

Notes on Malaysian Birds

By F. N. CHASEN and C. RODEN KLOSS

1. *Terekia cinerea* (Guld.).

A recent Key¹ for the differentiation of western and eastern races is:—

- A. Larger and darker; culmen 44—53 mm. *T. c. cinerea*.
- B. Smaller and paler; culmen 35—44 mm. *T. c. javanica*.

Dr. C. B. Ticehurst is sceptical about the existence of two races and the material before us (consisting of seventeen skins from Siam, the Malay Peninsula and the Natuna Islands) tends to confirm his doubts² mainly because the culmens give a range of 45.5—53 mm., which forces all our *eastern* birds into the *western* race (fide Baker).

We can, however, find no confirmation of Baker's statement that the culmen range of eastern birds is as small as 35—44 mm., and cannot but think some mistake has been made.³

Ticehurst's range for "Far East" material is 44—51, which is in close agreement with our own, while he gives for a European series 43.5—49; so that if there is any difference between western and eastern birds it seems that the latter have the bill slightly longer, rather than much shorter, than typical European material. This trifling greater length does not seem sufficient reason for the recognition of an eastern race (*Totanus javanicus* Horsf.).

Our small series seems to show that females have rather longer bills than males, a feature supported to some extent by the measurements published by Riley⁴ and in part by Ticehurst⁵.

Of our birds ten males and five females have culmens respectively 46.5—51 and 51—53 mm. Two others (sexed as females by native collectors) have the culmens 45.5 and 47 mm. It may be there is no real sexual difference in the size of the bill; or, on the other hand, the short-billed females (?) may be wrongly sexed. Assuming this last, the bills of our series are:—males 45.5—51, females 51—53 mm.

1. Baker, Fauna Brit. Ind., Birds, 1929, VI, p. 212.
2. Journ. Bombay N. H. Soc., 34, 1930, p. 486.
3. The only culmen of less than 43.5 we have been able to find is one of 39 mm. recorded from the Amur River (Schrenck).
4. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 54, 1919, p. 615.
5. Ibis, 1924, p. 125.

2. *Leptorodius gularis asha* (Sykes).

Moulton, following Shelford, includes the Indian Reef Heron in his list of Bornean birds¹ but the species is not otherwise known further East than Ceylon. We were rather doubtful of the identification which we therefore asked the Curator of the Sarawak Museum to confirm. Mr. E. Banks replies that the skins on which the record was founded are those of *Ardea sumatrana* Raffles.

3. *Leptoptilos javanicus* (Horsf.).

Mr. A. E. Coope has forwarded to us an interesting account of the breeding of this stork in the State of Johore in the south of the Malay Peninsula.

Mr. Coope reports that the Colony is situated in a mangrove swamp about a mile from the mouth of the River Sarang Buaya near the Muar-Batu Pahat boundary on the west coast of the State and was visited with some Malays (to whom *Leptoptilos* is known as the "burong-babi" or pig-bird) on 24th March, 1930.

There were four nests in one "ipil" tree and one in another: the trees were on a patch of slightly higher ground evidently not covered at high tide. The tree with the four nests was about 45 feet high and the other somewhat higher, about 60 feet.

A Malay climber reported one young bird in each nest, all in the downy stage except one almost fully fledged. In one nest there was a dead eel.

The parent birds flew round the climber but showed no inclination to attack.

The nests were of the usual type and unlined.

4. *Pernis apivorus ptilorhynchus* (Temm.).

A female nestling honey-buzzard was taken near Bau in the lowlands of Sarawak on 25th September, 1926. Mr. E. Banks, Curator of the Sarawak Museum, had the bird in captivity for a time and the skin before us is stated by him to have just completed its moult from a down plumage.

Although so young this bird has a crest 50 mm. in length and the plumage is very dark.

Top of the head, lores, crest and hind neck black lightening to between clove-brown and black on the mantle, scapulars and underparts and becoming dark clove-brown on the wings. Tail bands mottled with brownish grey and white. Thighs indistinctly barred with buff.

1. Journ. Straits Branch Roy. Asiat. Soc., 1914, p. 140.

This bird represents one of the southern, crested, resident races of *Pernis ptilorhynchus*. *P. a. ruficollis* of India and *P. a. steerci* of the Philippine Islands are others. Within the range of these resident forms larger, crestless races from the north are found at certain seasons.

5. *Asio flammeus flammeus* (Pontopp.).

A short-eared owl was killed on the coast of Singapore Island in January 1930.

We have no comparative material but on description the bird appears to belong to the typical form and not to the far eastern *leucopsis* (Brehm.).

The first recorded Malayan specimen, also from Singapore, was mentioned by H. N. Ridley in Journ. Straits Branch Royal Asiatic Society, 35, 1901, p. 105 as the short-eared owl, *Asio accipitrinus*. This seems to be the bird at one time said to be in the Raffles Museum but no longer there.

It also appears to be the *Asio otus* of Robinson's "Hand-list of the Birds of the Malay Peninsula" (Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus. 2, 1907, p. 72), of the same author, op. cit., 6, 1915, p. 67; and of Chasen's list of Singapore birds in "The Singapore Naturalist", 2, 1923, p. 97 for we know of no record of the long-eared owl from the Malay Peninsula.

Asio flammeus must apparently be regarded as a casual and rare migrant in the Malay Peninsula. Wing about 320 mm.