

BABLERS

Family TIMALIIDÆ

THIS large family is exceedingly composite in its features, and hardly any two ornithologists are agreed as to its limits. As our knowledge of the habits, early plumages, nidification and anatomy of the species comprising the family increases, the tendency has been to separate many of the groups referred to *Timaliidæ* by earlier systematists and unite them to other families, such as the thrushes, the warblers and the shrikes.

But even when this has been done there remains a large residuum to be dealt with, comprising many of the most characteristic birds of the Oriental region, more especially those inhabiting the hill districts and thicker forests.

The characters of the species comprising the family are so varied that a general definition that will include all the members belonging to it and exclude those that do not is almost impossible.

All the species are of medium or small size, none being larger than a jay.

The wing is, as a rule, rather short and rounded, moulded to the body, and the legs and feet are always powerful; the tarsal covering, smooth behind, composed of two plates. Bill very variable, generally fairly strong and slightly hooked at tip; nasal plumes often present, as also rictal bristles. Tail of twelve feathers usually square or rounded; occasionally greatly lengthened.

Coloration is very diverse; the sexes are alike, or not greatly different, and the young have a plumage closely resembling the female, not striped, squamated or spotted.

The nesting habits are equally variable: many species lay uniform blue or white eggs, in others they are strongly spotted, scrolled, or otherwise marked.

All the species are sedentary or perform only very limited migrations, within a restricted area.

The family is a large one of several hundred species, spread over the warmer regions of the whole of the Old World. Relatively they are most numerous in the Malaysian subdivision of the Oriental region.

As regards division into sub-families I have largely adopted the views of Mr Stuart Baker, at any rate for the purposes of the present work. I regard, however, the leaf birds as sufficiently distinct to constitute a family, *Ægithinidæ* (*q.v. antea*), and I think that the laughing thrushes and allied

forms should be separated from the more terrestrial *Timaliidæ*, in this respect conforming to the earlier classification of Mr Oates (*Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*).

The following is a key to the sub-families employed in this work, based in the main on those of Oates and Stuart Baker.

KEY TO THE MALAYAN SUB-FAMILIES OF TIMALIIDÆ

1	{	Sexes alike in plumage	2
	{	Sexes different in plumage; wing, parti-coloured; tail, fairly long	<i>Liothrichinæ</i> , p. 218
	{	Wings more pointed; tarsi and feet less powerful; strictly arboreal	<i>Sibiinæ</i> , p. 218
	{	Wings more rounded; tarsi and feet more powerful; less strictly arboreal	3
	{	Usually crested or with specialized head plumage; very gregarious; larger birds with very powerful tarsi and feet	<i>Pomatorhininæ</i> , p. 219
	{	Not crested or only slightly so, not specially gregarious; smaller birds	<i>Timaliinæ</i> , p. 220

Sub-family LIOTHRICHINÆ

Shrike Babblers and Silver-ears

THIS group includes a few Malayan birds which are strictly hill dwellers, and will therefore be described in a subsequent volume. They are mostly small birds, usually of brightly coloured plumage, with the basal portion of the wing feathers different from the terminal portion, and with brightly coloured wing coverts.

The plumage of the majority of this family, like some of the *Sibiinæ*, is very liable to fading, reds and yellows being especially fugitive. The group is essentially Oriental in its range, though a few species in Western China spread into the palæarctic region.

About four species are Malayan.

Sub-family SIBIINÆ

Sibias, Sivas and Yellow-crests

OF this section, externally very diverse in appearance, we have four Malayan species of three genera, two of which—*Sibia*, a grey and dark grey bird with a very long tail, and *Siva*, a small bird of varied plumage—are exclusively montane; the third, *Erpornis*, is here described.

Erpornis xantholeuca interposita

The White-bellied Herpornis

Erpornis xantholeuca interposita, Hartert, *Bull. B.O.C.* xxxviii., 1917, p. 20 (Temengoh, Perak).

Herpornis xantholeuca, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 636; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 219.

Erpornis xantholeuca xantholeuca (part), Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind.* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 325.

Malay Names.—Kēlichap bērijambul ; pipit angrek.

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes similar. Head, strongly crested ; whole upper surface a glaucous, yellowish olive, the feathers of the crest with darker centres. Primaries, brown, the outer webs edged with the colour of the back, but brighter ; outer webs of the secondaries as the back ; inner aspect of the wing, brownish, the quills having the inner webs edged with sulphur-yellow ; axillaries and under wing coverts, pale yellow ; tail feathers, ochreous olive-yellow, edged internally with bright yellow ; lores, dull brownish grey, not very distinct ; ear coverts, ashy grey with a brownish tinge. Beneath, greyish white, with a dusky tinge, especially on the flanks ; abdomen, whiter ; vent and under tail coverts, bright greenish yellow ; thighs, tinged with olive.

Immature.—Very similar to the adult, but with a very strong ochreous tinge above, especially on the secondaries.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark hazel to grey ; bill, pinkish horn, dark on the culmen, yellowish at gape ; feet, fleshy pink.

Dimensions.—Total length, 4·8 to 5 in. ; wing, 2·6 to 2·8 in. ; tail, 2 in. ; tarsus, 0·7 in. ; bill from gape, 0·6 in. Females are rather smaller than males.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout the Peninsula, but not on any of the islands. Hume records it from Junk Zeylon, but there are no specimens from that island in the British Museum collection.

Extralimital Range.—Birds from the Himalayas, whence the species was originally described, differ from the Malayan and Indo-Burmese birds in a rather less heavy bill. Other races occur in Borneo, Annam, Hainan, Formosa and South China.

Nidification.—Nests and eggs are not known from the Malay Peninsula. In Burma the breeding season is March, and nests are found in evergreen forest, in shrubs within a few feet of the ground. The eggs are two or three in number, the ground-colour, white or, rarely, creamy white, and the markings consist of sparse blotches of pale reddish generally confined to the larger end. Texture is fairly glossy, and the shape is a long oval. Twenty eggs average 0·64 by 0·49 in.

Habits.—Found in flocks, often of considerable size, in old jungle, usually on the hills from about 500 or 600 ft. to nearly 4000 ft., but not, or very rarely, in low-country swamps. They are active little birds, continually in motion, usually in low trees, and not so much in the brushwood as other timaliads. I have never seen them near the ground. The food is in the main insects, but I think that on occasion berries must be eaten, as the plumage is not infrequently stained. The feathers of the crest are very frequently raised and extended at a sharp angle, but are not lifted vertically.

Sub-family POMATORHININÆ

Scimitar Babblers and Laughing Thrushes

THIS sub-family is the equivalent of *Crateropinæ*, as employed by Oates, but that name being unfortunately unavailable will have to take the name of the

next described genus, *Pomatorhinus* (Horsf., 1821). The group consists of a multitude of medium-size birds, which travel about in flocks often of considerable size, and are exceedingly noisy and inquisitive. They largely inhabit the lower zone of jungle, amongst the brushwood and smaller trees, and feed principally upon the ground, on a mixed diet of insects, worms, fruit and seeds. The eggs are usually white or blue.

Nine or ten species are found in Malaya, and are amongst the commonest and most striking inhabitants of the mountain zone. With the exception of a very abnormal species, *Eupetes macrocerus*, whose real alliances are altogether uncertain, no single form is ever found below an altitude of about 1500 ft. Their description will therefore be deferred until a later volume.

Sub-family TIMALIINÆ

Brush Babblers

THESE are smaller birds than the foregoing with rather different habits. They are comparatively silent and unobtrusive, and most of them are of more terrestrial habits, some of them keeping almost entirely on the ground, though others are found in dense, tangled vegetation, among bamboos, and on the lower trees in heavy jungle. A single one is an inhabitant of comparatively open country. They range from the mangroves of the coast to the tops of the highest mountains wherever there is sufficient cover, but are most abundant in damp, dense jungle at medium elevations.

They are very well represented in Malaya, where nearly forty species are known; of these I have selected eight, which are found at low elevations and on the coast, for description here.

Vernacular names for these rather obscure scrub birds are little known and very doubtful; they are given with all reserve, and will not be recognized by the majority of Malays.

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF TIMALIINÆ HERE DESCRIBED

1	{ Tail, very short; tarsi, long and slender	} <i>Anuropsis malaccensis malaccensis</i> , p. 221	
	{ Tail, not very short; tarsi stouter		2
2	{ Striped on the lower surface		3
	{ Not striped on the lower surface		4
3	{ Lower surface, whitish, with brown stripes	} <i>Pellorneum ruficeps subochraceum</i> , p. 222	
	{ Lower surface, yellow, with black stripes		<i>Mixornis gularis pileata</i> , p. 223
4	{ Throat and breast, dark blackish grey	} <i>Cyanoderma erythroptera erythroptera</i> , p. 224	
	{ Throat and breast, not dark grey		5

		6
5	{ Almost entirely white beneath	
	{ Light grey on throat and breast	<i>Alcippe cinerea cinerea</i> , p. 226
	{ Abdomen, rufous or buff	<i>Malacocincla abbotti olivacea</i> , p. 227
6	{ Breast, with faint grey streaks ; tail, } rich rust-red	<i>Horizillas magnirostris magnirostris</i> , p. 228
	{ Breast, pure white, without streaks } tail, duller	<i>Æthostoma rostratum rostratum</i> , p. 229

Anuroopsis malaccensis malaccensis

Hume's Short-wing

Brachypteryx malaccensis, Hartl., *Rev. Zool.*, 1844, p. 402 (Malacca).

Anuroopsis malaccensis, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 588 ;

Oates and Reid, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 39, pl. 2, fig. 12.

Malay Name.—Unrecorded.

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. General colour, brown ; darker on the head ; brighter and more russet on the mantle and wing coverts. Primaries and secondaries, dark brown, with paler rusty edges, beneath, light brown with buffy inner margins to the quills ; the axillaries and under wing coverts, pale buff. Tail feathers, rich brown with rusty margins. Forehead, near the nostrils and a stripe over the eye, clear grey ; the lores paler ; ear coverts and sides of the neck, dark grey, bordered beneath with a short blackish stripe, the grey continued round the nape suggesting a collar. Beneath, throat and middle of the belly, white ; sides of the breast and the flanks, under tail coverts and thighs, tawny buff, deeper in colour on the lower flanks.

Immature.—The cap on the head, lighter ; the sides of the head not so clear grey, more suffused with brown ; the rusty margins to the primaries much more pronounced.

Soft Parts.—Iris, hazel or red ; bill, slate, black on the culmen ; tarsus, flesh-pink.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 5·5 in. ; wing, 2·7 to 2·9 in. ; tail, 1·5 to 1·7 in. ; tarsus, 1·2 to 1·3 in. ; bill from gape, 0·9 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From about the latitude of Penang and Kedah to the southern extremity. Not apparently on any of the islands except Singapore, and possibly Penang.

Extralimital Range.—Names have been given to the races from the Siamese Malay States, Sumatra, Banka and Borneo. Only the latter, which is a much richer coloured bird on its lower surface, is at all distinct.

Nidification.—I have never seen a nest, but it is stated by natives to be a large untidy ball made of dead leaves, tendrils, etc., placed at the foot of palms and among rubbish. Eggs collected by Davison in South Johore on 8th March are oval in shape and fairly glossy. The ground-colour is light, creamy buff, with spots and thick streaks of rich brown and pale mauve. The markings are thicker at the broader end, where they form a zone. Measurements, 0·84 by 0·62 in. (Oates and Reid).

Habits.—Throughout the Peninsula this babbler is very common in old jungle, ranging up the hills to about 3000 ft. It is never found in cultivated land or in secondary forest, but is equally at home in swampy fresh-water jungle, and on dry hill sides and damp gullies.

It is not an assertive bird, and very little is really known about its habits except that it is essentially a ground bird feeding on insects, grubs, etc., which it searches for among the dead leaves. It is shy, but curious, like a wren, and runs and hops with considerable rapidity with its tail cocked up. It is especially numerous in country where the stemless palm, *Eugeissona tristis*, is abundant, and among the tall Zingiberaceous plants which often fill up narrow, damp gullies and stream-beds.

Pellorneum ruficeps subochraceum

The Malay Striped Babbler

Pellorneum subochraceum, Swinh., *Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist.* (4), vii., 1871, p. 257 (Rangoon); Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 520; Oates and Reid, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 33, pl. 1, fig. 20.

Pellorneum ruficeps subochraceum, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 239.

Malay Name.—Unknown, but often confused with the pipits (*q.v.*)

Description.—*Adult.*—General colour above, including the outer aspect of the wings and the tail, dull earthy-brown, a little more rufous on the upper tail coverts and the tail; the wing coverts and the outer webs of the primaries edged with ashy; lores, buffy white; ear coverts, pale rufous brown, margined below with blackish brown; above the eye, a very narrow white streak, broader posteriorly, on the sides of the crown and nape; top of the head, chestnut-rufous, with shining shaft stripes. Beneath, chin and throat, white; breast, pale sandy buff with broad dark brown stripes, continued on the flanks, which are deep buff. Under tail coverts, pale brown with whitish edges; thighs, brownish cinnamon; axillaries and under wing coverts, pale buff; wing lining, greyish brown; the quills with narrow, pale margins to their inner webs.

There is much variation in the character and intensity of the dark stripes on the breast and flanks, and also in the general tone of the upper surface, which is more olive in the freshly moulted state, and becomes more rufous in worn plumage. In some birds there is an indication of pale shaft stripes to the feathers of the mantle.

Soft Parts.—Iris, red, chestnut or brown; orbital space, sage-green; bill, greenish horn; culmen, dark, base, yellow; feet, yellowish flesh.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 6·5 in.; wing, 2·6 to 2·8 in.; tail, 2·4 to 2·8 in.; tarsus, 1 to 1·1 in.; bill from gape, 0·7 to 0·85 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From the northern border south, to South Perak; Junk Zeylon, Langkawi, and the islands of the Bandon Bight; not in Penang or Singapore.

Extralimital Range.—Central Burma to Tenasserim, Siam, French Indo-China.

Nidification.—Nesting habits in the Malay Peninsula are unknown. In Pegu and Tenasserim the breeding season is from April to July. Davison found a nest at Bankasun, on the Pakchan, on 25th March. It was on the ground, in thick forest, and was composed externally of dead leaves with a scanty lining of fine roots and fibres. It measured externally about five inches high by about four inches wide, with an egg cavity of barely three inches in diameter. It was only partially domed, and was very loosely and carelessly put together. It contained three eggs, moderately broad ovals, the shell fine, but with little gloss. Ground-colour white with thickly set markings, mostly towards the larger end, dull to bright reddish brown.

Habits.—A very common bird in the northern half of the Malay Peninsula, but never found south of the Perak border. It is met with singly or in pairs in the brushwood and low jungle at the edge of ricefields, and among the shrubs on the grazing-grounds, but never in old or damp jungle. It keeps to low shrubs, is never seen on high trees, or, so far as my experience goes, on the ground, and is somewhat shy and elusive, and exceedingly active in dodging among the leaves. I do not know of any special note except a continuous low chatter.

Mixornis gularis pileata

The Malay Yellow-breasted Babbler

Prinia pileata, Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xi., 1842, p. 204 (Malacca).

Mixornis gularis, Kelham, *Ibis*, 1881, p. 519; Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 576; Oates, in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1889, p. 116; id. *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 168; Oates and Reid, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 49.

Mixornis rubricapilla pileata, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 274.

Malay Name.—Kělichap bēlukar (doubtful).

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Head, dark chestnut, the feathers of the crown with shining shafts; lores, blackish; sides of the face and ear coverts, yellowish with black shafts, superciliary stripe the same. Upper surface, pale rufous chestnut, deeper on the upper tail coverts, the bases of the feathers, grey; wing coverts, much richer chestnut. Primaries and secondaries, blackish brown, edged with chestnut, more broadly so on the secondaries; inner aspect of wing, blackish, the quills edged with pale sulphur-yellow on the inner webs; axillaries, pale sulphur, darker at the tips; under wing coverts and edge of wing, the same only brighter; tail feathers, dark chestnut, obscurely rayed in certain lights. Beneath, throat and breast, pale, clear yellow with thick black shaft stripes; middle of belly, clear yellow; flanks and under tail coverts, greyish olive-green; thighs, more yellowish.

Immature.—The primaries edged with very much paler reddish buff, the

under surface paler, the crown much the same colour as the rest of the upper surface, and with the shining shaft stripes less marked.

Soft Parts.—Iris, variable, in some birds dark or dark brown to pale reddish brown; orbital skin, bluish lead; bill, plumbeous; feet, yellowish or greenish brown, the soles yellowish.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 5·2 in.; wing, 2·0 to 2·3 in.; tail, 1·85 to 2 in.; tarsus, 0·75 in.; bill from gape, 0·65 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From about the latitude of Penang southwards to Johore and in Singapore Island.

Extralimital Range.—Very closely related races are met with in Sumatra and the Indo-Chinese countries, and northwards from Penang and Perlis to Tenasserim, and several forms have recently been described from French Indo-China, and the islands off the Cambodian and the south-east Siamese coast. Rather more distinct subspecies are found in Borneo.

Nidification.—The nests of birds of this genus are rough domes of grass and bamboo leaves, lined with fibre, with the entrance at the side near the top. Davison found the bird breeding in June near Klang, and a clutch of three eggs obtained by him is in the British Museum. The eggs are oval, very glossy; the ground-colour white, with minute spots and specklings of clear, reddish brown with traces of paler markings beneath the surface. The markings are not particularly dense, but, as is usual, are rather more so at the larger end of the egg.

Habits.—Widely spread over the whole length of the Peninsula from Penang southwards, this babbler occupies much the same type of country as *Cyanoderma*; like it, it is averse to damp jungle and therefore is not found on the hills above 2500 ft. Birds of this genus are, as a rule, commonest in the coastal zone—except in mangrove, where they are rare, though numerous among Casuarina trees, which back the sandy beaches in many parts of the coast. They are often seen in flocks of considerable size and are very tit-like in their general habits. They have no special note or song except a low “tik-tik.”

Note.—This bird is especially liable to variation, and there has been much controversy as to the number of races or subspecies that should be admitted, North of Penang the bird becomes generally less rufous above, with finer shaft stripes on the feathers of the throat, and the colour of the iris fades to whitish or pale straw-yellow. This form, which covers a large extent of country throughout the north of the Malay Peninsula, Tenasserim, Burma and French Indo-China, has been named by Kloss *Mixornis gularis connectens*.

Cyanoderma erythroptera erythroptera

The Red-winged Babbler

Timalia erythroptera, Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xi., 1842, p. 794 (Singapore).

Mixornis erythroptera, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 580.

Cyanoderma erythropteron, Oates, in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1890, p. 115; id. *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 166.

Cyanoderma erythroptera erythroptera, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 271; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 298.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Region of the eye and an area on the sides of the neck, bare. Above, rich brown; the wing coverts, rufous chestnut, with paler edges; primaries, dull brown, edged with chestnut; the whole of the outer edges of the secondaries and inner aspect of the wings, greyish brown; the inner webs of the quills, pale rufous buff. Under wing coverts and axillaries, dull smoky brown; tail feathers, brown, with rufous margins; forehead, sides of the face and ear coverts, blackish grey. Beneath, chin, throat and breast, dark plumbeous grey; middle of the abdomen, albescent grey; flanks, thighs and under tail coverts, strongly washed with fulvous brown.

Immature.—Much duller than the adults, especially on the wing coverts; abdomen more washed with fulvous, like the flanks, otherwise much as in the adults.

Soft Parts.—Iris, red, "madder red to deep brown" (W. Davison); orbits, smalt; sides of the neck, silvery cobalt; bill, plumbeous, culmen, black; feet, yellowish grey.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 6 in.; wing, 2.6 to 2.8 in.; tail, 2.3 to 2.6 in.; tarsus, 0.8 to 0.85 in.; bill from gape, 0.8 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout its length, on Junk Zeylon and Singapore. Common on Tioman, not recorded from the other islands, but almost certain to occur on them.

Extralimital Range.—From Tenasserim town, southwards; South-West Siam and Sumatra; replaced in Borneo by a very distinct form.

Nidification.—Though not recorded from the Malay Peninsula proper, Davison found a nest at Bankasun, just over the border, on 23rd April. It is described as very like that of a species of *Mixornis*—a ball of dry reed leaves, about six inches in diameter, with a circular aperture on one side.

Baker describes the eggs as "two or three in number, glossy, china-white, spotted with reddish all over, but most numerous at the larger end." The eggs average 0.69 by 0.52 in.

Habits.—Common throughout the Peninsula at low elevations, not much over 1500 or 2000 ft.; Wallace and Wardlaw Ramsay, however, got it on Mount Ophir, in Malacca, though at what altitude is not stated. It is found usually in drier secondary forest and scrub, on bushes and low trees, and does not seem to like the damper jungles. Usually it goes about in small parties and is very active and restless, searching for insects, on which it principally feeds. Davison describes the note as a "sharp, metallic, rolling sound." I have not heard it.

Note.—There is a good deal of variation in the plumage of this bird, and a certain number have the throat and upper breast very much darker than the majority. This difference is not, however, correlated with locality. Southern birds have the abdomen greyer and paler than those from the north, in which these parts are darker and more washed with fulvous.

*Alcippe cinerea cinerea***The Malay Nun Thrush**

Alcippe cinerea, Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xiii., 1844, p. 384 (Singapore); Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 622.

Malay Name.—Murai sampah.

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Head and nape, dark grey, with a lavender suffusion; mantle, back and lesser upper wing coverts, olive-brown; lower back and upper tail coverts, rusty brown; median and greater wing coverts, dark brown, with very narrow, pale margins; primaries and secondaries the same, with narrow brown edges to the outer webs, becoming successively broader and richer coloured towards the inner secondaries. Inner lining of wing, fuscous; the inner webs of all except the outer primaries with white margins, broadest towards the base; axillaries and wing coverts, white, the greater outer ones with dark centres; edge of wing, white. Tail feathers, dark brown, more rufous towards the base and on the edges of the feathers; shafts beneath, white. Lores, sides of the face and ear coverts and region of the eye, dull grey, the ear coverts obscurely streaked. Beneath, throat, greyish white, obscurely streaked with grey; sides of the breast, grey; middle of the breast, abdomen and under tail coverts, white; flanks, fulvous; thighs, greyish fulvous.

Immature.—Crown and nape, browner; foreneck, tinged with brown; flanks, more fuscous; under tail coverts, brownish.

Soft Parts.—Iris, reddish hazel; bill, dark horn, edges of mandibles and the gape paler; feet, pinkish slate. In the immature bird the bill is more yellowish.

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

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From Trang south to Johore; rather doubtful on any of the islands, though the type is said to come from Singapore.

Extralimital Range.—Borneo and Sumatra.

Nidification.—Unknown. Allied species make cup-shaped nests and lay white or pinkish eggs with purple blotches.

Habits.—A lowland and submontane bird ranging up to about 3000 ft. It lives in old, heavy forest, usually in damp, heavily shaded localities, but occasionally on the edges of clearings and windfalls. It is usually seen in small flocks, on the lower branches of trees, and in bushes and shrubs, and amongst fallen timber. It feeds on insects, ants, soft-elytra beetles and small phasmids, and spiders, while Jacobson states that it also eats seeds and fruit—but this, I think, must be exceptional. There is nothing on record about its note.

Remarks.—The nomenclature of this species and allied forms is in a state of flux. Pending revision I have used the name which has been applied to it by the majority of authors, but it is possible that it will hereafter have to bear the somewhat cumbrous name *Alcipornis brunneicauda*.

Malacocincla abbotti olivacea

Strickland's Brown Babbler

Malacopteron olivaceum, Strickland, *Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist.*, xix., 1847, p. 132 (Malacca).

Turdinus abbotti, Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 154.

Malacocincla sepiaria abbotti (part), Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed), i., 1922, p. 260.

Malay Name.—Murai bēlukar.

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Upper plumage, olive-brown, very slightly darker on the head, the feathers of the head and mantle with very narrow, pale shaft streaks; rump, rather richer in tone; the lowest upper tail coverts, rusty brown; wing coverts and outer webs of primaries and secondaries, as the back, the inner webs dark brown; inner aspect of wings, paler brown; the inner webs of the quills narrowly edged with pale buffy; axillaries and under wing coverts, deeper buff; the outer, greater wing coverts, blackish; edge of wing, white; tail feathers, richer brown, with brighter edges. Lores, whitish; sides of the face and ear coverts, fuscous brown, with pale shafts. Beneath, chin, throat and upper breast, greyish white; lower breast, fulvous, richer on the sides; middle of abdomen, whitish; flanks, buffy brown, becoming more rusty on the flanks, anal region and under tail coverts.

Immature.—Hardly different from the adults, the throat and breast sometimes with darker streaks.

Soft Parts.—Iris, reddish chestnut; bill, greenish slate, dark above; feet, pale whitish flesh.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6 to 6·5 in.; wing, 2·8 to 3 in.; tail, 2·1 to 2·3 in.; tarsus, 1 in.; bill from gape, 0·9 to 0·95 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From about the latitude of Penang and Patani, south to Johore. The islands of Penang and Singapore.

Extralimital Range.—The island of Sumatra only.

Nidification.—Nests and eggs of this southern form do not appear to be recorded, but are certain to resemble those of the very closely allied northern race, *M. a. abbotti*, which, in Pegu, according to Mr Oates, breeds in May and June. The nests are always in jungle, in dense undergrowth, but little above the ground. The nest, according to Baker, is a "massive structure of dead leaves, weeds and grass, with an inner cup of roots, leaves and weeds, compactly bound together and lined with weeds." The eggs are three to four in number, very glossy and smooth, the ground-colour varies from a very pale to a rich pale salmon-pink, while the markings consist of spots, blotches and lines of deep red-brown, with paler spots of light red and neutral tint. The average measurements are 0·84 by 0·66 in. (Baker).

Habits.—This babbler is very common in secondary and low jungle, occasionally even in the mangroves, and ascends the hills to an altitude of about 2500 ft. It is generally found singly or in pairs in low bushes or trees, which it searches for caterpillars and beetles. It is a very silent bird

and I have never heard it utter a note, though Baker says it has a pleasant whistle.

Note.—The southern form of the species is here described. North of Penang and ranging throughout Burma to the Himalayas, and in Siam and Indo-China, a rather brighter-coloured bird is met with (*M. a. abbotti*), from which the present bird is very doubtfully distinct.

Another species found in the same districts, and with precisely the same habits, also occurs in the southern parts of the Peninsula, *Malacocincla sepiaria tardinata*. Superficially it resembles the bird described above, but may be recognized by its darker head, with no shaft stripes on the feathers but with a grey streak over the eyes, shorter tail and longer tarsi, which are dark grey and not pale fleshy in colour.

Horizillas magnirostris magnirostris

The Brown-headed Tree-Babbler

Alcippe magnirostris, Moore, *P.Z.S.*, 1854, p. 277 (Malacca).

Turdinus magnirostris, Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 547.

Malacopterum magnirostris, Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 151.

Horizillas magnirostris, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 258.

Malay Name.—Merbah rimba (but this name, which merely means jungle-thrush, is applied to many of the smaller jungle bulbuls and babblers).

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes similar. Rictal bristles very strong. Feathers of the head slightly elongated, but rounded at the tips. A dark grey stripe along the jaw, bordering the white throat. General colour above, earthy, olive-brown, more rufescent on the lower back; the upper tail coverts, rusty rufous; wing coverts as the mantle but with slightly marked rufous edges. Primaries, etc., dark brown, with paler brown outer edges; outer webs of the secondaries as the upper surface. Inner aspect of wing, dark brown; the inner webs of the quills edged with pale whitish buff; axillaries and under wing coverts, whitish. Tail feathers, bright rusty chestnut with slightly paler margins. Lores, whitish; a ring of white feathers round the eye with a narrow, clear grey superciliary stripe above them; sides of the face, grey; the ear coverts, brownish grey, with white shaft stripes; a dark iron-grey malar stripe very conspicuous. Beneath, white, the breast with an indistinct, fulvescent collar, and with a few longitudinal streaks of ashy grey. Flanks, fulvescent brown; thighs and under tail coverts washed with the same.

Immature.—Very like the adults, but the secondaries are rusty, and the edges of the inner webs of the primaries are a much deeper buff.

Note.—The ashy streaks on the breast and the colour of the tail, which in some specimens is much darker towards the tip, show much variation.

Soft Parts.—Iris, variable, chestnut, lake-red, carmine, or greyish hazel; bill, greenish horn, basal half of lower mandible, wax-yellow; feet, pale lavender.

Dimensions.—Total length, 6 to 7 in. ; wing, 3'2 to 3'4 in. ; tail, 3 to 3'3 in. ; tarsus, 0'85 to 0'9 in. ; bill from gape, 0'85 in. Females are generally, but not always, rather smaller than males.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—The whole length of the Peninsula, Junk Zeylon and Pulau Tioman. Probably on Penang, Singapore and other islands, but no specimens are recorded therefrom.

Extralimital Range.—Extending just over the border into Southern Tenasserim, Sumatra, Borneo (in the northern parts). In Sarawak another race, *magnirostris kalulongæ* (Sharpe), is found.

Nidification.—Little is on record. The nest will probably be found to be a rough ball-shaped structure of leaves and rubbish placed on or near the ground in deep jungle. Eggs obtained by Waterstradt at the foot of Gunong Tahan, Pahang, on 14th February, are described by Stuart Baker (*loc. cit.*) as almost elliptical in shape, the shell fine in texture, almost without gloss ; in colour, very pale yellow creamy white, with a few specks of light red, principally on the centre of the eggshell. Measurements, 0'82 by 0'61 in.

Habits.—Strictly a forest bird, commonest in secondary scrub and in low-country jungle swamp, as well as dry coastal stretches, and occasionally in mangrove. It is not found in hill country above about 2000 ft. This species goes about in small flocks, frequenting bushes and the smaller trees but never descending to the ground. The food is probably almost entirely insectivorous. Nothing is on record as to its note, and those birds I have seen have been very silent, though extremely active. In life, the white ring of feathers round the eye is extremely conspicuous, and the elongated feathers of the head appear to be slightly erectile.

Æthostoma rostratum rostratum

Blyth's Babbler

Trichostoma rostratum, Blyth, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, xi., 1842, p. 795 (Singapore) ; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 153.

Ptilocichla leucogastra, Davison, *Ibis*, 1892, p. 100 (Pahang).

Æthostoma rostrata, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), i., 1922, p. 259.

Malay Name.—Burong telanjor (?) (alluding to the form of the bill, but doubtful).

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Whole plumage above, including wing and tail, dark olivaceous brown, darker on the head, brighter and more rusty on the lower back, upper tail coverts and edges of the tail feathers ; lores, dusky with dark tips ; ear coverts, greyish, with white shaft stripes, a greyish line bordering the throat. Under surface, white, greyish on the sides of the breast, brownish on the flanks ; under tail coverts, ashy.

Immature.—Rather more rusty above, especially on the edges of the wing coverts and primaries.

Soft Parts.—Iris, sienna ; upper mandible, dark horn, lower, slate, edges and gape, yellow ; feet, pale flesh.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 6 in. ; wing, 2·7 to 3 in. ; tail, 2·1 in. ; tarsus, 1 in. ; bill from gape, 0·9 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout the Malay Peninsula from its northern limit to Johore and also on Singapore Island.

Extralimital Range.—This bird has received many names, but all the forms, except that from Borneo, are extremely similar. Oberholser has recorded four races from within a radius of fifteen miles of Singapore town.

Nidification.—Nothing whatever is known of the nesting habits.

Habits.—This babbler is not really uncommon in its favourite haunts, which are either the edges of the mangrove swamps, or along the banks of large rivers where these debouch from the mountains. It does not, in my experience, ascend the hills at all. Waterstradt is stated to have obtained the bird on Gunong Tahan between 2000 and 5000 ft., but I think some mistake must have been made in the altitude. Both Davison and myself have obtained specimens from the Tahan river at altitudes not exceeding 500 ft. Hume states that this species is arboreal, and Stuart Baker repeats the statement. On the few occasions that we have met with it it has been creeping about among low vegetation and bushes, not actually on the ground but near it. Our native collectors give the same account of it, but Mr Seimund shot a bird actually on the mud among the mangroves of the Klang estuary. Its note and food are also quite unknown, and information is desired on all these points.

Note.—The systematic position of this bird is really quite uncertain, but it is probably correctly placed among the babblers. It is readily recognizable, in the group, by its long legs and powerful feet, and by the lengthened, compressed bill furnished with very stiff bristles at the gape.