

WHITE-EYES

Family ZOSTEROPIDÆ

Vol. I., p. 315.

SMALL birds, generally green or yellowish green above, usually with a conspicuous white ring round the eye. Bill, short, gently curved downwards; tongue with brush-like appendages at the tip.

Zosterops aureiventer aureiventer

Hume's White-eye

Zosterops aureiventer, Hume, *Stray Feath.*, vi., 1878, p. 519 (Tavoy); Oates, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, i., 1889, p. 215; Hartert, *Nov. Zool.*, ix., 1902, p. 575; Grant, *Fascic. Malay., Zool.*, iii., 1906, p. 75.

Zosterops mesozantha, Salvad., *Ann. Mus. Civ. Gen.* (ser. 2A), vii., 1889, p. 396 (Taho Plateau, North Tenasserim).

Zosterops tahanensis, Ogilvie-Grant, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, xix., 1906, p. 10 (Gunong Tahan); id. *Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus.*, iii., 1908, p. 20 (Tahan); Robinson, *Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus.*, ii., 1909, p. 215; Robinson and Kloss, *Ibis*, 1911, p. 79; Robinson, *Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus.*, v., 1915, p. 110; Robinson and Kloss, *Ibis*, 1923, p. 151.

Zosterops aureiventer tahanensis, Stuart Baker, *Ibis*, 1922, p. 146; Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1924, p. 394.

Zosterops aureiventris mesozantha, Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), iii., 1926, p. 364.

Malay Name.—Këlichap kunyet.

Description.—*Adult.*—Sexes alike. Above, yellowish green, very variable in tint; forehead not brighter yellow than the crown; lores, blackish; a broad white ring of silky feathers round the eye. Primaries, brownish, with broad outer edges of green internally and the edges of the inner webs edged with whitish. Tail feathers, blackish, only slightly edged with greenish. Beneath, throat yellowish, a broad, clear yellow mesial streak from the throat to the vent; the rest of the under surface dark clear grey, without any tinge of drab or buffy.

Immature.—Not very different from the adults, but generally duller in

colour; the mesial yellow stripe paler and not so pronounced; the tail feathers more greenish.

Soft Parts.—Iris, dark; upper mandible, black, lower, slate, black at tip; feet, slate, sometimes very pale.

Dimensions.—Total length, 4 to 4.2 in.; wing, 1.9 to 2.1 in.; tail, 1.3 to 1.5 in.; tarsus, 0.55 to 0.6 in.; bill from gape, 0.55 in.; culmen, 0.4 in.

Range in the Malay Peninsula.—From the extreme northern border, south to Negri Sembilan and in Pahang.

Extralimital Range.—Tenasserim, northwards to Tavoy, where the type was obtained, and probably as far as Karen-ni, if, as seems probable, the bird described by the late Count Salvadori as *Z. mesozantha* is identical. Other closely allied races are found in Sumatra, Borneo and Java, some of the islands of the Barussan Chain, and possibly the island of Car Nicobar.

Nidification.—The nests obtained by Kellow, near Taiping (Vol. I., p. 316), were probably of this and not of the coastal form, though the two are probably indistinguishable. The bird was breeding from February to May, and the nests are described as “neat little cups of grass, roots and cotton-down, felted together with spiders’ webs.” They were placed in bushes or on trees up to thirty feet from the ground. The eggs were like those of other species of *Zosterops*, pale bluish white, unspotted. The average dimensions are given by Baker as 0.61 by 0.47 in.

Habits.—This race of white-eye is, so far as our observations go, strictly confined to heavy jungle, and does not frequent the coast or open country, though in altitude it may range from nearly sea-level to over 5000 ft. In the north of the Peninsula, more especially, it is often found at lower altitudes than in the south. The bird, however, is never met with away from hilly country. At different times we have met with it on most of the hills along the main range in the Federated Malay States, in Siam, and in Negri Sembilan and on Tahan, and it is possible that it changes its altitude with season, and in accordance with the flowering of certain trees. I am under the impression that it goes about in smaller flocks than its coastal relative, but the bird is not a common one and is only rarely encountered. The habits are like those of all the family, tit-like, and the food is partly insectivorous and partly pollen, small seeds and fruit. The note is a very low chirp or twitter.

Note.—For its size this unfortunate little bird has had a “prodigious deal” of synonymy attached to it, but I think it may now be taken as proved that the Malay Peninsula is inhabited by two species of the family only, the present bird and that described in Volume I. as *Zosterops aureiventer* subspecies—to which Mr Kloss and myself are now agreed that the name, *Zosterops aureiventer williamsoni* is properly applicable. All birds referred to, under other names, obtained in the Malay Peninsula have been examined by us, and can be assigned to one or other of the above races, which, to reiterate the facts, are either purely coastal (*Z. a. williamsoni*) or jungle (*Z. a. aureiventer*) habitants.