

WEAVER-FINCHES AND RICE-BIRDS

Family PLOCEIDÆ

Vol. I., p. 286.

THIS family is, in the main, dependent on rice or on the seeds of other grasses, which, with the very important exception of the bamboos, most of which seed at infrequent intervals, are not well represented in Malayan forests. *Munias* are therefore scarce, both in species and individuals, the two commoner species probably owing their introduction to man and the felling of large areas of jungle. As is noted below, the only strictly montane species is one of the most extreme rarity.

KEY TO THE SPECIES HERE DESCRIBED

1	{	Plumage above, green	2
		Plumage above, not green	4
2	{	Abdomen, scarlet	<i>Erythrura prasina prasina</i> (male), p. 270
		Abdomen, not scarlet	3
3	{	Upper tail coverts, dark scarlet	<i>Erythrura prasina prasina</i> , p. 270
		Upper tail coverts, green	<i>Chlorura hyperythra malayana</i> , p. 271
4	{	A white band on rump	<i>Uroloncha striata subsquamicollis</i> , p. 272
		Rump black	<i>Uroloncha leucogastra leucogastra</i> , p. 272

Erythrura prasina prasina

The Malay Long-tailed Munia

Loxia prasina, Sparrman, *Mus. Carls.*, 1788, pls. 72, 73 (Java).

Erythrura prasina, Hume, *Stray Feath.*, ix., 1881, p. 121; Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, xiii., 1890, p. 381; Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, ii., 1890, p. 190; Robinson, *Handl. Birds Malay Peninsula*, 1910, p. 19, No. 571; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 364.

Erythrura prasina prasina, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), iii., 1926, p. 93.

Malay Name.—Chiak p̄rut merah.

Description.—*Adult male.*—Upper parts, including the external aspect of the wings, grass-green; rump and upper tail coverts, crimson; inner aspect of wing, dusky, the inner margins of quills edged with grey, the under wing coverts and axillaries cinnamon-buff; middle pair of tail feathers, crimson at the base, olive-brown at the tips; the remainder blackish brown, edged with lighter brown and crimson, inferior aspect, brownish grey. Extreme

forehead, sides of the head, ear coverts, chin and throat, blue; lores, blackish; breast, flanks, thighs and under tail coverts, rich buff; middle of breast and abdomen, pinkish crimson.

Adult female.—Duller, and with a shorter tail than the male; rump and upper tail coverts a much darker crimson; tail, yellowish brown; sides of the head only, blue; anterior parts of the under surface, greyish green; the remainder dull buff, more yellowish on the middle of the abdomen.

Immature.—Like the female, but with no red on the rump and upper tail coverts, which are olive-brown.

Note.—A variety is common over the whole range of this species, on which the red is replaced by a rich golden orange.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark; bill, black; feet, pinkish fleshy.

Dimensions.—Total length, *male*, 5·7 to 6·2 in.; *female*, 5 to 5·3 in.; wing, 2·3 to 2·4 in.; tail, *male*, 2·4 to 2·6 in.; *female*, 1·6 to 1·8 in.; tarsus, 0·55 to 0·6 in.; bill from gape, 0·55 in.; culmen, 0·5 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Sporadic from the northern border to Selangor, and in Pahang.

Extralimital Range.—The south of Tenasserim, Sumatra and Java. Birds from Borneo have the crimson of the belly deeper and brighter, and have been named *Erythrura prasina cœlica* by Stuart Baker.

Nidification.—Unknown.

Habits.—Except in the extreme north of the Peninsula, within a mile or two of the Tenasserim border, where we found it very numerous, this munia is very rare in Malaya. Davison got three or four near Klang in Selangor, and we have met with it on one or two occasions at Selama, in North-East Perak; on the Larut Hills, where it was not uncommon at one time, and at Bentong in Pahang. On the Pakchan the bird was found in small flocks, both on the edges of the dry ricefields, and in jungle, and was not particularly shy. On Maxwell's Hill and Gunong Ijau, Taiping, it occurred singly or in small numbers in the gardens, by the edge of the forest, but was never at all common. In Sumatra, Mr Jacobson records it as occurring in small flocks near the ricefields.

Chlorura hyperythra malayana

The Malayan Bamboo Munia

Chlorura hyperythra malayana, Robinson, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, xlviii., 1928, p. 72 (Telôm, Perak-Pahang boundary, Cameron's Highlands, Malay Peninsula).

Chlorura, *sp.*, Ogilvie-Grant, *Fascic. Malay., Zool.*, iii., 1906, p. 70.

Description.—*Adult female*.—Above, dull grass-green, slightly bluish on the forehead; primaries, blackish, edged with pale green; inner aspect of wing, dusky; inner webs of primaries edged with greenish white; under wing coverts, axillaries, and edge of wing, pale chestnut. Middle tail feathers as the back; remainder, blackish, edged with green on the outer webs. Rump only very slightly more bronzy than the back. Frontal plumes, blackish;

lores, deep chestnut ; sides of the face and ear coverts, slightly paler. Beneath, tawny chestnut, richer on the throat ; flanks, washed with greenish.

Soft Parts.—Iris, brown ; bill, black ; feet, greenish yellowish brown.

Dimensions.—Total length, 4·2 in. ; wing, 2·2 in. ; tail, 1·35 in. ; tarsus, 0·5 in. ; bill from gape, 0·45 in. ; culmen, 0·4 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Cameron's Highlands, Perak-Pahang boundary.

Extralimital Range.—Closely allied races are found in the mountains of Borneo, Java and the Lesser Sunda Islands to the east of Java.

Nidification.—Unknown.

Habits.—Only one specimen of this bird has ever been obtained, though it has been searched for repeatedly on Cameron's Highlands and other likely localities. The original specimen was shot among tall bamboos, which is the habitat affected by other members of the genus, all of which are found only in mountain jungle, and seem everywhere rare. Now that Cameron's Highlands are being developed as a residential centre we may hope to learn more of this very interesting little finch.

Uroloncha striata subsquamicollis

The Malayan Sharp-tailed Munia

Vol. I., p. 289, pl. 24 (*lower figures*).

This weaver bird is easily recognized by its dark upper parts, with a pale patch on the rump, its dark, sharp-pointed tail, and the white-edged dark feathers to the sides of the neck which give a scaly effect.

It is less of an open-country and ricefield bird than many of its family, and is quite common both in the Larut Hills, on the Semangko Pass, and along the road to Fraser's Hill, and in several of the hills in Negri Sembilan, flying in small flocks up to a dozen or more. Mr Chasen recently obtained a single male near the summit of Penang Hill, 2700 feet.

Uroloncha leucogastra leucogastra

The White-bellied Munia

Dark brown above, blacker on the head and rump ; the mantle and back with fine white shaft stripes, the tail feathers black, edged with golden straw-colour. Beneath, sooty black, except the middle of the abdomen, which is white, with a faint, creamy flesh tint. Total length, about 4·5 in.

This munia is common on the hills of Negri Sembilan and on Mount Ophir, and in parts of Pahang in the low country, and has occurred in Selangor and Malacca, and in Peninsular Siam, while in the extreme south of Tenasserim it is extremely common. In the Malay Peninsula it is very local, and, like *U. s. subsquamicollis*, is less of a ricefield bird than other munias, preferring the edge of the forest, and clearings in the jungle. It will be described in detail in a later volume.