

HONEY-GUIDES

Family INDICATORIDÆ

Vol. I., p. 149; Vol. II., p. 97.

THE honey-guides are closely related to the barbets, but differ considerably in their external appearance and habits. They are of small size, not exceeding a starling. Bill, stout, finch-like, the culmen curved, without nasal plumes or rictal bristles. The wing is long and pointed, with nine primaries only. The tail, of twelve feathers, is somewhat graduated, the outer feathers shortest and narrow. Tarsus short, the toes strong.

Nesting habits are those of the barbets, and the eggs are similar. The food is largely bees and wasps, and the family derives its popular name from the habit the African species are said to have of pointing out the nests of bees in order that they may share in the spoil. Whether they actually do so in Asia is not known, but in Malaya we have come across the species only in places where, and at times when, bees were unusually numerous.

The family is a small one, numbering two genera and about fifteen species, all but two of which are African. The only Malayan species is a bird of considerable rarity (*Robinson*, Vol. I., p. 149).

Indicator archipelagicus

The Malaysian Honey-Guide

Vol. II., p. 97.

Upper parts, dull brown with a faint olive wash and the rump indistinctly streaked with white. A patch of bright yellow on the lesser wing coverts on the inner edge of the wing. Tail, brown, the outer feathers much paler, almost white, on the inner webs. Throat, dirty white; abdomen and vent, white; remaining under parts, grey; flanks, streaked with blackish. The female lacks the yellow patch on the wings.

Total length, 6.75 in.; wing, 4 in.

The honey-guide is a very rare bird in the Malay Peninsula and the breeding habits are unknown. The few specimens that have been secured were collected in forest. Two from Pahang were shot from trees near water when tall *Dipterocarpus* trees in flower were attracting swarms of bees.