

TREE-STARLINGS AND GRACKLES

Family GRACULIDÆ

Vol. I., p. 278.

THE tree-starlings or grackles are very closely allied to the true starlings (*Sturnidæ*) and some authors unite the two families.

In the present family the sexes are alike, and the plumage of the young is streaked in some genera. There are ten primaries in the wing, the first one small, and twelve rectrices (tail quills) in the tail. Around the gape, at the base of the bill, are some stiff hair-like feathers. The tongue is rather fleshy.

The tree-starlings are resident wherever they occur and are strictly arboreal in habits. The eggs are usually spotted.

The family, which includes the gorgeous glossy starlings of Africa, is found in Africa, India and eastwards through the island groups to Australia.

The two Malayan species have been dealt with in detail in our first volume, and are therefore given only brief notice below.

KEY TO THE MALAYAN LOWLAND TREE-STARLINGS

- I { Size large: wing about 6 to 7 in.;
head with bright yellow wattles . . . *Gracula javana javana*, p. 362
Size small: wing about 4 in.; no
wattles on the head *Aplonis panayensis strigatus*, p. 361

Aplonis panayensis strigatus

The Malay Tree-Starling

Vol. I., p. 278, pl. 25 (*upper figures*).

Adults of both sexes are alike and have the whole plumage dark glossy green. The eye is bright red. Young birds are quite different. They are glossy bottle-green above, streaked with blackish; the under parts are creamy white with heavy blackish streaks.

Total length, about 8·3 in.; wing, 4 in.

This is a very common Malayan bird and is often seen in large flocks even in the centre of the big towns. Mr A. T. Edgar has recently published notes on the nesting habits and eggs in *Bull. Raff. Mus.*, 8, 1933, p. 153. All Mr Edgar's nests were high up in holes in trees in the mangrove belt.

The breeding season in Malaya seems to be from March to June. Mr G. C. Madoc writes to me: "A matter of interest regarding *Aplonis*. In Sitiawan [Lower Perak] Edgar has found many nests, all in trees and none in houses. In the Selangor coastal districts I have seen many nests in stone buildings, but none in trees."

Gracula javana javana

The Malay Grackle

Vol. I., p. 280.

The whole plumage, except a large white patch on the wing quills, is glossy black with green, purple and blue reflections. Below each eye is a small bare patch of skin, bright yellow in colour; and a much larger, yellow, fleshy lappet adorns each side of the head behind the eye, the two lappets nearly meeting on the nape.

Total length, about 12 in. ; wing, 7.4 in.

Common in most parts of the Peninsula, this large and striking bird is often seen near the towns. It is a favourite cage-bird with Malays and Chinese, and can be trained to talk well. It is found in a variety of situations, but seems not to like the deep forest. Since the publication of Vol. I. the nesting habits and eggs have been described by Mr A. T. Edgar in *Bull. Raff. Mus.*, 8, 1933, p. 153. Nests were in holes in trees forty feet from the ground.