

TROGONS

Order TROGONES

THE trogons are a very distinct order and can easily be recognized by the following characters. Bill, short and stout, broad at base, the culmen much arched and with a subterminal notch ; nostrils in a deep depression near the base, hidden by bristles. Wing, short and rounded, with ten primaries, shorter than the tail, which is graduated, the feathers with very squared tips in the adults. Tarsi, short and feeble ; toes, four, two directed forwards and two backwards.

Plumage brilliant, with much scarlet or yellow in the local species, the wing coverts always with narrow black and white vermiculations. Sexes different, females much duller. A distinct juvenile plumage.

Nests in holes of trees or branches, unlined ; eggs, two to four in number, white or creamy white in Asiatic species, glossy and very round, rather like those of owls ; young hatched helpless.

The order contains about sixty species, spread over the tropical portions of Asia, Africa, Central and South America and some of the West Indian Islands, but not in Australasia. Six or seven forms are found in Malaya, all inhabitants of dense jungle. The commonest is here described.

Pyrotrogon duvauceli

The Red-rumped Trogon

Trogon duvauceli, Temm., *Pl. Col.*, 1824, pl. 291 (Sumatra).

Harpactes duvauceli, Ogilvie Grant, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, xvii., 1892, p. 491 ; Blandford, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, iii., 1895, p. 201.

Pyrotrogon duvauceli, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1923, p. 148 ; Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), iv., 1927, p. 319.

Malay Name.—Burong kasumba.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Head and neck all round, jet-black ; whole under surface, rump and upper tail coverts, brilliant scarlet ; mantle and back, rich ochreous cinnamon. Primaries and primary coverts, black, white at extreme base ; secondaries, with narrow zigzag bars of white on the outer

webs, the tertials on both webs; wing coverts as the tertials. Tail, with the central pair of feathers, pale chestnut, tipped with black, the next two pairs uniform black, the outermost three pairs black at the base, the terminal half obliquely white, most extensive on the outer web; thighs greyish.

Immature male.—Like the female, gradually moulting into the adult plumage.

Adult female.—Top of head, olive-brown; sides of the head, chin and throat, rust-brown; chest, ochreous, becoming pale pink on belly. Wings with the primaries edged with whitish, the secondaries and wing coverts, barred with black and buff, the buff bars much broader than the white bars in the male. Tail as in the male, but the black tip to the centre feathers narrow or absent.

Note.—As the bird grows older there is a continuous increase to the pink of the belly, while the rump and upper tail coverts also become pink. The pale bars on the wings also become narrower, but are always buff.

Juvenile.—Like the female, but the barring on the wings still coarser, the under tail coverts, white, and the middle tail feathers without any black tips at all.

Soft Parts.—*Adult*: iris, dark brown or hazel; bare orbital skin, silvery cobalt; bill, purplish cobalt, the culmen black; feet, dull pinkish, or mealy black. *Immature*: iris, brown; skin above orbits, blue, below, pink; feet, dark pink; bill, black, base, cobalt-blue.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 10 in.; wing, 4·2 in.; tail, 5·6 in.; tarsus, 0·4 in.; bill from gape, 0·9 to 1 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout its length. Of doubtful occurrence on any of the islands.

Extralimital Range.—As far north as Tavoy in Tenasserim; Sumatra, Billiton and Borneo. Not apparently in Siam proper or in French Indo-China.

Nidification.—Eggs from near Taiping, Perak, collected by Mr. A. S. Kellow, and from Sarawak, collected by the late Major J. C. Moulton, are described by Baker as practically pure white, ranging in size from 0·92 to 0·98 in. in length, and from 0·76 to 0·79 in. in breadth.

Habits.—Like all other members of its family in Asia, this trogon is an inhabitant of thick evergreen jungle, and is never seen in more open country and rarely even in secondary scrub. It is fairly common throughout the country, in low country jungle and on the hills, up to about 3500 feet, above which it is not found. It is a silent solitary bird, rather sluggish in its habits, and, despite its brilliant coloration, is rather difficult to see. It is found among the lower and more leafy branches of the tree, in dark jungle, often in shady ravines, and not infrequently chooses a perch among creepers.

I have heard the note, which is a “*mew*,” like that of the larger species, and once I came across a pair sitting side by side on a level bough, the male uttering a curious hissing sound, but normally they are very silent birds. Davison records the note as consisting of the three syllables, “*too-too-too*,” repeated quickly. When suddenly alarmed it has a peculiar note, a sort of “*kir-r-r-r*,” which it utters as it takes flight.

The food is exclusively insectivorous—moths, beetles and bugs—which, curiously enough, evil-smelling as they may be, are eagerly eaten by many Malayan birds. Trogons of this and other species also feed on the smaller *Phasmids* and *Locustidae*, larval and adult.

The plumage of all members of this family is exceedingly soft and loose, and their skin is correspondingly tender, of the consistency of wet tissue-paper, so that it is difficult to make satisfactory study specimens.