

• THRUSHES, SHORT-WINGS, CHATS, REDSTARTS AND ROBINS

Family TURDIDÆ

THE large family which includes the thrushes is in many respects closely allied both to *Timaliidae*, with which many of the genera inosculate, and with the *Muscicapidae*, to which it assimilates in the juvenile plumages. Thrushes, however, have no soft bristles over the base of the nostrils, the tarsi and feet are much stronger, and the habits of the majority of the species are more terrestrial.

Bill, comparatively short, rarely as long or longer than the head, usually slightly notched at top, in a few species quite strongly hooked; rictal bristles never so strongly developed as in the flycatchers, but generally present.

Wing with ten primaries, the outermost often very short; tail with twelve or fourteen feathers, variable in length and shape, sometimes very strongly forked.

Legs, usually strong and long, with large feet; tarsi, in all the local forms, smooth behind.

Eggs, very variable, in some species white or blue, unspotted, in others strongly marked in two colours; young with a squamated or spotted plumage, like the flycatchers.

Colour of plumage, very variable, a few of the tropical species very brilliant, but in the majority of species rather dull.

The family is cosmopolitan, but is perhaps most strongly represented in the temperate zones. A large proportion of the species are migratory, while some of the tropical forms change their haunts according to season, within narrow limits.

None of the divisions into sub-families is really satisfactory, as in any scheme there are always a considerable number of genera that do not fit into any comprehensive section, thereby necessitating an unduly large number of groups. Mr Baker's arrangement, which I here follow in the main, is probably as natural as any, though I think that the position of three of the local genera—*Larvivora*, *Myiophoneus* and *Kittacincla*—is probably not correct, and will have to be further considered. Of the six sub-families adopted in the *Fauna of British India* (2nd ed.), one, the *Prunellinæ* or hedge-sparrows, is unknown in Malaya.

ARTIFICIAL KEY TO THE SUB-FAMILIES OF THRUSHES

1	{	Wing, very short and rounded; tail, never more than two-thirds the length of the wing, usually less	} <i>Brachypteryginæ</i> , p. 233
		Wing, longer and more pointed; tail, never less than half the length of the wing, usually more	
2	{	Tail, highly forked. middle pair of feathers shortest	} <i>Enicurinae</i> , p. 234
		Tail, square or rounded	
3	{	Bill, rather broad at base; rictal bristles, strong; habits, <i>Muscicapine</i>	} <i>Saxicolinae</i> , p. 236
		Bill, not so broad at base; rictal bristles, moderate; habits, largely terrestrial	
4	{	Tail, very strongly bicoloured	} <i>Phœnicurinae</i> , p. 236
		Tail, not markedly bicoloured	

Sub-family BRACHYPTERYGINÆ

Short-wings

APART from *Larvivora*, whose position in this alliance is open to question, the members of this sub-family are characterized by their very short and rounded wings, long slender legs and short tail (except *Hodgsonius*). In habits they are strictly terrestrial, and are usually found in mountainous districts in the dense undergrowth and among rocks in damp jungles. One species, *Heteroxenicus nipalensis wrayi*, occurs at high elevations on most of the mountains of the Malay Peninsula.

Larvivora cyane

The Siberian Blue Chat

Motacilla cyane, Pall., *Reis. Russ. Reichs*, iii., 1776, p. 607 (East Siberia).

Larvivora cyanea, Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 181; Stuart Baker, *op. cit.* (2nd ed.), *Birds*, ii., 1924, p. 12.

Malay Name.—Unascertained.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Whole upper surface, including the edges of the primaries, the outer webs of the secondaries and the wing coverts, dark blue, slightly glazed; a line running over the eyes, slightly paler; ear coverts, darker blue; lores, region below the eye, and a line running from the gape, down the sides of the breast, separating the white of the under parts, deep black. Primaries, secondaries and tail feathers, blackish brown, the latter edged with blue on the outer webs; inner aspect of wing, brownish, lighter on the edges of the inner webs and towards the base of the feathers; axillaries and under wing coverts, deep blue. Whole under surface, white; a patch of deep blue

on each side of the breast ; the flanks infuscated with bluish grey ; thighs, bluish black.

Adult female.—Whole upper surface, greyish olive-brown, warmer on the rump ; the wing coverts and quills with rufous brown edges, brighter on the secondaries ; lores, mottled white and fulvous ; ear coverts, russet-brown ; under surface, white, squamulated with brown tips to the feathers, especially on the sides of the breast ; flanks, fuscous ; middle of the belly and tail coverts, pure white. Under wing coverts and axillaries, smoky brown, with pale edges ; thighs, brownish, the feathers tipped with white. Very adult females possibly have a blue tail.

Immature.—As the female, but with marked rufous tips to the wing coverts. Young males acquire the blue plumage of the adult gradually, in part by moult, also in part by a direct colour change in the feathers ; the blue on the rump, tail and wing coverts is the first to appear, followed by that on the mantle and head.

Soft Parts.—*Male* : iris, dark ; bill, black, pale at the base of lower mandible ; feet, whitish flesh. *Female* : bill, horn, pinkish beneath ; feet, pale pink.

Dimensions.—Total length, 5'3 to 5'6 in. ; wing, 2'9 to 3'2 in. ; tail, 1'9 to 2'1 in. ; tarsus, 1 to 1'1 in. ; bill from gape, 0'7 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout the Peninsula in winter, and most of the island groups.

Extralimital Range.—Breeding in Northern Siberia and Japan, and wintering in the countries east of the Bay of Bengal and on the islands of the Malay Archipelago.

Nidification.—Does not breed in the Malay Peninsula.

Habits.—A winter visitor and bird of passage, arriving as early as the middle or end of September and still in the country (in the north at least) at the end of April. Also common on small islands in the Straits of Malacca in November and December. As in the case of *Turdus obscurus*, this bird makes only a very brief stay on the peninsular shores, but is abundant at higher elevations, from 2500 to 4000 ft. along the main range.

This chat is almost entirely terrestrial in its habitat, and is never seen on high trees, and only occasionally on bushes. It keeps to dense jungle, usually in damp situations, in gullies and by the sides of streams, but is never seen on rocks in midstream like a wagtail or forktail. It is generally solitary and very active and restless, flicking its tail, but not elevating it like a Straits robin or a shama. It is a very silent bird and I have never heard its note.

Sub-family ENICURINÆ

Forktails

THE forktails form perhaps the most natural subdivision of the thrushes, and can be at once recognized by their strongly forked tail, in which the centre tail feathers are much the shortest.

The birds of the group are all small, none so large as a blackbird, and have all the same habits, being denizens of rapid mountain streams.

The plumage is always white, black or grey, ornamented with chestnut, in some species the sexes are alike or slightly different, and there is a juvenile livery.

The nests are large, cup-shaped structures placed among rocks, and the eggs are richly spotted.

In distribution the group is Asiatic and strictly sedentary, comprising about fifteen species: four are Malayan, of which one is here described.

Hydrocichla ruficapilla

The Chestnut-backed Forktail

Enicurus ruficapillus, Temm., *Pl. Col.*, iii., 1832, pl. 534 (Palembang, Sumatra).

Hydrocichla ruficapilla, Oates, *Faun. Brit Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 87; Stuart Baker, *op. cit.* (2nd ed.), *Birds*, ii., 1924, p. 64.

Malay Name.—Burong chegar.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Forehead, white; lores, region of the eye, a narrow border in front of and behind the white forehead, chin and throat, glossy black; crown of head, ear coverts, sides of the neck and nape, bright chestnut; bases of the ear coverts, black. Primaries, brownish black; wing coverts and secondaries, glossy blue-black, the former with broad white tips, the latter with white bases and narrow white tips. Axillaries, white; lesser inner wing coverts, mainly black, greater ones mainly white. Mantle and upper back, black; lower back, rump and upper tail coverts, pure white; tail, much forked; the middle pair of feathers much the shortest, the two outermost pairs, pure white; the remainder, black, with narrow white tips and increasingly broad white bases from the centre pair outwards. Beneath, with a pure white triangular patch on the breast; sides of the breast and lower breast, white, with broad black tips and edges to the feathers, causing a squamate appearance. Remaining under surface, pure white; thighs, slightly greyish.

Adult female.—Like the male, but the mantle is dull, rufous brown, and only a narrow black line separates it from the white of the lower back. The inner upper wing coverts are also dull brownish, and the squamation of the lower parts is heavier.

Immature.—Like the female, but the head almost the same dull brown as the mantle, the black markings below, brownish in tinge, and the wing coverts and secondaries less glossy.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark; bill, black; feet, fleshy pink or whitish pink.

Dimensions.—Total length, 7·8 to 8·3 in.; wing, 3·4 to 3·7 in.; tail, 3·3 to 3·6 in.; tarsus, 1·15 to 1·3 in.; bill from gape, 1 in. to 1·1 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout the length of the Peninsula. Not definitely recorded from any of the islands, and not likely to occur, at any rate in Singapore.

Extralimital Range.—Extending a short distance into Southern Tenasserim ; Borneo and Sumatra.

Nidification.—A. L. Butler found the nest of this forktail in March on the Larut Hills, Perak, on the cleft of a moss-grown rock by the edge of a path. It was composed very largely of earth, thickly covered with green moss, and was consequently remarkably heavy for its size. It contained two longish, cream-white eggs, very glossy, and spotted with rufous.

Habits.—This species is found in clear-water streams in hilly country from about 4000 ft. altitude to where they debouch on flat country. It is never seen far from water or on the larger rivers or in swampy country. It is generally met with singly or in pairs, and is very active both on its feet and in flight. The latter is very undulating and dipping and never long-continued. The note is a very shrill, acid call, generally of one syllable, but repeated at frequent intervals, generally when on the wing. The food is worms, grubs, aquatic insects and, especially, dragon-fly larvæ.

Sub-family SAXICOLINÆ

Stonechats

OF this sub-family, typified by the English stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*), we have only two Malayan species, which are only winter visitors ; both are rather rare in the central and southern parts of the Peninsula, but are a good deal commoner in the north and in Central Siam. They are small birds, about 5 in. in total length, with a wing of about 2.5 in. One, *Saxicola caprata*, is almost entirely black and white ; the other, *Saxicola torquata*, is blackish above, with a black throat and rusty brown under parts. Its habits are much those of flycatchers, but the latter bird spends a good part of its time on the ground.

Sub-family PHÆNICURINÆ

Redstarts, Robins and Shamas

IT is difficult to put down on paper, differences that will distinguish all the members of this group from the true thrushes (*Turdinæ*), though in life they are easily differentiated.

Spending a great part of their life on the ground, many have long tarsi, though these are usually weaker than in the thrushes. In many cases the tail is longer and more graduate, and some are birds of bright plumage or with patches of bright colour, which is not the case with the thrushes.

Many species are migratory or partially migratory, others, resident. Four species are found in the Malayan list. Two are amongst our commonest birds, and are here described ; a third, *Notodola leucura*, the white-tailed blue robin, a dark blue bird, with the base of the tail white, is of very rare occurrence on one or two of the highest mountains ; and the fourth, *Phœnicurus auroreus leucopterus*, the eastern redstart, rests on a somewhat doubtful record, eighty years old, from Malacca.

KEY TO THE SPECIES HERE DESCRIBED

- Tail, very much longer than wing,
 colour black, white and chestnut . *Kittacincla malabarica tricolor*, p. 237
 Tail equal to or shorter than wing ;
 colour, black and white only . *Copsychus saularis musicus*, p. 239

Kittacincla malabarica tricolor

The Malay Shama

Turdus tricolor, Vieill., *Nouv. Dict.*, xxx., 1818, p. 291 (Isles de la mer du Sud ; West Java, 1923).

Cerchotrichas macrura, Kelham, *Ibis*, 1881, p. 515.

Cittocincla tricolor (part), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, vii., 1883, p. 84 ; Nehr Korn, *Kat. Eiersamml.*, p. 52, 1899.

Cittocincla macrura (part), Oates, in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1890, p. 86 ; id. *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 118 ; Oates and Reid, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, iv., 1905, p. 155.

Kittacincla macroura macroura (part), Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 117.

Malay Name.—Murai batu.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Upper surface, black, with a purplish blue gloss on the head and mantle ; back and upper tail coverts, white. Primaries and secondaries, dull black ; inner aspect of wing, greyish brown, with narrow pale edgings to the inner webs of the quills ; axillaries and under wing coverts, rusty ; the greater series white with black centres. Tail with two centre pairs of feathers, uniform black ; the four outer pairs with broad white tips and black bases, the line of division being diagonal. Beneath, throat and breast, black ; rest of under surface, deep rusty chestnut, rather paler on middle of abdomen ; thighs, whitish, strongly washed with rusty.

Adult female.—Tail much shorter than in the male. Above, blackish grey, not glossy ; black throat and upper breast like the upper surface ; rest of the lower parts much lighter rust-coloured than in the male, the middle of the belly, whitish. In most cases the dark throat has a brownish wash.

Immature.—Like the female in distribution of colours, but more sooty brown above ; flight feathers more brownish, with fine, pale edgings to the outer webs ; greater upper wing coverts with broad, pale rusty, buff edges ; lesser wing coverts, scapulars and inner secondaries with guttate tips of the same colour.

Males seem to pass through a stage like the adult female, if Davison's sexing is correct, only differing from them by a slight gloss of black over the grey upper surface, and by indications of regular buff margins to the upper wing coverts. Males very nearly adult have the chin and upper throat sooty black, without gloss.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark hazel to black ; bill, black ; tarsi, pale fleshy pink ; claws, brownish horn.

Dimensions.—*Male*: total length, 10 to 11 in.; wing, 3·5 to 3·9 in.; tail, 6·2 to 7·5 in.; tarsus, 1 to 1·1 in.; bill from gape, 0·8 to 0·95 in. *Female*: total length, 8 to 9 in.; wing, 3·2 to 3·4 in.; tail, 4·8 to 5 in.; tarsus, 1 in.; bill from gape, 0·9 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—South of a line from Perlis to Bandon to Johore; the islands off the Trang coast; Langkawi group, Penang and Singapore; Koh Pennan, Koh Samui and the Tioman Archipelago.

Extralimital Range.—The Rhio Archipelago, Sumatra and West Java. The Indian bird is slightly different and so are the forms inhabiting the Indo-Chinese countries south to Trang in the Malay Peninsula, Borneo, East and Central Java. Mr Oberholser has also described numerous races from material obtained in Malaysia by Dr W. L. Abbott.

Nidification.—I have not myself seen nests of the Malay shama from the south of the Peninsula, but, judging from the young birds obtained, the species would appear to breed in March and April, up to June, as it does farther north. The nest is described as being a roughly shaped mass of twigs and leaves lined with grass, and placed in holes in trees or among bamboos. The eggs have a white or pinkish ground-colour very thickly and evenly spotted with reddish brown. They are very smooth in texture but without much gloss. Baker gives the average dimensions as about 0·89 by 0·68 in. The above description, of course, refers to *K. m. interposita*.

Habits.—The shama is a fairly common bird throughout the Peninsula, but is, on the whole, much commoner or, at any rate, more noticeable on the smaller islands than it is on the mainland. It is especially numerous in the Langkawi and Tioman archipelagos, and on the north-west of Penang Island, and was at one time common on Singapore Island, though of late years its numbers have become much reduced.

It is not a village or open-country bird, nor does it ascend the hills to a greater elevation than 1000 or 1500 ft.; the situations it chiefly affects are dry and rocky jungle, and boulder-strewn hill-sides where the vegetation is not too thick. It is also found among bamboos. On Pulau Tioman and Pulau Tinggi we met with it in great numbers at the foot of the steep hill-sides, rising steeply from the sandy flats, planted with coconuts. Amongst the rocks and stemless palms on these hill-sides the shama was very conspicuous, the white rump patch catching the eye at every turn.

As Baker has noted, *Kittacincla* is the jungle representative of the Straits robin; the distribution of the two genera is almost identical, and where one is found the other is certain to occur. The habits, too, are very similar, though *Kittacincla* is less of a ground bird than *Copsychus*, and does not cock its tail backwards to the same extent, though it droops its wings and expands the tail in a similar manner.

The song is even more liquid and melodious, and there is less of the disagreeable, chattering notes of the Straits robin. As both Baker and Davison note, the song is less continuous throughout the year, and there are times when the birds are quite silent, presumably when the breeding season is over. I noted this specially in Tioman in August and September.

Note.—The form inhabiting the north of the Peninsula and large areas in Tenasserim, Burma and French Indo-China differs in certain trifling particulars from the Southern Malay bird described above. It is slightly larger in both sexes; the male has the feathers of the thighs whiter, less tinged with rusty, and the female is different. It has been named *Kittacincla malabarica interposita*. Throughout its range the breadth of the white tips to the tail feathers is a variable character in most of the races, but those from the Tioman Archipelago have them exceptionally narrow.

Copsychus saularis musicus

The Straits Robin or Dyal Bird

PLATE 19 (*upper figure*, female; *lower*, male)

Lanius musicus, Raffles, *Trans. Linn. Soc.*, xiii., 1822, p. 307 (Sumatra).

Copsychus musicus, Kelham, *Ibis*, 1881, p. 515.

Copsychus saularis musicus, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 114.

Copsychus saularis ephalus, Oberholser, *Smiths. Mus. Coll.*, 76, No. 6, 1923, p. 2 (Sumatra).

Malay Name.—Murai.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Above, glossy black, with a bluish tinge; lesser median and outer greater wing coverts and the outer webs of the secondaries, white, forming a stripe down the wing. Axillaries, whitish, with dark bases; under wing coverts, black, somewhat mottled with white; under surface, to middle of breast, black; the remainder, white, somewhat greyish on the flanks. Tail, with the outer three pairs, mainly white; the fourth, with a broad, white tip, the rest black; thighs, mottled black and white.

Adult female.—The upper surface, greyish black, with only a slight gloss; throat and breast, dark grey; flanks, vent and under tail coverts much infuscated with buffy; axillaries, white, with dark bases.

Immature.—Young birds are much mottled above, with the general colour sooty; the feathers of the white stripes on the wings have the tips black or rusty; the breast is greyish, with whitish edges and tips giving a mottled effect; the glossy black plumage of the adult appears first on the mantle and scapulars, and then on the breast. Males appear to moult direct from the juvenile to the adult plumage, and do not seem to pass through a stage in which they resemble the female, except that they are always more buffy on the flanks.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark, or dark brown; bill, black; feet, black or greyish black (the figure shows these rather too bluish grey).

Dimensions.—Total length, about 8·5 in.; wing, 3·8 to 4·2 in.; tail, 3·5 to 4·1 in.; tarsus, 1·2 to 1·4 in.; bill from gape, 1 to 1·15 in. Females are somewhat smaller than males.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout its length and on almost all the islands, but very rare or absent in the Tioman group.

Extralimital Range.—Parts of Tenasserim and Southern Siam and Sumatra. The characters that separate the Indian dyal from the Malayan are so indeter-

minate, and merge so into each other, that it is difficult to say where one form begins or the other ends. Broadly speaking, Indian and northern birds have more white on the tail feathers, and on the axillaries and under wing coverts, than have Malayan. The southern birds are also considerably darker and purer grey above in the females, and have more buffy on the flanks. Many nominal races have been designated by Mr Oberholser.

Nidification.—In the Malay Peninsula the Straits robin breeds from March or April onwards, and appears to have two broods in the year. The nest is placed under the eaves of houses, occasionally in holes in walls or on the top of broken tree stumps, but very frequently in bushes or hedges. It is a loose structure of grass, twigs and dead leaves, often quite bulky, but neatly lined with grass and plant tendrils. The eggs, which may be up to four in number, are ovals almost equally pointed at both ends, without much gloss and blue or blue-green in ground-colour with thickly spread blotches, varying in size, of brown or brownish purple. Stuart Baker gives the average dimensions as 0·9 by 0·68 in.

Habits.—Quite the most familiar bird to all residents in Malaya. It is common everywhere, in gardens and open country, keeping mainly to human habitations, but spreading along the roads throughout the country, and found occasionally on isolated clearings on the hills. Two or three pairs may be seen in almost every garden, and, as a rule, males seem to be in a majority, perhaps because they are bolder, and less shy than the females. The bird is equally at home on the ground, in low trees and bushes and on the roofs, and is extremely active and vivacious. It runs with a jerky action, incessantly flirting and expanding its tail, often bending it backwards, until it is at more than a right-angle with the body, and at the same time drooping its wings.

The Straits robin shares with the shama the deserved reputation of being the best songster in Malaya. Its notes, heard constantly throughout the day, are a very clear and melodious whistle of several syllables, generally uttered while the bird is on a tree or perched on a roof, and almost equally by both sexes. Its repertory is very varied, and includes a harsh and disagreeable chattering, especially when two or three males are chasing each other, as they very often do.

The food is almost entirely insectivorous, but spiders and worms are sought for, and in captivity bread, boiled rice and bananas are readily eaten. As with almost every bird, termites are eagerly devoured, and when, on a wet evening, the winged insects are erupting from a nest, all the Straits robins in the neighbourhood, together with shrikes, bulbuls and an occasional Pygmy Falconet, will collect and gorge themselves until they can hardly fly.

Note.—The birds figured are three-quarters natural size. The male from Sungkai, South Perak, and the female from Nealay, Malacca.

Sub-family TURDINÆ

Thrushes

IN this sub-family are included the true thrushes, all fair-sized birds. The bill is narrow, slightly hooked at tip, and the bristles at the gape are usually present, though not very stiff.

The wing is long and pointed, the first primary usually rather small; the tail is never very strongly divided into two colours, though often tipped with white, the feathers often rather narrowed at the extremities. The legs are long and the feet large.

The sexes may be either alike or very dissimilar, and the young are always strongly spotted above, and squamate below. The nests are open, cup-shaped structures, and the eggs spotted.

Though a few species are resident the majority of thrushes are migratory, breeding in northern latitudes and wintering in the tropics. They travel, as a rule, in large flocks.

Food is in part vegetable, but largely worms, molluscs and insects.

The group is a large one spread over the whole globe. About ten species are included in the Malayan list, of which two are included in this volume.

KEY TO THE SPECIES HERE DESCRIBED

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1 | { | Greyish black above | . | . | <i>Geocichla sibirica davisoni</i> (male), |
| | | | | | p. 241 |
| | | Brown above | | | 2 |
| 2 | { | Chin and throat, iron-grey | | | <i>Turdus obscurus obscurus</i> (male), |
| | | | | | p. 243 |
| | | Chin and throat whitish | | | 3 |
| 3 | { | Breast nearly uniform | | | <i>Turdus obscurus obscurus</i> (female), |
| | | | | | p. 243 |
| | | Breast with broad, dusky edging to
feathers | | | <i>Geocichla sibirica davisoni</i> (female), |
| | | | | | p. 241 |

Geocichla sibirica davisoni

Davison's Ground Thrush

Turdulus davisoni, Hume, *Stray Feathers*, v., 1877, p. 63 (Muleyit, N. Tenasserim).

Geocichla sibirica (part), Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 138.

Geocichla sibirica sibirica, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 147.

Geocichla davisoni, Sharpe in Seebohm's *Monogr. Turdidæ*, i., 1898, p. 101, pl. 21.

Malay Name.—Murai or merbah kělabu.

Description.—*Adult male.*—General colour, dark slaty black, with paler slate edges to the feathers. Lores, black, a stripe from in front of the eye to the nape, pure white, broadening posteriorly. Primaries, edged with white on their inner webs towards the base. Axillaries, white with broad grey tips; greater under wing coverts, black on the basal half, white at the tips; middle of the belly and vent, white; tail feathers, with a patch of white on the inner webs; under tail coverts, slate, with white tips and shaft stripes.

Adult female.—Upper plumage, including wing and tail, russet-brown; the primaries with rufous brown edgings to the outer webs; wing coverts with buff spots on the tips, largest on the lesser coverts; on the inner aspect of the wing the primaries and secondaries have creamy edges to the inner webs, broadest at the base; axillaries, white, with broad, dark brown tips; under wing coverts, creamy, blackish at the base, with pale tips; tail, brown, a white spot on the inner web of the outer feather; the next pair with a much smaller spot; the remainder almost immaculate. Lores, blackish; sides of the first and a short postocular stripe, mottled blackish and buff; the ear coverts, dark, with pale shaft stripes. Beneath, throat whitish buff with small, subterminal spots, and a blackish stripe on each side; breast, buffy white, with broad, dark edges to the feathers; the flanks dusky, with pale shafts and darker edges to the feathers; the middle of the belly and under tail coverts almost pure white; thighs, dusky.

Immature.—Young birds are like the female, but with the upper surface somewhat barred, and with much lighter and larger tips to the wing coverts. The young males seem at first to be like the female, and gradually assume the grey plumage, in part by moult, but in part by a direct colour change in the feather.

Soft Parts.—*Adult male*: iris, dark brown; bill, black; feet, dull yellow. *Adult female*: iris, dark hazel; bill, black, yellowish green at base of lower mandible, yellow at the gape; tarsi and feet brownish yellow, more yellow posteriorly and on the soles.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 10·5 in.; wing, 4·8 to 5·2 in.; tail, 3·5 to 3·9 in.; tarsus, 1·4 in.; bill from gape, 1 to 1·05 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—At present known from Kedah Peak southwards to Malacca territory, and on many of the small islands and islets in the Straits of Malacca. Not hitherto recorded from either Penang or Singapore or any of the larger islands.

Extralimital Range.—Breeding in Japan and wintering in Sumatra, Tenasserim and Assam and in other parts of Indo-China.

Nidification.—Not breeding in the Malay Peninsula.

Habits.—This ground thrush apparently follows similar lines of migration to the succeeding, but spends even briefer periods at low elevations before it makes for the high mountains, where it is very common in the winter months. It is evidently resident for a time on the small islands, such as Pulau Jarak, and the more wooded of the Sembilan Islands off the Perak coast, as on every occasion that these islands have been visited during the winter months the bird has been met in numbers. In habits it is rather more of a ground bird than *Turdus obscurus*, and keeps well in the undergrowth. It has many musical notes, mixed, however, with harsh and grating ones when it is alarmed.

Note.—I have described birds that are somewhat intermediate between the two named races, *G. sibirica sibirica*, which breeds in Siberia, and *G. s. davisoni*, as above. The former is paler grey on the upper surface, and has more white on the abdomen and tail feathers, and is rather smaller. In its extreme form

G. s. davisoni is very dark grey, with hardly any white on the belly, tail feathers and under tail coverts, and is larger. In many places both races occur together in winter quarters, and are sometimes difficult to discriminate, especially in the case of females and immature males.

Turdus obscurus obscurus

The Dusky Thrush

Turdus obscurus, Gmel., *Syst. Nat.*, i., 1789, p. 816 (Lake Baikal).

Merula obscura, Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 134.

Turdus obscurus obscurus, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), ii., 1924, p. 141.

Malay Name.—Murai Bělanda (Bělanda or Dutch is often used by Peninsular Malays as equivalent to foreign or exotic). This thrush is supposed to come from the Netherland East Indies.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Upper surface, including the wing coverts, edges of primaries, and outer webs of secondaries, earthy olive-brown, distinctly greyer on the head. Primaries and tail feathers, darker brown; the outer tail feathers with a small spot of white at the tip of the outer web; under wing coverts and axillaries, smoky grey; a stripe from the nostril over the lores to the eye, and a patch beneath the eye and the ear coverts, greyish black; a short superciliary and a spot beneath the eye, and the point of the chin, whitish; throat, sides of the neck and upper chest, clear grey, grading into earthy brown on the breast; sides of the breast and flanks, bright brown; middle of belly, white; under tail coverts, white, broadly edged with olive-brown; thighs, greyish brown, mottled with white.

Adult female.—Head, as the rest of the upper surface; lores, etc., dark brown, not blackish; ear coverts, brownish, streaked with white; a whitish stripe from gape to below the ear coverts, bordered below by a brownish stripe. Chin and throat, white, no grey on the sides of the neck and breast, which are white with buffy and dusky tips.

Immature birds.—Resemble the female, but usually have marked white tips to the wing coverts; the under wing coverts and axillaries are paler and edged with yellowish.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark to hazel-brown; bill, yellowish horn; tip and culmen, dark ash; feet, pale yellow, yellowish horn or yellowish brown.

Dimensions.—Total length, 9 to 10 in.; wing, 4.9 to 5.2 in.; tail, 3.7 to 3.9 in.; tarsus, 1.3 in.; bill from gape, 1.1 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Throughout the Peninsula and on all the islands. Not recorded from the Tioman group, which have not been visited in the winter months.

Extralimital Range.—Breeding in Siberia. In winter, through the countries south of the Himalayas and in Borneo, Sumatra, Java, the Philippines, and probably other islands of the Malay Archipelago. Stragglers have occurred in Europe.

Nidification.—Does not breed within our limits. The eggs are stated to be very like those of the English blackbird, but smaller and more thickly spotted (Baker).

Habits.—This thrush is only a bird of passage and winter resident in the Malay Peninsula. In October, November and December it arrives in immense numbers on the small islands of the Straits of Malacca, probably staying some time on those that are sufficiently well wooded. Its stay in the low-lying area of the southern portion of the Malay Peninsula is probably very brief—possibly not more than a night or two—nor does it seem to care for submontane country below about 2000 ft. But from about 3000 ft. to the summits of the ranges it is very numerous from October to March, frequenting damp gullies and feeding almost exclusively on the ground, on worms, grubs and insects. Its habits are almost exactly those of the common English thrush, and its song is very similar but not so strong.

In the northern parts of the Peninsula it is met with at lower elevations during the same periods as in the south, and is here more of an open-country bird, keeping to the edges of ricefields and the banks of the streams. In Langkawi and Terutau it has been shot among the mangroves where these abut on the limestone rocks and cliffs characteristic of these islands.