streaked Grasshopper-Warbler**

Vol. I., p. 248.

A small species with a much graduated, rounded tail. Upper parts, brown, very faintly tinged with olive and almost everywhere heavily and broadly streaked with black. Under parts, white, with a faint fulvous wash on the throat and abdomen and tinged with buff on the breast and flanks, which are also boldly streaked with blackish brown. Young birds have the under parts washed with yellow.

Total length, about 5.3 in.; wing, 2.3 in.

This warbler is a winter visitor to the Peninsula from its breeding-grounds in Northern Asia. On passage, from October onwards, it is very common at lighthouses and small islands in the Straits of Malacca. On the mainland the bird affects swamps, and keeps to the cover of tall grass and reed-beds, etc.

*Acrocephalus stentoreus orientalis***The Eastern Great Reed-Warbler**

Vol. I., p. 250.

A large species with the first primary very small and not reaching the ends of the primary coverts. Upper parts, pale brown; lores, a short supercilium

and under parts, white, faintly tinged with buff, and with an indistinct brownish patch on each side of the breast.

Total length, about 7.5 in.; wing, 3.3 in.; bill from gape, 0.95 to 1 in.

A common winter visitor to the Peninsula from the breeding-grounds in East Siberia, Japan, etc. From October onwards it is to be seen, or more frequently heard, in the thick beds of grass and reeds in swampy country.

*Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

**Schrenck's Reed-Warbler**

Upper parts, pale brown washed with rufous on the rump. A broad buff eye-stripe is bordered above by a broad black streak on the side of the crown and bounded below by a brownish streak running through the eye. Under parts, whitish buff. Tail, comparatively short.

Total length, about 5 in.; wing, about 2.25 in.

A winter visitor to the north of the Peninsula from the breeding-grounds in Japan, Eastern Siberia, etc. Local specimens are all from Peninsular Siam.

*Orthotomus sutorius maculicollis*

**The Malayan Long-tailed Tailor-Bird**

Vol. II., p. 242.

*Orthotomus maculicollis* Moore, *Proc. Zool. Soc.*, 1854, p. 309 (Malacca); Oates, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 190.

*Sutoria maculicollis*, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 218.

*Orthotomus sutorius maculicollis*, Herbert, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, vi., 1923, p. 98; Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 413; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 322 (pt.); Stuart Baker, *Nid. Birds Ind. Emp.*, ii., 1933, p. 374.

**Malay Name.**—Kêlichap puchat pisang.

**Description.**—Top of head, chestnut; upper parts, green; lower parts, creamy. In males the centre pair of tail feathers is greatly lengthened and projects beyond the others. This species is very like the black-necked tailor-bird (*Orthotomus atrigularis*) described and figured in the first volume of this work, but males of the present species can at once be told by the absence of the black throat. Females are less easy to distinguish, but in the present species they are more creamy or buffy on the under surface and less white; the edge of the wing is whitish, not bright yellow; the ear coverts are boldly streaked and less uniformly grey; the flanks are not washed with green; and the space behind the eye is never, solidly, chestnut.

Males of this tailor-bird develop long tails, seasonally. The centre pair of feathers, which for most of the year only projects a short distance beyond the others, projects in the breeding season for as much as 0.76 in. I cannot say exactly when and under what conditions these long streamers are acquired in Malayan birds, but they seem at their longest in the south of the Peninsula in June. From the north of Peninsular Siam a number of skins collected in

April have long tails. Long tails are also common in Bangkok in June. Special detailed observations are required on this point.

*Adult male*.—Forehead and crown to about the level of the eyes, or just beyond, chestnut, turning to dull grey-brown on the hinder crown and nape. Mantle to upper tail coverts, pale yellowish green. Wings and tail, dull brown, the feathers edged with yellowish green, the tail feathers slightly blackened subterminally and with very narrow paler tips. Lores and sides of the head, whitish, streaked with black. Under parts, creamy or buffy white, the black bases of the feathers showing through on the sides of the breast and sometimes on the sides of the neck and throat, producing a streaked appearance. Thighs, rufous. Edge of wing, creamy white. Axillaries and under wing coverts, white, faintly tinged with saffron.

*Female*.—Very slightly less brightly coloured than the male. The long streamers in the tail are not developed in this sex.

*Immature*.—Duller and paler than the adult.

**Soft Parts**.—Iris, yellowish brown to pale orange or even terracotta; bill, horn-colour, the lower mandible paler, the upper mandible sometimes almost black; feet, pale brown, yellowish brown or flesh-colour.

**Dimensions**.—The total length of the adult male depends, of course, on whether or not the long tail feathers are developed. When they are, the total length is about 5.5 in., of which the tail takes up about 2.5 to 2.7 in., the latter figure being the measurement of the longest tail I have seen from the Peninsula. Wing, 1.7 to 1.9 in.; tarsus, 0.8 in.; bill from gape, 0.7 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula**.—The whole length of the Peninsula on both sides from north to south, including the islands of Penang and Singapore. Birds from Peninsular Siam are not exactly like typical *maculicollis* of Malacca, but are intermediate between it and *O. s. patia* which was described from Bengal, and extends south at least as far as Tenasserim, and Raheng in West Siam.

**Extralimital Range**.—Filters into the south of Tenasserim, but birds from South-West Siam are not typical, although those from the southern part of French Indo-China (Cochin-China, Cambodia, the south of Annam and Lower Laos) appear to belong to the present race. Allied races extend the range of this purely continental species to Ceylon, North-West India, the Himalayas and China.

**Nidification**.—Mr A. T. Edgar has found this tailor-bird breeding in Lower Perak in February, April and May. The nests were between three and five feet from the ground, "each sewn into a single large leaf, which hung from the plant at an angle of forty-five degrees, the midrib of the leaf forming the approximate centre of a sloping roof to the nest."<sup>1</sup> The three or four pale greenish-blue eggs are heavily marked with reddish brown, and also with smaller spots and irregular lines at the larger end. Mr Edgar gives the average size of nine eggs as 0.63 by just under 0.45 in.

**Habits**.—A common bird in the lowlands of most parts of the Malay Peninsula, but especially numerous in Peninsular Siam, and again in the south

<sup>1</sup> One nest found later was sewn between two leaves.

of Johore and on Singapore Island. It is most numerous in scrub vegetation and in gardens, even entering the gardens in the larger towns. It is also found at times in old forest and it has been found breeding on the Larut Hills as high as 3000 ft. Specimens have been collected on other hills slightly above this altitude.

*Orthotomus atrigularis atrigularis*

**The Malay Black-necked Tailor-Bird**

Vol. I., p. 246, pl. 18; Vol. II., p. 241.

Top of the head, pale chestnut; upper parts, bright yellowish green; edge of the wing, yellow; sides of the head and under parts, dirty white washed with grey, especially on the sides of the body; centre of the throat, black or grey-black; under tail coverts, greenish yellow. Females have the chestnut on the head reduced in extent and the black on the throat restricted to the bases of the feathers, and therefore scarcely noticeable.

Total length, 4.5 in.; wing, 1.7 in.

This well-known species is a common garden bird in most parts of the Peninsula. It prefers areas of secondary growth to the secluded parts of the old forest. Local eggs have been taken from February to June. The island of Tioman, off the east coast of the Peninsula, is inhabited by a slightly larger race (*O. a. major*), originally described from the Anamba Islands in the South China Sea.

*Orthotomus ruficeps*<sup>1</sup>

**The Red-headed Tailor-Bird**

Vol. I., p. 247, pl. 18.

Top of the head and the tail, bright chestnut; remaining upper parts, ashy grey; under parts, silky white, washed with buff on the flanks; thighs, chestnut.

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

A common bird, although rather locally distributed, throughout the lowlands of the Peninsula. It is not often seen in gardens, but is usually common in the scrubby areas on the outskirts of cultivation.

The nest has been found in Perak.

*Orthotomus sepium cineraceus*

**The Ashy Tailor-Bird**

*Orthotomus cineraceus* Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xiv., 1845, p. 589 (Malacca); Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 225 (pt.).

*Orthotomus sepium cineraceus*, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 416; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 322.

<sup>1</sup> The correct technical name of this bird is *O. sericeus hesperius* Oberh.; and unfortunately, the name *ruficeps* must be transferred to the species known above as *O. sepium cineraceus*.

**Malay Name.**—Këlichap puchat pisang.

**Description.**—General plumage, grey, palest on the abdomen. Head, chestnut.

*Adult male.*—Forehead, crown to about the level of the eyes, chin, upper throat, sides of the head, including the ear coverts and sides of the crown, broadly, behind the eyes, bright chestnut; mantle to upper tail coverts, dark grey, slightly paler on the rump. Wings, dull brown, washed with grey on the wing coverts and greyish olive on the quills, which have narrow beadings of greyish olive. Tail, paler olive-brown, the feathers with large, subterminal black patches and narrowly tipped with whitish, both these features absent, or only faintly marked, on the centre pair of feathers. Remaining under parts, grey, deepest and blackest on the lower throat and upper breast, much paler on the flanks and lightening to white on the centre of the abdomen and on the under tail coverts. Edge of wing, axillaries and under wing coverts, white tinged with buff. Thighs, rufous.

*Adult female.*—Much paler than the male. The whole of the lower breast and abdomen, white or whitish, and the breast quite pale grey.

*Immature.*—Like the adult female, but the general tone of the plumage even paler and the under parts whiter. Chin, throat and sides of the head, whitish.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, pale brown; bill, horn-colour, the upper mandible darker; feet, flesh-colour to fleshy brown.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, 4·6 to 5 in.; tail, 1·7 to 1·85 in. in males, very slightly shorter in females; wing, 1·9 to 2 in. in males; females run a little smaller, 1·75 to 1·9 in.; tarsus, 0·8 in.; bill from gape, 0·75 to 0·8 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—Specimens are from Lacon in Peninsular Siam. Perak, Selangor and Pahang south to Singapore Island and adjacent islets.

**Extralimital Range.**—South Tenasserim (*vide* Stuart Baker). Cochin-China. Sumatra, the Rhio Archipelago and Banka. The north coast of Java; Bawean and Kangean Islands. An almost inseparable race is found in Borneo and other subspecies have been described from the Karimon-Java Islands and the West Sumatran islands of Nias, Sipora and the Pagi Islands. The typical race inhabits most of Java and Bali.

**Nidification.**—In Lower Perak Mr A. T. Edgar has taken eggs of this species in January and April from nests of the usual tailor-bird type sewn into single large leaves, but in *Bull. Raff. Mus.*, 8, 1933, p. 149, he has called attention to variation in the nests, and his detailed notes should be read by those who have an inclination to add to our most imperfect knowledge of the specific variation in the nests of the Malayan tailor-birds. The two or three eggs measure about 0·64 by 0·42 in., and are rather variable in colour. The ground-colour varies from blue-green to white or pinkish-white, and the usual markings, blotches of reddish brown and underlying purple, are sometimes reduced to smaller brown specks, chiefly at the larger end.

**Habits.**—In the south of the Peninsula, including Singapore Island and its environs, this is a common bird of the countryside wherever there is scrub

and secondary growth. It is often seen in hedges and on the edges of plantations. It readily enters large gardens on the outskirts of villages and towns; but it is definitely not a regular inhabitant of the towns like *O. s. maculicollis* and *O. atrogularis*. In the northern Malay States it seems much less common and very local in its distribution, and I have seen no specimens from Kedah, Kelantan, etc., although the bird almost certainly will be found in suitable situations in these states.

*Cisticola juncidis malaya*

**The Streaked Fantail Warbler**

*Cisticola juncidis malaya* Lynes, *Ibis*, 1930, Suppl., p. 92 (Klang, Selangor, Malay States).

*Cisticola cisticola* (pt.), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 259.

*Cisticola cisticola cursitans*, Herbert, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, vi., 1923, p. 100.

*Cisticola juncidis cursitans*, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 318.

**Malay Names.**—Burong laki padi (any small grassland warbler); chak tinting (*Kedah*).

**Description.**—Upper parts, brown, boldly streaked with blackish and buff. Rump, paler, rufous-brown. Under parts whitish, the flanks tinged with rufous. Tail, rounded and tipped with white.

*Adult in summer plumage.*—Top of the head, dark brown, faintly mottled, or obsoletely striped, with paler brown, the dark crown forming a fairly distinct cap against the paler brown nape. Mantle, back and upper tail coverts, dark brown, the feathers fringed with paler brown. Lower back and rump, pale rufous-buff without markings. Wing quills, dark smoky brown, edged with paler brown externally, and smoky grey on their concealed inner edges. Wing coverts, pale brown with much darker centres. Lores and an indistinct stripe over the eye, whitish. Under parts, white, faintly washed with dull brown on the sides of the breast, and with rufous on the flanks. Tail feathers, dark brown, broadly tipped with white, the tips narrower and buffy white on the centre feathers. *In males there is a pale rufous patch ("mirror") on the inner web of all tail feathers, except the centre pair.* This "mirror" is in the terminal half of the feather and can be seen, easily, when the tail is spread.

*In females* the crown is very slightly less uniformly brown than in males, and there are no "mirrors" in the tail.

*Adult in winter plumage.*—In this plumage the sexes are alike, and the male has no "mirrors" in the tail. There are certain other differences between the summer and winter plumages, the most striking of which is that in winter the top of the head is not almost uniformly brown forming a fairly distinct dark cap, but that it is best described as dark brown, boldly striped with paler brown. It is much like the mantle and back in appearance, with the colour pattern of which it is now almost continuous.



*Young birds* are much like the adults in winter, but they are faintly washed with pale yellow ("sulphured") on the under parts.

**Soft Parts.**—The adult male in summer has the iris, yellowish brown to hazel; the bill, pale brownish grey to yellowish white, brownish on the culmen and at the tip of the lower mandible; feet, fleshy; inside the mouth, black. In females the bill is slightly paler, and the mouth is flesh-coloured inside, as is that of the male in winter. In young birds the iris is pale brown; the bill, dull yellow, with the culmen and point of the lower mandible, brown, and the feet, pale brown. The gape, mouth and tongue are yellow, and there are two conspicuous black spots at the base of the tongue.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, about 4.5 in.; wing, 1.9 to 2 in.; tail, 1.38 to 1.45 in. in summer and 1.58 to 1.7 in. in winter; tarsus, about 0.8 in.; bill from gape, 0.52 to 0.57 in. Females run slightly smaller than the preceding measurements.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—The whole length of the Peninsula, including Penang, Singapore and the small islets near Singapore.

**Extralimital Range.**—Lower Burma, the Nicobar Islands, Siam, Sumatra, Simalur Island, Billiton and West Java. In Assam and Upper Burma it fuses with the Indian race, *C. j. cursitans*, and in the opposite direction, that is on its north-eastern boundary, it fuses with the Chinese *C. j. tinnabulans*, which is the race found in French Indo-China.

**Nidification.**—Mr A. T. Edgar has found the nest in Lower Perak from February to May, and writes: "The nest is very flimsy, purse-shaped, and three to four inches deep over all, the inside depth of the egg-chamber being one and a half to two inches. The nest rim is often noticeably higher at the back of the cup. The materials used are dry *lalang*, very fine dry grass and *lalang* flowers, mainly the latter, which alone are used for lining the egg-chamber. The nest is placed amongst low *lalang* from six inches to two feet from the ground, attached to and supported by some of the young blades, which are bent over and interwoven with the dry nesting material.

"One or two eggs are laid, white, with a greenish tinge, marked all over with minute brown specks, most numerous at the larger end, where also are some very faint underlying greyish markings. Oval, slightly compressed at one end, the egg measures about 0.63 by 0.45 in.; for so small an egg it has a relatively tough shell, with a slight gloss." In connection with the foregoing description it should be mentioned that *lalang* is the Malay name for a genus of big, coarse grasses (*Imperata*).

Mr V. W. Ryves mentions a nest with two eggs in Perak on 28th June.

**Habits.**—From the descriptions of the plumages given above, it will be seen that the males of this grass-warbler have distinct summer and winter plumages. The difference between these plumages is less marked in the females, and in winter males and females are much alike. The winter plumage in both sexes is characterized by a lengthened tail. The details of the changes and even the extent of their seasons are very little understood, and few birds are more likely to repay sustained interest by a field-worker in Malaya. The series of birds I have studied is not large, but from the Malay States I can

record summer plumage from March to August and winter plumage, or very near it, from August to October. Flying juveniles are dated May and September. Curiously enough, a series of skins from Bangkok, far away to the north, gives, approximately, similar seasons.

This little bird, insectivorous in diet, is common in grass-lands and in the fields of growing rice throughout the lowlands of the Malay Peninsula, and even very small patches of grass on the outskirts of villages often contain a few birds. On the tiny islets near Singapore it is found in the grass at the back of the mangroves only a few yards from the open sea. Normally it is a skulker, keeping to the undergrowth and, when disturbed, fluttering off a short distance only before dropping quickly into the grass again. In the breeding season, however, the males are much more conspicuous and bold, and their nuptial flight during which the bird rises into the air, flying round in circles, with an undulating flight and a continually uttered sharp little note, is certain to attract attention. In some newly built-up areas in Singapore it is curious to see the nuptial flight over main roads and house-tops in districts where the birds are clinging desperately to their old haunts, now sadly depleted. This boldness of the breeding male is reflected in casually made collections in which such birds invariably form the great majority of the skins. The warblers of this genus are the subject of a recent monograph by Rear-Admiral H. Lynes, C.B., C.M.G. (see *Ibis*, 1930, *Cisticola* supplement), and this work is recommended as an example to all local ornithologists whose tastes run in the direction of the pursuit of a circumscribed study.

*Franklinia rufescens*

**Beavan's Wren-Warbler**

Vol. II., p. 242.

*Prinia rufescens* Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xvi., 1847, p. 456 (Arracan).

*Cisticola beavani*, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 255.

*Franklinia rufescens*, Oates, in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1889, p. 242; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 377 (pt.); Oates, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 197 (pt.); Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 320.

*Franklinia rufescens rufescens*, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 427; Stuart Baker, *Nid. Birds Ind. Emp.*, ii., 1933, p. 387.

**Malay Name.**—Laki padi (also applied to *Prinia*, *Cisticola* and other open-country warblers).

**Description.**—Top of the head, grey; remaining upper parts, brown, the tail tipped with black and white; under parts, whitish, washed with buff on the flanks. A white stripe in front of the eye.

**Adult.**—Sexes alike. Forehead to nape, dark brownish grey; mantle to rump, including wing coverts and inner secondaries, pale brown, faintly olive; upper tail coverts and tail, rather brighter, more rufous-brown, the

tail feathers with a black subterminal patch and narrow white tips. Wing quills, dusky brown, edged with brighter rufous-brown. Lores, dusky; a broad white stripe from the eye to the bill, above the lores. Ear coverts and cheeks, paler grey than the crown. Under parts, including edge of the wing, under wing coverts and axillaries, white, washed with creamy buff on the flanks and sometimes on the breast; thighs tinged with pale rufous.

*Immature*.—Like the adult but the upper parts more rufous-brown. Under parts more heavily tinged with saffron-buff, especially on the flanks. White tips to the tail larger.

*Note*.—This warbler is always said to have a winter plumage in which the top of the head is browner and less grey, the upper parts, therefore, being more concolorous than in summer. Associated with this change of plumage is a longer tail. On the material before me, admittedly not a large series and consisting of about twenty skins only, I find the distinctions very hard to make out, and maybe the change is not so decisive in the Malay States as in more northern latitudes. The subject requires further study. I note a tail moult in February and July, and between these months the tail runs up to 1.77 in. in length. Outside those months it usually measures about 1.5 in., but in both seasons I find exceptions, and turning to the colour distinction I can only isolate one long-tailed bird collected on 24th March.

**Soft Parts**.—Iris, pale brown to orange; bill, black, pale at the base; feet, flesh-colour or brownish flesh.

**Dimensions**.—Total length, 4.2 to 4.5 in.; tail, 1.5 to 1.77 in.; wing, 1.65 to 1.76 in.; tarsus, 0.8 in.; bill from gape, 0.6 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula**.—From the Isthmus of Kra south to Negri Sembilan and Pahang.

**Extralimital Range**.—This is a continental species extending northwards to French Indo-China, Yunnan, Burma and most of India. Another subspecies is found from Kumaan to Assam and in Manipur.

*Note*.—In their book on the birds of French Indo-China, Messrs Delacour and Jabouille have united this species with *Franklinia gracilis*, a species with a wide distribution in India, Burma, Siam, etc. The move is a bold one on which I am not in a position to comment.

**Nidification**.—Mr V. W. Ryves records nests in June and August. Mr G. C. Madoc has found several nests of this species in Negri Sembilan and Selangor during the period April to June. The usual site is in a shrub in a clearing, the nest, a deep pocket of fine grass, being placed about two or three feet from the ground between two or even three large leaves, which are stitched together in the manner of a tailor-bird. Sometimes a single large leaf is curled round and stitched. The eggs are sometimes almost white before blowing, but more often pale or even deep blue. The local clutch is three or four eggs, which measure about 0.61 by 0.45 in. Mr Madoc considers that the nest of this species is readily distinguished from those of the true tailor-birds, as it is lined with grass and perhaps a few wisps only of cotton, whereas the local species of tailor-bird all line their nests with tree-cotton.

**Habits**.—This wren-warbler is most numerous in the northern parts of the

Peninsula, but nevertheless it remains common in grass-land throughout the Malay States, especially in Selangor and Pahang. I have never seen specimens from the extreme south of the Peninsula (Malacca, Johore and Singapore). For the habits I cannot improve on Robinson's summary: "This is normally a brushwood, scrub and ricefield bird, often coming into gardens and sometimes numerous in *lalang* wastes. It is, however, adventurous in its travels, and seems to spread along the roadsides and tracks, but is not, normally, found in heavy, evergreen jungles. Butler records it as abundant in the Tea Gardens clearing on the Larut Hills, in February and March; it has been obtained at the Semangko Pass in February, and on Gunong Tahan, at 5000 ft., in July. Kloss obtained very young birds on Bukit Tinggi, 1400 ft., in September."

*Phragamaticola aëdon rufescens*

**The Thick-billed Warbler**

This is a large species, at first sight so much like the eastern great reed-warbler (*Acrocephalus stentoreus orientalis*) that the two species are easy to confuse. Both have the upper parts pale brown and the under parts white tinged with buff, but the present species can always be picked out by its shorter, thicker and more finch-like bill, the absence of a broad pale eye-stripe, the much graduated and rounded tail, the outer feathers of which are very short, and the relatively large first primary which extends for some distance beyond the tips of the primary coverts. In *Acrocephalus* the tail is much squarer with the outer feathers only a trifle shorter than the centre pair, and the first primary is so minute that it can be overlooked. It is a pin-like feather not reaching to the end of the primary coverts.

Total length, about 7·7 in.; wing, about 3 in.; bill from gape, 0·8 to 0·9 in.

A winter visitor to the north of the Peninsula from the breeding-grounds in Siberia and China. I know of no record of its occurrence in the Peninsula south of Peninsular Siam.

*Acanthopneuste borealis borealis*

**The Arctic Willow-Warbler**

Vol. I., p. 251; Vol. II., p. 245.

The sexes are alike. Upper parts, dull olive-green with no median pale stripe running down the crown. Pale tips to the wing coverts form a double bar across the wing, in worn plumage sometimes not very noticeable. A yellowish white stripe runs from the base of the bill, over the eye, to the nape. Below this a slightly broader, dusky green stripe runs from the base of the bill, through the eye, to the end of the ear coverts. Under parts, dirty white tinged with yellow. First primary very small, sometimes shorter than the primary coverts, sometimes a trifle longer. Second primary longer than the sixth.

Total length, about 5 in.; wing, 2·5 to 2·8 in.

This willow-warbler breeds in the north of Asia and Europe and is a common winter visitor to the Malay Peninsula. It arrives in large numbers in October and is found chiefly on the coasts. The full season is from August to the beginning of June.

The Japanese Arctic willow-warbler (*Acanthopneuste borealis xanthodryas*) was mentioned by Robinson in Vol. II., p. 245, and characterized as follows: "A little larger than *A. borealis borealis*, with the head a darker brown, more distinct from the rest of the upper surface, and decidedly more yellow beneath. The outermost small primary larger and broader, extending well beyond the primary coverts." This Far-Eastern form of the Arctic willow-warbler certainly does visit Malaysia in winter, but my present opinion is that I have seen no birds from the Malay Peninsula that can be unhesitatingly referred to this race.

*Acanthopneuste nitidus plumbeitarsus*

**Middendorff's Willow-Warbler**

Dealing solely with skins from the Malay Peninsula, that is to say, with birds in their winter quarters and often in worn and abraded plumage, I doubt the utility of giving any superficial colour characters for the separation of this species from *A. borealis* to which it bears a close resemblance. The two species can, however, be easily separated by the relative lengths of the primaries. In *borealis* the first primary is very small and often shorter than the primary coverts. Sometimes it extends a short distance beyond the tips of these coverts, but always less than 3 mm. The second primary, that is the first *long* primary, is slightly longer than the sixth feather. In the present species the first primary is relatively longer and always projects more than 3 mm. beyond the tips of the primary coverts. The second primary is shorter than the sixth and in length falls between the sixth and the eighth.

Wing, 2.15 to 2.5 in.

I have seen a few wintering birds from Peninsular Siam, but none from the south of the Peninsula.

*Acanthopneuste occipitalis coronatus*

**Temminck's Crowned Willow-Warbler**

Vol. II., p. 243.

General appearance like the two species of the genus described above, but the upper parts much brighter green and the under parts whiter. Under tail coverts, pale yellow. Top of the head much darker than the mantle and back, and with a narrow, paler stripe running down the centre of the crown from the base of the bill to the nape.

Wing, 2.35 to 2.6 in.

A winter visitor from Siberia, Japan, etc., but less common than *A. borealis* and, in its winter quarters, more addicted to the inland forests.

*Acanthopneuste tenellipes***The Pale-legged Willow-Warbler**

This species differs from all the willow-warblers described above in that the upper parts are not olive-green but russet tinged with olive. In particular, the rump and tail are distinctly brown rather than green. Under parts, whitish. There are the usual wing bars formed by pale tips to the coverts, a well-marked, pale eye-stripe and a dark line through the eye. The second primary falls between the sixth and eighth in length.

Wing, 2.4 to 2.65 in.

This is another of the migrants from North-East Asia that seems to winter no farther south than Peninsular Siam, whence we have seen a few specimens.

*Phylloscopus inornatus inornatus***The Crowned Willow-Warbler**

Vol. II., p. 243.

A small, green-backed species with a markedly shorter and more slender bill than the other Malayan willow-warblers. The pale bars on the wings are broad and conspicuous, and if the bird is examined closely a very indistinct coronal stripe can be made out running down the centre of the crown. The yellowish eye-stripes are very well marked. The second primary falls between the sixth and the eighth.

Wing, 2.05 to 2.35 in.

Another winter visitor from the north and commoner in Peninsular Siam than in the Malay States, from the southern parts of which I know of no record.

*Abrornis superciliaris schwaneri***The Bamboo Flycatcher-Warbler**

Vol. II., p. 239.

Sexes alike. Top and sides of the head, brownish grey; upper parts, olive-green, becoming yellow on the rump and upper tail coverts. A broad white stripe over the eye; the chin and the throat, white. Remaining under parts, pale yellow.

Total length, about 4 in.; wing, 2.2 in.; tail, about 1.8 in.

In the Malay Peninsula this common bird inhabits forest, usually where there is much tall bamboo. It is usually a submontane species, but we have specimens from a few localities in the lowlands.

The species becomes larger as it ranges to the north, and in Peninsular Siam, from Bandon to the north, it should be called *A. s. superciliaris*. Birds from the northern Malay states of Perlis and Perak are intermediate between the typical, northern race and the southern *A. superciliaris schwaneri*.

There is no record of the nest from the Peninsula.

*Urosphena squamiceps***Swinhoe's Reed-Warbler**

A wren-like species with a very short tail. Upper parts, brown, the top of the head with an indistinct squamate appearance due to slightly darker fringes to the feathers. A broad, pale eye-stripe is bordered below by a dark line running through the eye. Under parts, whitish buff.

Total length, about 4 in. ; wing, 2 in. ; tail, 1.1 in.

A winter visitor to the north of the Peninsula from Siberia and Japan. In the Malay Peninsula the bird has not yet been collected south of Siamese territory.

*Prinia flaviventris rafflesi***The Yellow-bellied Wren-Warbler**

*Prinia rafflesi* Tweeddale, *Ibis*, 1877, p. 311, pl. vi., fig. 1 (Lampongs, South Sumatra).

*Burnesia flaviventris* (pt.), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 204; Oates, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 245.

*Prinia flaviventris* (pt.), Oates, in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds*, i., 1889, p. 289; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 449; Herbert, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, vi., 1923, p. 106.

*Burnesia flaviventris flaviventris*, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1925, p. 321.

*Prinia flaviventris flaviventris*, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 528; Stuart Baker, *Nid. Birds Ind. Emp.*, ii., 1933, p. 478.

**Malay Name.**—Laki padi (vaguely).

**Description.**—Tail very long and narrowly tipped with white; upper parts, olive-brown, grey on the crown. Breast, white; abdomen, pale yellow.

*Adult.*—Sexes alike in plumage. Forehead and crown, dark grey, tinged with olive on the hinder crown; upper parts, dark olive; wings and tail, brown, the feathers edged with olive; the two centre tail feathers entirely dull olive, the other feathers narrowly tipped with white and with an ill-defined, dusky subterminal patch. Lores, ear coverts, sides of neck and sides of breast, grey, a short whitish streak above the lores, between the eye and the bill, sometimes obsolete. A narrow white ring round the eye. Chin, throat and breast, white; remainder of under parts, pale yellow; thighs tinged with brown; edge of wing, pale yellow; axillaries and under wing coverts, white tinged with yellow.

*Note.*—The amount of white on the lores and over the eye is a very variable character. On the series before me females average whiter than males, but I suspect that this is due to the luck of collecting and that the variation is really individual in character.

*Immature*.—Rather different. Upper parts, brownish olive; entire under parts and stripe over the lores, pale yellow. White tips to the tail feathers larger than in the adult.

**Soft Parts**.—Iris, yellowish brown to orange; bill, black; mouth inside, black; feet, pale to yellowish brown or yellowish flesh-colour. In females the bill is often less heavily black than in males.

**Dimensions**.—Total length, 5.4 to 5.7 in.; tail, 2.05 to 2.5 in.; wing, 1.85 to 1.95 in.; tarsus, 0.8 in.; bill from gape, 0.63 in.

In this species the tail is said to be longer in "winter" than in "summer," but judging by published observations of authors, the change seems less marked in the Malay States than in countries farther north. My series are not large or in any way conclusive, and more, specially directed, observation is needed to clear up the matter. A few males taken in April and May have the tails measuring 2.25 to 2.5 in.; a smaller number of females of the same season average shorter, 2.05 to 2.2 in. Males in September and again in January have the tail averaging 2.25 in. in length.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula**.—From Patani, in Peninsular Siam, down both sides of the Peninsula to Singapore Island and the islets near Singapore.

**Extralimital Range**.—Sumatra and Java; other subspecies inhabit Borneo and Nias Island. The present form differs very slightly from the typical race, which is found in the Lower Himalayas east to Assam and south to Eastern Bengal, through Burma to Tenasserim, Siam and French Indo-China from Tonkin to Cochin-China. I cannot yet determine where the two races meet, but *rafflesi* extends to the extreme south of Tenasserim.

**Nidification**.—Mr A. T. Edgar's notes quoted below refer to the species in Lower Perak: "Nests of this little warbler were found from January to June. All were situated in thick lalang grass, and were one and a half to two feet above the ground. The nest is not attached to the lalang, but merely built between the stems, which at that height from the ground are sufficiently strong to bear its light weight. It is usually a loosely constructed ball, about the size of a large orange, made of dry bamboo and lalang leaves, interwoven with fine grass, which material is also used for lining the egg-chamber. One nest had on the outside wall a piece of sloughed snake-skin. The entrance is roughly circular, placed centrally on one side. Occasionally more carefully constructed nests may be seen. One of which I have notes was built externally of fine stems of dry grass, some with the flower-heads still attached, fibre and lalang heads, compacted here and there with a little cobweb; internally it was lined, very neatly, with fine fibre.

"The clutch is three or four, generally, in my experience, three. The eggs, which are rounded ovals, and extremely glossy, vary little in size, most eggs being about 0.59 by 0.46 in., but I have one egg measuring only 0.55 by 0.43 in. The colour of the eggs is most unusual. At the larger end there is a cap of rich reddish chestnut, shading to a paler colour on the rest of the egg. Eggs vary a good deal in depth of tint, and light and dark eggs may be found in the same clutch. Their peculiar colour and extremely high gloss make them look more like reddish beads than birds' eggs."



Mr V. W. Ryves has eggs from Selangor (August) ; Perak (May) ; Kelantan (May and June) ; and Negri Sembilan (April and May).

Mr G. C. Madoc has found eggs in Selangor in April, May and June. Mr Madoc sends the following observation on a nest found by him in swampy ground at Kuala Lumpur : " It was a domed affair of leaves and grass, built about two feet up in a Straits Rhododendron bush alongside a cattle-path. The nest was fastened partly to the bush and partly to reeds growing up through it. It was well concealed."

**Habits.**—Common in the south of the Malay Peninsula and especially so in Singapore, but rarer in the north, although it is no doubt more numerous in Peninsular Siam than the two specimens on record from Bangnara, Patani, appear to indicate. Essentially a bird of grass-land, it is contented with a very small, open area, and a pair will often be found in a grassy patch of less than an acre in the middle of secondary growth or cultivation. It works its way from patch to patch along roads and the sides of railways, and turns up almost everywhere where the forest has been opened and cleared. I have found it on tiny islets near Singapore frequenting the grassy borders at the back of the fringing mangrove and the overgrown patches of cultivation near deserted Malay huts. Davison's notes from the extreme south of Tenasserim are : " I only found this species in the grassy wastes about Malewoon and Bankasoon, where it was not uncommon. Generally there were three or four together, chiefly amongst the grass, but also about the bushes and bamboo clumps that studded these wastes. They are excessively noisy little birds, and are very fond of working their way to the top of some bush or grass stem, and sitting there for a considerable time, keeping up all the while an incessant *chink, chink, chink*. They feed on insects, especially on the small moths that are so common about long grass."