

# FLYCATCHERS

## Family MUSCICAPIDÆ

IN terms of geological time the whole of the passerine birds are very modern, and many of the families have not as yet become clearly differentiated, so that there are, in many cases, genera or species possessing the characters of more than one family, in varying degree. This is especially true of the large and important family of the flycatchers (*Muscicapidæ*) amongst which may be found species verging towards the thrushes (*Turdidæ*), the warblers (*Sylviidæ*), the shrikes (*Laniidæ*), and lastly the babblers (*Timaliidæ*), a large and heterogeneous assemblage, which will probably be ultimately greatly reduced in numbers. At present, as a late eminent ornithologist once described it, the *Timaliidæ* are "the waste-paper basket of the puzzled ornithologist." But this is by the way.

Flycatchers have really no very salient characters. All are small birds, none so large as a thrush, not many larger than a sparrow. The bill is broad and flattened, often, in plan, almost an equilateral triangle, the upper mandible slightly notched; the nostrils are covered with long hairs or soft bristles directed forwards, sometimes reaching beyond the tip of the bill; there are also stiff bristles at the gape, directed laterally.

The wing has ten primaries, the first often short, but never vestigial, as in some of the warblers; the shape of the wing is variable, more pointed in migratory, rounded in sedentary forms. Tail of twelve feathers also variable, sometimes very short, the middle tail feathers in some genera greatly lengthened, three times the length of the bird. Tarsi, very slender, smooth behind, the feet with four toes, always weak (in which the flycatchers differ from the thrushes, where they are strong).

The plumage is very diverse, and many flycatchers are brilliantly coloured birds; the sexes are sometimes alike, sometimes different, but there is no distinct breeding or seasonal plumage. The young, however, are nearly always spotted or mottled, a difference between this family and the warblers, where the young are more or less like the parents, sometimes brighter in colouring.

The breeding habits of the whole family are somewhat similar, the nests being usually small cup-shaped structures of moss lined with tendrils, hairs and the like, and placed either in crevices of rocks, holes in trees or among the

branches; the eggs, which may be up to seven or more in number, but usually much fewer in tropical forms, are almost always much mottled and speckled.

The food is invariably insectivorous, often caught on the wing, the bird returning to one perch or point of observation—usually a projecting twig or bough—after each flight. Sometimes food is sought for on the boughs and trunks of trees or among leaves and creepers, but hardly ever on the ground.

Song is often sweet though feeble; some species have little more than a twitter, and the notes of some others are decidedly harsh.

The family is a very large one of many hundreds of species spread over the whole world, except the Arctic regions. The majority of the species are sedentary, but those inhabiting the colder zones of necessity migrate to warmer zones in winter.

Nearly fifty species are found in Malaya, in every kind of country: some are permanent inhabitants of the mangrove swamps, others are familiar village birds, not a few are confined to the higher mountains, and many are merely winter visitors.

I have selected ten species for description in this volume including all the commonest forms. It should be mentioned that *Muscitrea cinerea* is considered by Mr Baker to be a warbler, not a flycatcher, while I myself regard it as a somewhat aberrant shrike. For convenience, however, I have retained it in its present position pending a revision of the allied forms.

#### KEY TO THE SPECIES HERE DESCRIBED

1	{	Central tail feathers greatly elongated . . . . .	2	
	{	Central tail feathers not greatly elongated . . . . .	3	
	{	Mantle, back and tail, white, or mainly so . . . . .		<i>Terpsiphone paradisi affinis</i> (adult male), p. 179
2	{	Mantle, back and tail, chestnut . . . . .		<i>Terpsiphone paradisi affinis</i> (sub-adult male)
	{	Head more or less glossy black and crested; mantle and tail, chestnut; size larger . . . . .		<i>Terpsiphone paradisi affinis</i> (female and male immature)
	{	Head not glossy black, not crested, mantle and tail not chestnut; smaller . . . . .	4	
4	{	Plumage with more or less blue or grey . . . . .	5	
	{	Plumage with no blue or grey . . . . .	10	
5	{	Breast rufous . . . . .	6	
	{	Breast not rufous . . . . .	7	
	{	Plumage above, vivid blue . . . . .		<i>Cynoris tickelliae sumatrensis</i> (male), p. 181
6	{	Plumage above, grey, faintly blue . . . . .		<i>Cynoris tickelliae sumatrensis</i> (female)
7	{	Feathers on crown more or less glossy . . . . .	8	
	{	Feathers on crown not glossy . . . . .	9	

8	{	A patch of close-set velvety black feathers on nape ; a black gorget	}	<i>Hypothymis azurea prophata</i>	(male), p. 183
		No patch of close-set velvety black feathers on nape ; no black gorget		<i>Hypothymis azurea prophata</i>	
9	{	A maroon patch on breast	}	<i>Drymophila velata caesia</i>	(male)
		No maroon on breast		<i>Drymophila velata caesia</i>	(female), p. 185
10	{	Plumage largely green	}	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis anti-oxantha</i>	p. 185
		With no green in plumage			
11	{	Tail, fan-shaped, not shorter than wing, a distinct white eyebrow	}		12
		Tail not fan-shaped, shorter than wing, no distinct white eyebrow			
12	{	Plumage spotted below	}	<i>Rhipidura perlata</i>	p. 188
		Plumage not spotted below		<i>Rhipidura javanica javanica</i>	
13	{	Larger wing not less than 3.2 in.	}	<i>Muscitrea grisola grisola</i>	p. 189
		Smaller wing not more than 2.9 in.			
14	{	Plumage more or less ferruginous	}	<i>Hemichelidon ferruginea</i>	p. 190
		Plumage not at all ferruginous		<i>Alseonax latirostris latirostris</i>	

*Terpsiphone paradisi affinis*

**The Burmese Paradise Flycatcher**

*Tchitrea affinis*, Hay, Blyth, *Journ. Asiatic Society Bengal*, xv., 1846, p. 292 (Malacca).

*Muscipeta affinis*, Kelham, *Ibis*, 1881, p. 508 ; Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 340.

*Terpsiphone affinis*, Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 47 ; *id.* in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1890, p. 26 ; Oates and Reid, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iii., 1903, p. 280.

*Terpsiphone paradisi affinis*, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 267.

**Malay Names.**—Burong murai bangau ; murai (or merbah) ekor gading.

**Description.**—*Adult male.*—Head, chin and throat, black, with a greenish gloss, the feathers of the head lengthened, with rounded tips forming a crest. Primaries, black, in all except the outermost, with the outer webs white and with an increasing amount of white on the inner webs ; secondaries, the same but with more white ; innermost, entirely white with a broad white shaft streak. Upper wing coverts, white, with broad, black centres ; under wing coverts axillaries and edges of wing, white. Mantle, back, scapulars and upper tail coverts, white, often uniform, often more or less heavily streaked with black

and with narrow black edgings. Tail feathers, white, always with black shafts and generally with black edges, which vary in width. Black shaft stripes generally continuous to the tips of the centre feathers, but not invariably so. Under surface and under tail coverts, uniform white.

*Male in second plumage.*—With elongated centre tail feathers. Head all round, chin and throat, black, with a greenish gloss, as in the white stage. Primaries, brownish black, edged with chestnut-bay on the outer webs, and with paler bay on the inner webs; upper wing coverts and inner secondaries, pale chestnut-bay; axillaries, greyish; under wing coverts dusky with buffy edges. Mantle, back, rump and tail, rich, rufous chestnut, under surface of tail rather paler. Beneath breast, dark steel-grey; centre of abdomen, greyish white; under tail coverts washed with chestnut.

*Adult female.*—Centre tail feathers not greatly elongated. Crest shorter than in male. Throat rather less dark than in rufous plumage of male. Wing coverts and inner secondaries with broad dark centres, and flanks slightly washed with buffy.

*Immature.*—Younger birds of both sexes have practically no crest, with the head only slightly glossy; the sides of the breast are washed with fulvous, and the upper surface is much browner, less rufous, chestnut, especially on the mantle. Young males often have the centre tail feathers projecting an inch or so beyond the rest.

*Fledgeling.*—Uniform cinnamon-bay above, including the head, the latter with ill-defined shaft stripes; wings as in the immature bird. Beneath, white, the feathers of the breast mottled and edged with smoky buff.

*Note.*—The stages passed through by this bird are, even now, not fully understood, but it is evident that the white plumage is not attained until the third year. There is great variation in the amount of black on these white birds, especially on the tail and on the back. Possibly as they age they tend to lose the black edging to the feathers.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, green or emerald, dark brown or dark; eye, wattle and bill, smalt blue; the inside of the mouth, green; feet, blue or slaty grey or purplish grey. We have birds from widely separated localities, Bandon, the west coast of Siam and Sumatra, with the iris recorded by ourselves as green, though other observers record it as dark brown or dark. Possibly this colour fades rapidly or is assumed only during the breeding season.

**Dimensions.**—Wing, 3·5 to 4 in.; tail, including long feathers, up to 15 in. or more; females, 4 to 4·2 in.; tarsus, 0·65; bill from gape, 1 to 1·3 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—Throughout its length. Junk Zeylon, Langkawi, Penang and the Bandon Islands (Koh Samui). Not recorded of late years from Singapore Island, but probably occurring there at times.

**Extralimital Range.**—The Eastern Himalayas, the whole of the Indo-Chinese countries to Annam and Tonkin, Sumatra. The status of the Javan form is uncertain, but slightly different races inhabit Borneo, the lesser Sunda Islands (Flores, etc.) and the Andamans and Nicobars.

**Nidification.**—Breeds in the Malay Peninsula from March to June. The nesting situation is usually in old jungle, and one nest I obtained in the Patani States on the 8th May was in the fork of a small sapling about eight feet from the ground, and, externally, a deep, crucible-shaped cup covered with bright green moss; internally, a shallow, oval cup, lined with the fine black tendrils of a creeper.

Eggs from the north and south of the Peninsula in the British Museum are pointed ovals, slightly glossed, of a faint pinky white tint, with small spots and specklings of dark brown and pale pinkish brown, much thicker towards the larger end. Stuart Baker gives the average of one hundred Burmese eggs as 0.78 by 0.6 in. The four eggs in the British Museum from the Malay Peninsula are a little smaller than this.

**Habits.**—Very common throughout the Malay Peninsula, though in the southern half it does not come into garden- and orchard-land, and is, therefore, not such a familiar bird to the European resident as are its congeners in India and Burma. For the most part it frequents old jungle and jungle clearings, from sea-level to about 4000 ft., though it is rare at the higher elevations, and perhaps commoner at from 1000 to 2000 ft. than it is in the plains. It frequents, for choice, more open situations where there is not much close undergrowth. The flight is low and undulating, though, as Baker notes, the bird is capable of very quick turns when hawking for insects, but the males often seem rather incommoded by their long tails. They have the usual habits of flycatchers, and feed on all kinds of insects and moths, including adults of the evil-smelling bug, such as the Coreid (*Acanthocoris scali*er).

The adult males are very proud of their white plumage and display it by perching across a bough, depressing and half spreading the wings and raising and expanding the tail.

This species is sedentary, but another form, characterized by its smaller bill and a maroon-washed mantle, in the rufous phase, is migratory, arriving from the East in October and staying some months. This is *Tersiphone paradisii incii*, whose breeding haunts are China. Another Chinese species which never attains a white plumage, but is purple-black above and grey beneath in the adult, is *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* (Eyton), but this latter is very seldom met with except on the coasts. Young and immature birds can be distinguished from the other two forms by their dull *brown* tail.

It is impossible to distinguish with certainty between white specimens of *T. p. affinis* and *T. p. incii*. Distinctions that I, at one time, thought to exist are illusory.

### *Cyornis tickellia sumatrensis*

#### Sharpe's Blue Flycatcher

*Siphia sumatrensis*, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 451 (Sumatra).

*Cyornis tickellia sumatrensis*, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii, 1924, p. 234.

**Malay Name.**—Kêlichap ranting.

**Description.**—*Adult male.*—Feathers next the bill and lores, very deep blue, almost black; sides of the face, ear coverts, and a line bordering the throat, bluish black, almost black on the chin. Forehead, a line over the eye and the coverts at the angle of the wing, bright shining blue, the forehead with glistening points, rest of the upper surface clear blue, rather dark. Quills and wing coverts, brownish, edged with blue, very narrowly on the primaries. Inner aspect of the wing, lead; axillaries and under wing coverts, white, the greater series smoky, with pale edge. Central pair of tail feathers, blue, as the back, the remainder, black, with the outer webs blue. Throat and breast, ferruginous, with the sides of the breast, blue; remainder of under surface, including under tail coverts, pure white, sharply defined from the rufous of the upper breast; flanks, but slightly infuscated; thighs, white, with dark bases.

*Adult female.*—General distribution of the colours as in the male, but with no glistening or bright blue; the whole upper surface bluish grey, bluer on the upper tail coverts; hardly any blue edging to the wing; sides of the face, pure grey. Under surface with the flanks heavily infuscated with greyish brown, and the white not so sharply defined from the breast.

*Immature.*—Greyish brown with no tinge of blue above, and heavily mottled with buff and fulvous beneath, with the throat paler, and with most of the feathers with dusky edges, giving a spotted effect.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, dark; bill, black; feet, purplish flesh.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, 5·4 to 5·6 in.; wing, 2·5 to 2·8 in.; tail, 2·3 to 2·5 in.; tarsus, 0·7 in.; bill from gape, 0·65 to 0·7 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—From its northern boundary to Malacca, but not, apparently, much farther south. Common on the Langkawi group and on the Bandon Islands, but not yet obtained on Penang, Junk Zeylon or Singapore islands.

**Extralimital Range.**—Central Burma, south through Tenasserim, the greater part of Siam, Annam, and also Sumatra, where its occurrence has now been verified.

**Nidification.**—Mr Seimund and I obtained a nest on Koh Pennan, on 25th May, with the parent bird. The nest was placed in a crevice in a rock about six feet off the ground, and was of the usual flycatcher type—a hemispherical cup, about four inches in external and two in internal diameter, made of dead leaves and fragments of ferns and lined with tendrils. The eggs were three in number, hard set. In shape they are blunt ovals, the shell almost without gloss; ground-colour, olive-grey, clouded with mottlings of reddish brown, which in two eggs are fairly distributed over the shell, and in the third forms a zone at the larger end. Average dimensions, 0·70 by 0·54 in.

**Habits.**—This little flycatcher is most numerous along the coasts of the Peninsula, but not in the mangroves, where its place is taken by a larger form with a uniform, deep rusty under surface, *C. rufigaster* (Raffles). It is also very abundant in scrubby brushwood on many of the larger islands towards the north of the Peninsula, but becomes continuously scarcer

towards the south. It is not found in deep jungle or at any height on the hills, but occurs frequently in gardens, etc., especially during the winter months, though I do not think that it is in any sense a migrant.

It is found singly or in pairs, frequenting low trees and bushes, and is singularly tame and fearless. Its habits and food are those of the family in general, and it has a very pleasant little song, often uttered on the wing.

*Hypothymis azurea prophata*

**The Malaysian Black-naped Flycatcher**

*Hypothymis azurea prophata*, Oberholser, *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.*, 39, 1911, p. 597 (Karimon Island).

*Hypothymis occipitalis*, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 275; Whitehead, *Ibis*, 1889, p. 197; Oates and Reid, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iii., 1903, p. 273.

**Malay Name.**—Not ascertained.

**Description.**—*Adult male.*—Feathers of the head very short, nape patch dense and velvety. Crown and sides of the head, turquoise-blue; frontal plumes, a narrow line on the forehead and a patch on the nape, dense, velvety black, as also a narrow gorget on the throat. Upper surface, including wing coverts, more purplish blue. Primaries and secondaries, black, all except the outer two of the former narrowly, and the latter broadly, edged with ultramarine blue; inner aspect of wing, brownish black, paler on the inner webs, which have indications of whitish edges; axillaries, silky greyish white; under wing coverts the same, blue along the edge of the wing. Tail feathers—except the central pair, which are dark blue—blackish, the outer webs blue, very narrowly tipped with white on the inner web; beneath, greyish black, the basal two-thirds of the shafts, white. Beneath, extreme point of chin, black; throat above the black gorget, azure blue; breast beneath the gorget more purplish blue; flanks, belly and under tail coverts, white, strongly washed with purplish blue; thighs, greyish blue.

*Adult female.*—No velvety black nape patch. Much duller than male. Forehead and point of chin, dull black; head and nape, blue; rest of upper surface, including wings and tail, greyish brown; a faint wash of blue on the wing coverts; upper tail coverts richer brown, inner aspect of wing paler than in the male, and with more decided white edges to the inner webs of the feathers. Under surface, throat, purplish blue; breast, greyish blue. Rest of under surface, white, with a faint greyish-blue wash; under tail coverts pure white.

*Immature.*—Young females have very little blue on the crown and throat; young males are at first like females and gradually acquire the black nape gorget, and the brighter blue of the back. I have not seen *very* young birds, which are probably spotted or mottled.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, mostly recorded as dark or reddish brown, though I have seen birds with red or carmine eyes; tumid ring round eye, Cambridge

blue; bill, smalt, yellowish green inside; feet, purplish cobalt or greyish blue. *Female*: without the eye ring and with the bill generally duller.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, about 6·2 in.; wing, 2·8 in.; tail, 2·9 in.; tarsus, 0·62 in.; bill from gape, 0·73 in. Females average slightly smaller than males.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—From about the latitude of Penang south to Johore; Singapore Island and Penang; the Tioman group (Pulau Tinggi).

**Extralimital Range.**—Sumatra and Borneo. The status of the Javan bird is at present uncertain. The species, as a whole, has a very wide range, from Western India to Hainan and throughout the Malay Peninsula to the Philippines; very many insular races have been named.

**Nidification.**—I am not acquainted with any records of the nests and eggs of this southern form from the Malay Peninsula. There is a clutch of five eggs from Labuan, or more probably the adjacent mainland of Borneo, in the Hugh Low collection in the British Museum. These are rather pointed ovals, smooth in texture; the ground-colour is very white, with a faint pinkish tinge with reddish-brown markings varied in size, with confluent edges, mostly congregated towards the large end of the egg; the size is about 0·74 by 0·52 in. A clutch of three eggs, taken by J. Darling, in Junk Zeylon, on 10th March, are more strongly coloured and marked, and rather broader. There is also a clutch attributed to this species collected by Mr Aagaard at Bangnara, Patani States, on 11th June, which is now in the Raffles Museum, Singapore. The nest of the closely allied races is the usual deep cup, built in the forks of saplings on the undergrowth of deep forest, ornamented outside with moss, spiders' egg caves and webs, and lined inside with fine tendrils.

**Habits.**—Common everywhere, in jungle, old and secondary, to a superior limit of about 3000 ft., and strictly resident. It is found in pairs, generally on the lower trees or among creepers on the edge of clearings, and has the usual habits of the smaller flycatchers. It is perhaps commoner in or near bamboo forest than in other situations. The song is a pleasant little trill, uttered on the wing as well as when perching.

*Note.*—In the north of the Peninsula and in Junk Zeylon and the Bandon Islands this race is replaced by a slightly larger form, with a greater extent of pure white on the belly. This race, *H. azurea styana* (Hartl.), is found over the greater part of Northern India, the whole of Indo-China, Southern Yunnan and Hainan. In the Peninsula there is a broad belt, including Perlis, the Langkawi Islands and parts of Patani, in which the birds can be indifferently referred to either race.

### *Drymophila velata caesia*

#### The Maroon-breasted Flycatcher

*Monarcha caesia*, Lesson, *Rev. Zool.*, 1839, p. 167 (Sumatra).

*Philentoma velatum*, Temm. (part), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 365; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 43; Stuart Baker (*op. cit.*) (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 262.



**Malay Name.**—Unknown, vaguely murai, or merbah batu (doubtful).

**Description.**—*Adult male.*—General colour, light indigo-blue; primaries, black, broadly edged with blue; middle pair of tail feathers, blue, the remainder black on the inner web, and blue on the outer. Forehead, lores, ear coverts, region round the eye, chin and upper throat, black; lower throat and chest, dark maroon; remainder of under surface, greyish blue, paler on the middle of the abdomen; flank feathers elongated, greyish white for the greater portion of their length.

*Adult female.*—Almost uniform blue as the male, but without maroon breast, those parts that are black in the male being somewhat darker blue.

*Immature.*—Young males are like the females at first, gradually assuming the maroon plastron. Very young stages are not well known, but the nestling is at first almost uniform chestnut, the wing coverts dark brown, broadly edged and tipped with pale buffy chestnut.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, red or reddish brown; bill, black; feet, black, greyish or purplish black.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, 7·7 to 8·2 in.; wing, 3·9 to 4·2 in.; tail, 3·5 to 3·7 in.; tarsus, 0·7 to 0·75 in.; bill from gape, 0·85 to 0·95 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—Throughout the whole length. No very authentic records from any of the island groups.

**Extralimital Range.**—Throughout Tenasserim, Sumatra and Borneo. The original *Ph. velatum* from Java is slightly different, having less black on the throat of the males.

**Nidification.**—Nothing whatever is recorded.

**Habits.**—Common throughout the forested districts of the Peninsula up to about 3000 ft., but most numerous in low-country jungle and in swampy forest; only rarely seen in clearings. It is found in pairs, usually keeping to the lower zone of trees, and perching on lianas and creepers dependent on them, and like other flycatchers hawking for insects on the wing and not searching the boughs and leaves for insects as do some of the smaller species. Davison says it has a "harsh, grating, metallic-sounding note." I have never heard it utter any call.

### *Culicicapa ceylonensis antioxantha*

#### The Malayan Grey-headed Flycatcher

*Culicicapa ceylonensis antioxantha*, Oberholser, *Smithsonian Misc. Coll.*, 76, No. 6, July 1923, p. 9 (Peninsular Siam).

*Culicicapa ceylonensis meridionalis*, Stuart Baker, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, xliv., Oct. 1923, p. 12 (Peninsular Siam); id., *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 256.

*Culicicapa ceylonensis* (auct.), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 369; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 38.

**Malay Name.**—Unascertained.

**Description.**—*Adult.*—Sexes similar. Head and neck, all round throat and upper breast, dark bluish grey, darker on the crown and lores. Upper surface, including the wing coverts, dark yellowish green, slightly more yellow on the rump, the wing coverts with black centres and sometimes with paler tips. Primaries and secondaries, brownish; the inner primaries and secondaries with greenish edges becoming broader on the inner secondaries; under wing coverts, yellowish white; the primaries on their inner aspect with faint white edges on their inner webs. Under surface, bright yellow, deeper on the under tail coverts, more greenish on the flanks, and on a band separating the grey of the breast from the abdomen.

*Immature.*—Very young birds are not on record, but immaturity is indicated by duller colouring, the grey parts suffused with greenish, and by the marked tips to the median wing coverts.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, dark brown; upper mandible, black; lower, pale pinkish yellow at base; feet, brownish yellow; tarsi, more yellow behind.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, 4·7 to 4·9 in.; wing, 2·3 to 2·5 in.; tail, 2 to 2·3 in.; tarsus, 0·5 in.; bill from gape, 0·5 to 0·55 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—The whole of the Malay Peninsula. Doubtful on the islands.

**Extralimital Range.**—North to the neighbourhood of Moulmein, South Siam, Cochin-China and Annam, and probably Borneo and Sumatra. The forms inhabiting India generally, Ceylon, Southern and Western China and Java, are slightly different and have been given names, but these differences are trivial and somewhat difficult to appreciate unless large series of well-prepared specimens are examined.

**Nidification.**—There are no records of the nesting habits in the Malay Peninsula. On Kinabalu, in Borneo, Whitehead describes a nest found on 29th April as simply a pocket in a long dangling piece of moss. The eggs were two in number, glossy white, plentifully spotted with brown, and blotched with underlying grey mottling, principally towards the larger end. Measurements, 0·6 by 0·5 in. In the nest was found an egg of the hawk-cuckoo (*Hierococcyx fugax*). Baker describes the nest of the allied Indian form as a half-cone or hemisphere of bright green moss and lichen, placed against a moss-covered trunk of tree or rock, amongst living moss and lichen, from which it is practically impossible to distinguish it.

**Habits.**—A submontane bird in the Malay Peninsula, ascending to about 3000 or 3500 ft., but ceasing when the true mountain species, such as the blue niltava and species of *Cryptotopha* amongst flycatchers, commence. Its favourite habitats are the lower hills from 500 to 1000 feet up to 3000 feet, and it is only occasionally seen in open country and gardens. It is not found in secondary scrub or in swampy forest. It is not so tame or fearless as some of the short-tailed flycatchers, and except when hunting for insects, which it does mainly on the wing, keeps to the shelter of the leaves. I have not seen it on the ground. In Sumatra, where it ranges to higher elevations than in the Malay Peninsula, Jacobson notes it as flying in small flocks; with us it would appear to be a more solitary bird.

*Rhipidura javanica javanica***The Malaysian Fantail Flycatcher**PLATE 16 (*lower figure*)*Muscicapa javanica*, Sparrm., *Mus. Carls.*, iii., 1788, pl. 75 (Java).*Rhipidura javanica*, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 322; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 54; Oates and Reid, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iii., 1903, p. 277, pl. 8, fig. 18.*Leucocerca javanica*, Kelham, *Ibis*, 1881, p. 509.*Rhipidura javanica javanica*, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 281.**Malay Name.**—Merbok gila (mad thrush): nok-i-pert, nok pen, nok pi (Siamese).**Description.**—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Head all round, sides of the throat and a large patch on the throat, sooty black, glossy on the forehead; a short white stripe over the eye. Upper surface, brownish, warmer on the rump, the longest tail coverts blackish. Wing brownish, the wing coverts with pale tips; inner aspect of wing, grey, the axillaries and under wing coverts, greyish white. Tail feathers, brownish black, darker towards the tip, all except the two centre pairs with broad white tips. Beneath, throat white; breast, white; the belly and under tail coverts suffused with buffy fawn. Some birds have the wing coverts and quills very narrowly edged with rusty, but this is, I think, evidence of slight immaturity.*Young.*—Somewhat paler above, especially the rump and upper tail coverts, which are rusty brown. Black patch on breast smaller, and with buffy white tips to the feathers. Wing coverts, with a double bar of broad rusty tips to the feathers.**Soft Parts.**—Iris, dark; bill and feet, black.**Dimensions.**—Total length, 6·9 to 7·7 in.; wing, 2·9 to 3·3 in.; tail, 3·7 to 4·2 in.; tarsus, 0·75 to 8 in.; bill from gape, 0·7 to 0·72 in.**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—Throughout its length and in all the islands except the Tioman group.**Extralimital Range.**—South from Central Burma; Siam, except the north; French Indo-China, Sumatra, Borneo and Java.**Nidification.**—I have not seen the nest. According to Baker it is a small cup, cone-shaped, with a tail pendent below it, and may be placed either on a small branch or pendent from a small bamboo twig in open country, gardens or compounds. The eggs are two in number; those in the British Museum from North Borneo are rather pointed ovals with very little gloss. The colour is whitish or yellowish white, and the markings, mostly small yellowish brown specks or blotches, are mainly confined to a zone near the larger end of the egg, and are very scattered or absent elsewhere. Baker gives the average dimensions of fifty eggs as 0·69 by 0·51 in. There are no data as to the breeding season in the Malay Peninsula. In Siam it is from February to August, two broods being reared. In North Borneo it is March and April.

**Habits.**—Ranges throughout the Malay Peninsula in suitable country, but not very far up the hills, except apparently in Penang Island, where it is found at over 2000 ft. It is a bird of gardens, orchards and the grazing-grounds near ricefields, but is not found on the open stubble or in secondary or heavy jungle. In Borneo, Whitehead met with it on tidal rivers among the Nipa palms, and there are specimens from the Bernam river in the British Museum. It is seen in pairs or singly, very often on the ground, where it runs about with considerable activity with its tail raised, and wings drooped and constantly expanded and contracted. At times it is seen in trees, sometimes at the end of an exposed branch, but it does not take up one position to which it constantly returns as do many flycatchers. It catches its food on the wing, but its flight is weak, and the bird seems often to be incommoded by its relatively long tail. I have often seen it picking up ants, etc., on the ground.

*Note.*—The bird figured is a male from Patani, September 1901.

*Rhipidura perlata*

**The Spotted Fan-tailed Flycatcher**

PLATE 16 (*upper figure*)

*Rhipidura perlata*, S. Mull., *Natuurl. Gesch. Land en Volkenk*, 1835, p. 185 (Sumatra); Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 328; Oates and Reid, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iii., 1903, p. 277.

**Malay Name.**—Unascertained.

**Description.**—*Adult.*—Above, bluish grey, darker on the forehead and rump; wing coverts the same, with small white spots at the tips; a partially concealed short white stripe over the eye. Primaries, dark brown; axillaries and under wing coverts, brownish grey, edged with white. Tail, black; the three outer pairs of feathers with white tips, narrower on the inner pair. Throat, grey, bordered with a narrow white stripe from the gape; breast, also grey, with narrow white shaft stripes which on the lower breast become guttate spots broadening to the tips. Flanks, greyish without spots; belly and under tail coverts, white.

*Immature.*—Much browner above, with narrow rufous edges to the quills; feathers of the chin and throat with narrow white streaks.

*Note.*—There is considerable variation in the amount and character of the white tips to the wing coverts, which in some birds are large and conspicuous, and in others almost obsolete.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, very dark brown; gape and base of lower mandible, fleshy; rest of bill, black; feet, plumbeous brown.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, about 7 in.; wing, 3.5 in.; tail, 3.65 in.; tarsus, 0.6 in.; bill from gape, 0.75 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—The southern half of the Malay Peninsula only, not recorded from any of the islands, though it probably occurs in Penang.

**Extralimital Range.**—Sumatra, Borneo and Java.

**Nidification.**—We have no records of breeding habits in the Malay Penin-

sula, but the nest may be expected to be similar to that of *Ph. j. javanica*. An egg in the British Museum from South-West Borneo is of a pale yellowish cream-colour, with a zone of small specks of brownish and lavender near the larger end. It measures 0.72 by 0.55 in. (Oates and Reid).

**Habits.**—A bird of the lower submontane forests hardly ever found in open country or in gardens. In flight it resembles the preceding species, but is much more arboreal in its habits, and is hardly ever seen on the ground. It ascends the hills to about 2500 ft., but above that altitude its place is taken by *Rh. albicollis*, which has, except for its white throat, an almost uniform, greyish black under surface, and is rather different in its habits.

*Note.*—The bird figured is a male from Johore, collected by W. Davison.

*Muscitrea grisola grisola*

**The Grey Mangrove Flycatcher-Shrike**

*Tephrodornis grisola*, Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xii., 1843, p. 180 (Calcutta?).

*Muscitrea grisola*, Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 31.

*Muscitrea grisola grisola*, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 484.

**Malay Name.**—Murai bakau.

**Description.**—*Adult.*—Sexes similar. Whole upper plumage dull brown, except the head, which is greyish, and the central tail feathers, which have also a greyish wash; inner aspect of wing, ashy; primaries, edged with whitish on the inner webs; axillaries, white; under wing coverts ashy mixed with white, edge of wing white. Ear coverts with a brownish tinge. Beneath, throat and upper breast, ashy grey, with very indistinct darker striations; rest of under surface, pure white.

*Immature.*—Wing coverts and outer webs of secondaries, pale rufous brown; bill, pale corneous. Fledgelings are like immature birds and are not spotted, barred or mottled at any stage.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, sometimes chocolate or hazel, but usually dark; bill, black, horny in young birds; feet, slate, greyish black or lavender.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, 6.25 to 6.75 in.; wing, 3.2 to 3.5; tail, 2.8 to 3.2 in.; tarsus, 0.8 to 0.9 in.; bill from gape, 0.75 to 0.9 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—Throughout its length and in all the larger islands.

**Extralimital Range.**—First obtained near Calcutta, but possibly some mistake has been made in the locality; Andaman Islands; throughout Indo-China to Annam; the islands of the Malay Archipelago east to Lombok. Closely allied forms occur in the small islands off the west coast of Sumatra, in Palawan and others of the Philippine group.

**Nidification.**—We have no details of nesting in the Malay Peninsula, but judging from the dates on which juvenile birds have been obtained, and the

state of the genital organs of others, the breeding season probably commences in March. In the Andamans, according to Osmaston, the bird breeds in May and June, and two eggs only are laid. The nest is a rather thin, flimsy, cup-shaped structure made of roots, which are attached by cobwebs to the twigs supporting it. The eggs could be seen from below through the nest, which was inclined and somewhat resembled that of a bulbul. The nests are all in small trees from six to twelve feet from the ground. The eggs are slightly glossy, dark cream or pale *café-au-lait*, spotted with dark yellowish brown or sepia. The spots are rather small and not numerous, and tend to form a zone towards the big end. The mean dimensions are 0.85 by 0.62 in.

**Habits.**—In the Malay Peninsula, and in most of the islands, large and small, that edge its coasts, this bird is very common, but only along a narrow zone fringing the shores. Indeed it may almost be said to be strictly confined to the mangrove and Casuarina zone, just as are *Cyornis rufigaster*, and the local forms of *Parus cinereus*. In the situations it affects it is found singly or in pairs, never in flocks, among the roots and branches of the mangroves or on Casuarina trees, but in this case higher up. It is a very silent bird, but occasionally utters a little song of three notes in a rising scale.

**Note.**—I have for the present placed this bird among the flycatchers, though it is obvious that its true affinities are to be found among other families, possibly with certain of the Australasian shrikes which are included among the *Pachycephalinæ*. Further information as to its habits is urgently desired, as are also young and adult specimens, both in spirit and as skins. Series from the west coast of Sumatra and the adjacent islands are also needed, to settle vexed questions of nomenclature.

### *Hemichelidon ferruginea*

#### The Ferruginous Flycatcher

*Hemichelidon ferruginea*, Hodgson, *P.Z.S.*, 1845, p. 32 (Nepal); Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 6.

*Hemichelidon cinereiceps*, Sharpe, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 206.

**Malay Name.**—Unknown.

**Description.**—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Head, dark brownish grey; nape, mantle and lesser wing coverts, rich brown; median and greater wing coverts and primaries, dark brown, the two former broadly edged with rusty chestnut; secondaries, pale brown, more broadly edged with pale chestnut; inner aspect of wing, dull fulvous, the quills with pale ferruginous margins to inner webs; axillaries, rusty; under wing coverts dark, with broad, rusty tips; tail, rusty brown, the tips and outer webs of the two central pairs of feathers, duller brown. Lower back and upper tail coverts, bright rusty. Lores, whitish, the feathers with rusty tips, a broad buffy white ring round the eye; ear coverts, sides of the face, and a broad stripe on each side of the throat, blackish brown, the feathers with paler bases. Beneath, chin, throat and upper breast, white;

lower breast, brownish, with rufous centres to the feathers; remainder of lower surface, rusty, infuscated on the sides of the breast, brighter on the flanks and paler on the middle of the belly. Under tail coverts rufous; thighs, rusty with dark bases to the feathers.

*Immature*.—Head, blackish; the feathers with clear buffy white central streaks, broadening towards the tips; sides of the face, mottled rufous and black. Upper surface, rusty with broad black edges to the feathers; wing coverts with broad, pale, rusty tips. Under surface, uniform buffy rufous, with no white throat patch.

**Soft Parts**.—Iris, dark; bill, black; base of the lower mandible, yellow; feet, flesh, or brownish yellow.

**Dimensions**.—Total length, about 4·5 to 5 in.; wing, 2·7 to 3 in.; tail, 1·8 to 2 in.; tarsus, 0·5 to 0·6 in.; bill from gape, 0·6 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula**.—Common on the islands of the Langkawi group, and on the small islets off the Perak coast during the winter months, and also on the higher mountains of the central range. Not recorded from south of Malacca or from Singapore or Penang islands, though it is almost certain to be found on the latter.

**Extralimital Range**.—From the Himalayas to China, breeding in the northern parts of its range, and at moderate elevations. Winters throughout Burma, Indo-China, South China, and also in Sumatra, Borneo, Java and Palawan.

**Nidification**.—Is not known to breed in the Malay Peninsula.

**Habits**.—A migrant from the north, arriving about November or December, and not met with after about March. Its stay on the peninsular coast and at low elevations is very brief, and it is, therefore, rarer in collections made in Malaya than its real numbers warrant, but above 3000 ft. or so it is quite common, and it is just possible that it may be found breeding on Cameron's Highlands. There is nothing special to note about its habits, which are those of a typical flycatcher, though its flight is very weak. On the coasts and islands I have seen it once or twice on Casuarina trees and among brushy scrubs at or near high-tide mark, but on the mountains it keeps to the lower trees, at the edge of clearings, and makes only short flights into the open.

It would appear to be one of the birds that visit us by way of Tenasserim and the Straits of Malacca, gradually working its way south, but not, apparently, reaching Johore and Singapore. Another division of the species apparently comes from North China via Hong-Kong to Borneo and Java. I can distinguish no difference between these two "legions," though Sharpe has named the bird wintering in Borneo *Hemichelidon cinereiceps*.

*Alseonax latirostris latirostris*

**The Sumatran Brown Flycatcher**

*Muscicapa latirostris*, Raffles, *Trans. Linn. Soc.*, xiii., 1922, p. 312 (Sumatra); Hartert, *Vog. Paläarkt. Faun.*, i., 1910, p. 477.

*Alseonax latirostris*, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1879, p. 453; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 35.

*Alseonax latirostris latirostris*, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 248.

**Malay Name.**—Kēlichap sampah (but I doubt the accuracy of this name, which was probably invented by my informant).

**Description.**—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Above, ashy brown, the feathers of the crown with darker centres, giving a scaly effect. Wing coverts, primaries and tail feathers, brown, the wing coverts with pale ashy edges, as also the secondaries; axillaries, whitish; wing coverts, greyish with white edges. Lores and a narrow ring round the eye, white; ear coverts, brownish. Beneath, white, the breast ashy, and the flanks indistinctly streaked with the same colour.

*Immature.*—Browner with sandy, rufous, buff edges and tips to the wing coverts; very young birds are said to have the upper surface and wing coverts with large, buffy spots, but birds in this stage are, if not non-existent, extremely rare in the Malay Peninsula.

**Soft Parts.**—Iris, dark hazel; bill, dark horn; basal half of lower mandible, yellowish white; feet, greyish white.

**Dimensions.**—Total length, 5 to 5.5 in.; wing, 2.7 to 2.9 in.; tail, 1.9 to 5.2 in.; tarsus, 0.6 in.; bill from gape, 0.5 to 0.65 in.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—Universally distributed and on all the island groups.

**Extralimital Range.**—Southern and Central Burma and Tenasserim; Siam, French Indo-China. In winter in Borneo, Sumatra, Java and the Philippines.

**Nidification.**—In the Malay Peninsula it is doubtful if this species is a breeding bird though occasional specimens have been obtained in July and August. A very closely allied form, *A. latirostris poonensis*, breeds in the Himalayan tracts, Assam and the plains of India, constructing a cup-shaped nest of moss and lichen, lined with roots, fibres and feathers. The eggs are described as pale stone, freckled with very fine reddish markings, generally covering the whole surface of the egg but sometimes leaving part of the smaller end visible. Average size, 0.7 by 0.52 in.

**Habits.**—This little flycatcher is essentially a winter visitor in the Malay Peninsula, though the duration of its stay is some six or seven months, and, as mentioned above, some birds may reside throughout the year. It arrives about the end of September and leaves in April, and in the months of October and November large numbers are to be met with on the lighthouses and small islets of the Straits of Malacca. Later on in the winter it occurs in numbers on the higher mountains of the main range up to an altitude of at least 4000 ft. It is also found in gardens and secondary jungle, but does not seem to make a prolonged stay at low elevations at any distance from the coast. Its flight is weak and fluttering, and when at rest it always keeps well within the shelter of the leaves.