

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS

Family MOTACILLIDÆ

Vol. I., p. 291.

THIS family is not much in evidence on the hills, and none are found during the summer months, the Malay pipit (*Anthus richardi malayensis*) being strictly an inhabitant of the plains. During the winter months, however, wagtails of at least two species are regular visitors and residents, and the careful observer may possibly note several other forms, including species not hitherto recorded from Malaya. Birds of this family are, however, very difficult to identify from descriptions, and specimens of unfamiliar species should, if possible, be preserved, and submitted to examination at the local museums.

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF WAGTAILS AND PIPITS HERE DESCRIBED

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|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | { | Upper surface faintly streaked ¹ | <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i> (?) <i>berezowskii</i> , | P. 274 |
| | | Upper surface quite plain | 2 | |
| 2 | { | With a black gorget ; throat, white | <i>Dendronanthus indicus</i> , p. 274 | 3 |
| | | With no black gorget | | |
| 3 | { | Throat, black ; belly, yellow | <i>Motacilla cinerea caspica</i> (summer), | p. 273 |
| | | Throat, white ; belly, yellow or whitish | <i>Motacilla cinerea caspica</i> (winter and young), p. 274 | |
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Motacilla cinerea caspica

The Eastern Grey Wagtail

Vol. I., p. 292.

Description.—*Adult in summer plumage.*—Above, clear grey, washed with olive-green on mantle, rump, greenish yellow ; a distinct white superciliary and a white stripe from the gape bordering the throat. Beneath, chin and

¹ The lowland Malay pipit (*Anthus richardi malayensis*) differs at a glance in being much more rufescent brown above and more tawny buff below ; it is also a much longer-legged bird, tarsus exceeding an inch.

throat, black; rest of under surface, pale primrose-yellow, deeper on the tail coverts. Total length, 8 to 8.5 in.

Adult in winter plumage.—Whole upper plumage, brownish grey, with a white supercilium extending back to the ear coverts; throat, pure white; rest of under plumage, pure yellow, brightest on the under tail coverts.

Immature.—Brown above, the throat buffy, not pure white, often with dark edges to the feathers; wing coverts with pale buffy edges.

This common wagtail is, as elsewhere, abundant on the hills throughout the autumn and winter months from September to March, keeping to the clearings, and numerous along the roads, paths and watercourses. Butler has noted it on the Larut Hills as late as the middle of April, and the species is common on Fraser's Hill until well on in March.

The other rarer wagtails referred to incidentally in Volume I. (p. 293) have not, as yet, been noted on the mountains, but may possibly occur on passage.

Dendronanthus indicus

The Forest Wagtail

Vol. I., p. 293.

The creamy white colouring of this wagtail, with the double black band on the breast, is very distinctive, and once seen the bird can never be mistaken. It is often seen on the hills during the winter months, sometimes in very large numbers, but generally for a very short period only. It frequents by preference the smaller forest paths only, and is not, like the other wagtails, much seen on wide roads and open spaces.

Anthus hodgsoni (?) *berezowskii*

Sarudny's Tree-Pipit

Anthus maculatus berezowskii, Sarudny, *Ornith. Monatsb.*, xvii., 1909, p. 43 (South-West Kansu).

Anthus maculatus (Hodgs.), Butler, *Journ. Straits Branch, Roy. Asiat. Soc.*, No. 32, 1899, p. 21 (Larut Hills); Robinson and Kloss, *Ibis*, 1911, p. 74.

Anthus hodgsoni berezowskii, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), iii., 1926, p. 283.

Description.—*Adult female.*—Above, an olivaceous greyish brown, with a slight wash of green; the feathers of the head and mantle with dark, ill-defined shaft streaks; the remainder unmarked. Wing coverts with dark brown centres, edged with sandy brown, the median and greater series with yellowish buff tips, forming a double bar on the wing; primaries and secondaries, dark brown, the former very narrowly, and the latter very broadly, edged with the colour of the back on the outer webs; inner aspect of wing, dusky; the quills with the inner margins edged with buffy; under wing coverts and axillaries, pale buffy. Tail, dark brown, the edges of the feathers and the middle pair paler, the two outer pairs dusky white on the outer webs, the

outermost pair largely white on the inner web, the line of separation from the dark parts being diagonal. A streak behind the eye and a patch behind the ear coverts whitish; lores, face and ear coverts, fulvous, a broad buffy streak on the sides of the throat. Under surface, buffy white, rather deeper coloured on the throat and breast; the latter with black streaks broadening towards the tips, much finer on the belly and flanks; middle of abdomen and under tail coverts unmarked.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark; bill and upper mandible, horn, lower, pink; feet, whitish pink.

Dimensions.—Total length, about 6·5 in.; wing, 3·2 to 3·4 in.; tail, 2·7 in.; tarsus, 0·8 in.; bill from gape, 0·7 in.; culmen, 0·45 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—Known only from four winter specimens—from Trang, Peninsular Siam, from Kedah Peak and from Maxwell's Hill, Larut Hills.

Extralimital Range.—Three closely allied races of this pipit are found practically throughout Southern Asia, Formosa, and the Philippines in winter, breeding in the Himalayas, to China, Corea, Manchuria and Japan. The breeding areas are fairly distinct, but the range in winter of each race is not yet understood, and it is almost impossible to identify with certainty individual specimens. The allocation of the recorded Malayan specimens to the above subspecies is therefore given under all reserve.

Nidification.—Does not breed in the Malay Peninsula.

Habits.—The three specimens we ourselves have obtained were obtained on the ground, in open spaces, and were solitary, two in low jungle among the foothills at Chong, Trang, Peninsular Siam, in December, the other at about 3000 ft. on Kedah Peak. Butler noticed a flock of about a dozen in the clearing on Maxwell's Hill, between 3000 and 3500 ft., during March and the beginning of April; like our birds, they did not settle in a tree when disturbed. In other respects their habits do not call for special remarks, and are those of the lowland bird, *Anthus richardi malayensis* (Volume I., p. 294).