

THE BIRDS OF BANGKOK.

By W. J. F. WILLIAMSON.

(Continued from Vol. I., No. 2, p. 92).

In the Introduction to the first part of this Paper, which appeared in the previous number of the *Journal*, I gave a list of books and papers to which references would be made. Since then several lists of Birds from Siam (some of them important ones) have made their appearance or are in course of publication, and our knowledge of the geographical distribution of species has, in consequence, been much increased. The following are the lists in question, in chronological order of publication, with the names of their authors:—

- Barton.....C. S. Barton. A short List of Birds from the Raheng District. Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 105-109 of this *Journal*.
- Robinson.....H. C. Robinson. On a collection of Birds from the Siamese Province of Bandon, N. E. Malay Peninsula. *Journal of the Fed. Malay States Museums*. Vol. V, No. 3, pp. 83-110.
- Robinson.....H. C. Robinson. The Zoology of Koh Samui and Koh Pennan—Birds. *Journal of the Fed. Malay States Museums*. Vol. V, No. 3, pp. 139-152.
- Gairdner.....K. G. Gairdner. List of Mammals and Birds, obtained in the Ratburi and Petchaburi Districts. Present number of this *Journal*, pp. 148-153.
- Gyldenstolpe.....Count Nils Gyldenstolpe. List of birds collected by Mr. Emil Eisenhofer in Northern Siam. Part 1, Order *Pas-seres*, present number of this *Journal*, pp. 163-172. Remaining Orders to follow in Vol. I, No. 4.

In order to distinguish the last-named List from that of Gyldenstolpe's own collection, previously quoted in the Introduction to this Paper, Mr. Eisenhofer's name will be given, in conjunction with that of Count Gyldenstolpe, for each species referred to. In all other cases the names of the authors alone will be quoted.

Family *ORIOLIDÆ*—Orioles.

26 (514). *Oriolus indicus*. *The Black-naped Oriole*.

Siamese, นก ขันนํ้าเหลือง (Nok khamin liang-on).

Description. Length about 267 mm. (10.5 in). *Male.* Whole head and body bright yellow, except the lores and a band through each eye broadening and meeting across the nape, which are black; primaries and secondaries black, tipped and edged with yellowish white; outer webs of tertiaries yellow; inner webs black; primary coverts black tipped with yellow; middle pair of tail feathers black narrowly tipped with yellow, the others progressively more yellow at the ends. *Female.* Similar colouration, except that the back is slightly greenish.

Iris pink (Oates). Bill pinkish white. Legs plumbeous.

Young birds are yellowish green above, paler on the rump; throat, breast and centre of abdomen whitish streaked with brown; flanks, under wing-coverts and under tail-coverts yellow with greenish tinge. Quills and tail feathers brownish where the adults have black. Iris brown. Bill dark horny to pinkish brown—the basal half of the lower mandible being paler. Legs as in adults.

Habits, etc. This beautiful and striking bird is a fairly common cold weather visitor, occurring (as far as my observation goes) from October to April. Adults have rich flute-like note, but young birds (which are the more plentiful) utter a harsh call of *che-eh*. Orioles are of strictly arboreal habit, and feed on fruit as well as the insects to be found on trees.

Distribution. Also recorded from Trang by Robinson and Kloss, who state that they found it "fairly abundant" during December and January; from the Ratburi and Petchaburi Monthons by Gairdner; and from Northern Siam by Mr. Emil Eisenhofer (Gyldenstolpe).

27 (521). *Oriolus melanocephalus*. *The Indian Black-headed Oriole*.

Siamese, นก ขันหม เหลือง ค้อหม (Nok khamin lüang-on).

Description. Length, up to 241 mm. (9.5 in.). *Male*. Head, neck, chin and throat black; remainder of body rich yellow; primary coverts black with yellow tips; quills black, all but the first primary with yellowish tips which become successively larger on the secondaries and tertiaries; tail yellow, except the middle pair of feathers which are black on their terminal half, with a yellow tipping, and the next two pairs which are partly black. *Female*. As above, but the yellow of the breast and back is duller, with sometimes a greenish tinge.

Iris crimson. Bill pinkish. Mouth flesh-colour. Legs plumbeous.

In young birds the yellow parts are greenish, and the black parts brownish to brownish black, except the chin and throat which are whitish with dark brown stripes—traces of the stripes being also visible on the breast. The iris is brown to reddish brown, and the bill blackish brown.

Habits etc. Similar to those of the last species.

Distribution. So far as Bangkok is concerned this appears to be a rare bird, as I have only obtained a single specimen, an immature male, which I shot in my garden in February 1914. It appears, however, to be common almost throughout the country, as it is recorded by Gyldenstolpe from Eastern, Central and Northern Siam, while Robinson and Kloss state that they obtained a pair in Pulau Lankawi (an island off the coast of Kedah, at that time under Siamese protection), but apparently did not meet with it on the mainland, in Trang. It is also reported from the Ratburi and Petchaburi Monthon by Gairdner, and I have obtained it both at Koh Lak and at Sriracha in November and December.

Family. *STURNIDAE*—Starlings and Mynas.

28 (536). *Sturnia sinensis*. *The Chinese Myna*.

Description. Length, up to 203 mm. (8 in.). Forehead whitish with a ferruginous tinge; chin whitish; rest of body grey, darkest on back and paling almost to white on lower part of abdomen, the flanks and upper tail-coverts sometimes with a ferruginous tinge; wing-coverts white, slightly tinged with ferrugi-

nous; quills black, the tertiaries and tips of the other feathers suffused with metallic blue and lilac; tail black with metallic blue gloss, the middle pair of feathers narrowly, the others more broadly, tipped sullied ferruginous white.

Iris greyish white to white. Bill slatey blue. Legs plumbeous.

Immature birds are darker grey on the body, and lack the conspicuous patch formed by the white wing-coverts of adults.

Habits, etc. A common cold weather visitor, occurring here in great numbers from September to February, after which the majority of the birds depart, though some linger on until April. They invariably go about in flocks numbering from three or four up to thirty or forty, and are a familiar and striking object, with their distinctive grey and white plumage, as they fly past rapidly in company, or settle on some tree to search for their food. This consists of insects and the nectar from flowers.

Oates states that the few specimens of this bird which he procured in Pegu were feeding on the ground, but in Bangkok, where they occur in large numbers, I have always found them strictly arboreal, and while searching for their food they move along the branches and twigs with a peculiar creeping motion. The note of this bird is a harsh, but not loud, double *chick-chick*.

I have been unable to get any satisfactory Siamese name for this bird, though it appears to bear several.

Distribution. Also recorded from the Monthons of Ratburi and Petchaburi (Gairdner).

*29 (539). *Sturnia memoricola*. *The White-winged Myna*.

Description. Length about 203 mm. (8 in.) Upper plumage grey, darker on the back—the feathers of the head and neck having whitish shafts and those of the rump and upper tail-coverts being tinged with ferruginous; quills blackish, all the feathers being tipped and edged with grey, the edging becoming broader on the secondaries and tertiaries; edge of wing white; middle pair of tail-feathers grey with black shafts, the others dark brown at the base and tipped with ferruginous. Chin, throat and upper breast greyish white to ferruginous grey, the breast feathers with white shafts; remainder of lower plumage ferruginous white to deep ferruginous.

Iris dull white. Bill, anterior half yellow, basal half plumbeous—the culmen greenish. Legs pinkish flesh-colour.

Distribution. I obtained a pair of these birds from a Siamese bird-catcher in Bangkok in December 1914. He assured me he had trapped them here, and that in the course of a season he gets as many as 40 or 50. I have no reason to doubt this statement, as the man appears to devote himself to the business of catching birds in Bangkok and selling them either to private individuals or to the proprietors of the numerous bird shops here.

I can trace no other record of this bird in Siam. Mr. Emil Eisenhofer (Gyldenstolpe) records *S. malabarica* from Northern Siam, and though the two species are very similar in appearance, *S. memoricola* can be distinguished by the white edge to its wing which is entirely lacking in *S. malabarica*. The identification of my specimens has been confirmed by Mr. H. C. Robinson.

30 (546). *Graculipica nigricollis*. *The Black-necked Myna.*

Siamese, นกเขียงโครงใหญ่ (Nok iang-khrōng yai).*

Description. Length, up to 304 mm. (12 in). Whole head and neck white, bordered all round by a black collar; behind this, on the back, is an indistinct band of feathers with whitish tips, while the remainder of the back is dark brown, the feathers with paler tips; rump and shorter tail-coverts white, primary wing coverts white; remaining wing-coverts and quills dark brown with white tips—minute on the primaries. Lower plumage, with the exception of the black collar, white.

Iris rich dark brown, surrounded by a narrow ring dull white. Bill dark horny. Mouth dark slate to blackish. Legs dull fleshy white. Bare skin round the eyes pale to deep yellow. Young birds have the head and neck brown.

Habits, etc. One of our commonest resident birds, usually going about in pairs or small flocks, and frequently to be seen walking about on the ground searching for insects, of which its food appears chiefly to consist. This Myna is a very noisy bird and has a number of loud and cheerful but not unmusical notes. Being of a gregarious nature, it usually roosts, out of the breeding season, in considerable companies, selecting some leafy tree or bamboo clump for the purpose.

* Colloquially known as *Nok king-khrong yai*.

The noise the birds then make, for half an hour or so before dark, is almost deafening.

Distribution. Probably to be found over the greater part of the country, as it is also recorded by Gyldenstolpe from Eastern, Northern and Central Siam, and by Gairdner from the Provinces of Ratburi and Petchaburi. I have found it common both at Koh Lak and at various places on the east coast of the Gulf of Siam.

* 31 (549). *Acridotheres tristis*. *The Common Myna*.

Siamese. นกสามิตา (Nok sālika).

Description. Length 254 mm. (10 in). Upper portion of head and neck glossy black, succeeded by a band of dull greyish black, fading into the vinous brown of the back and the paler brown of the rump and upper tail-coverts; primary wing-coverts white; other wing-coverts and tertiaries vinous brown; primaries black with white bases; tail feathers blackish, tipped with white. Lower neck and breast dull black, passing into the vinous brown of the abdomen and flanks; under tail-coverts white.

Iris reddish brown. Bill, bare facial skin and legs yellow. Mouth blackish purple.

Habits, etc. Largely a ground-bird feeding on insects, and of a gregarious and sociable character.

Distribution. So far as regards Bangkok, this bird appears to be somewhat of a rarity as I have only obtained specimens on three occasions, in February, March and October. Mr. E. W. Trotter, however, informs me that he found it common in December at Klong Rangsit (only 12 miles due north of Bangkok) whence he sent me a specimen. Outside Bangkok I have obtained the bird at Koh Lak, and also observed it at Paknambo, while Gairdner records it from the Provinces of Ratburi and Petchaburi, and Barton from Raheng in Northern Siam.

32 (553). *Æthiopsar grandis*. *The Siamese Myna*.

Siamese, นกเขียวกดำ (Nok iang dam).

Description. Length up to 254 mm. (10 in). Body plumage black—the lower parts with a brownish tinge and the under tail-coverts

white; primaries black, with a large white patch near their bases, and all the wing feathers more or less glossed with bronze; tail black, broadly tipped with white.

Iris reddish brown. Bill orange yellow, paler at tip. Legs pale orange-yellow to dusky yellow.

Habits, etc. A fairly common resident species, occurring in pairs or small flocks, and easily recognised by its narrow frontal plumes, 18 mm. (.75 in.) long, rising from the forehead and curling backwards. It is frequently to be seen perched on the backs of Water Buffaloes, picking off and eating the ticks on those animals.

Distribution. Also recorded from Eastern and Northern Siam by Gyldenstolpe who describes it as "very common everywhere in favourable localities." Outside Bangkok I have obtained it at Koh Lak, while Gairdner records it from the Provinces of Ratburi and Petchaburi.

33 (556). *Sturnopastor superciliaris*. *The Burmese Pied Myna*.

Siamese, นกเขียง ไครง เต็ก (Nok iang-khrōng lek).*

Description. Length, up to 241 mm. (9.5 in). Forehead and crown black, closely streaked with white; patch behind eye white; chin, throat, upper breast, neck (all round) and back glossy black; lower rump white; edge of wing, lesser wing-coverts and edges of inner median wing-coverts white. Lower plumage from middle breast downwards white, with pale vinaceous tinge; under wing-coverts white.

Iris pale yellow to yellowish buff. Bill, basal half deep orange to orange-red, remainder dull white. Mouth black. Orbital skin orange-yellow to orange. Legs, dull whitish to dusky flesh.

Young birds have the bill and legs more or less dusky brown.

Habits, etc. This is also a common and familiar resident species. Like other Mynas it feeds mainly on the ground, on insects, and possesses a variety of loud, vivacious notes. It is generally to be seen in pairs or small flocks, but sometimes large numbers congregate together.

Distribution. Also recorded from Eastern and Central Siam by Gyldenstolpe under the name of *S. floweri*, which appears to be a

* Colloquially known as *Nok king-khrōng lek*.

geographical race of *S. superciliaris*; from Northern Siam by Mr. Emil Eisenhofer (Gyldenstolpe); and from the Ratburi and Petchaburi Monthon by Gairdner. I have likewise met with the bird at Koh Lak and at various places on the East coast of the Gulf of Siam as far south as Chantabun.

Family *MUSCICAPIDÆ*.—Flycatchers.

34 (562). *Siphia albicilla*. *The Eastern Red-breasted Flycatcher*.

Description. Length about 127 mm. (5 in). General colour of upper parts fulvous brown, darker on the head, and with upper tail-coverts black; quills brown, the primaries very narrowly, the other wing-feathers more broadly, edged paler; the two middle pair of tail-feathers wholly blackish, the others with the basal half or more white. Chin and throat chestnut in the male, ashy white in the female; remainder of lower plumage ashy white.

Iris dark brown. Bill dark brown, except base of lower mandible which is brownish flesh. Mouth dull yellow. Legs and feet dark brown to blackish.

Habits, etc. This bird is a cold weather visitor to Siam and occurs in Bangkok from October to February, though not, I think, in any large numbers. It is of an active and wary disposition, and usually flits away as one approaches, the while uttering its grating little note, *chr-r-r*, which is unmistakable. It usually keeps to low trees and bushes, hunting for small insects, but I have observed it descend to the ground for that purpose—flitting back again to a convenient perch near by, as soon as the insect has been captured.

Distribution. Also recorded from Northern Siam (Gyldenstolpe), while I have likewise obtained it at Sriracha in December.

35 579). *Stoparola melanops*. *The Verditer Flycatcher*.

Description. Length up to 165 mm. (6.5 in). *Male*. Whole plumage verditer-blue, with the exception of the lores, feathers in front of the eye and those at the base of the lower mandible, which are black; all wing-feathers black on inner webs; tail blue, the shafts black and the inner webs edged with blackish brown. Under tail-coverts fringed with white. *Female*. Very similar to male, but the blue of the body-plumage is duller, the lores are brown, and the chin and throat are whitish.

Iris dark brown. Bill and legs black. Mouth flesh-colour to dusky flesh.

Habits, etc. A cold weather visitor to Bangkok, occurring here somewhat sparingly from October or November to February. As far as my observations go, it usually keeps well up in trees, preferably large ones, though I have on two occasions shot the bird while perched on the top of a small tree in a clearing. It takes its prey (small insects) in the true flycatcher manner, by darting on it in the air from its perch, to which it returns to devour its capture. I have never seen one on the ground.

Distribution. Outside Bangkok I have obtained this bird at Sriracha in December, while Gyldenstolpe also records it from Northern Siam where he found it "rather rare."

36. (588). *Alseonax latirostris*. *The Brown Flycatcher*.

Description. Length about 127 mm (5 in.). Upper plumage ashy brown, darker on the head and paler on the rump and upper tail-coverts; tail dark brown, the outer feathers very narrowly tipped with whitish; quills dark brown, all but the primaries edged with ashy white, more broadly on those nearer the body; lores and a ring round the eye whitish. Lower plumage ashy white.

Irish brown. Bill very dark brown, except base of lower mandible which is dull yellow. Mouth yellow. Legs blackish.

Habits, etc. This is also a seasonal visitor to Bangkok, occurring from August to February or later. It has the usual flycatcher habits, and takes its prey in the air by a short dart from a perch. I have not found the bird at all common here.

Distribution. Appears to be widely distributed, as it is also recorded from Trang by Robinson and Kloss, and from Northern Siam by Mr. Emil Eisenhofer (Gyldenstolpe), while I obtained a specimen at Sriracha in October.

*37 (—). *Tersiphone incii*. *The Chinese Paradise Flycatcher*.

Description. † *Male.* Length 222 mm. (8.75 in.). Head and neck all round black, richly glossed with blue; remainder of upper plumage rich chestnut, the tail paler chestnut; primaries and second-

† The description here given is taken from the two specimens in my collection, and is not necessarily of general application.

aries brown, edged with chestnut; tertiaries wholly chestnut, with black shafts. Lower plumage, from breast to middle of abdomen, grey, paling to whitish on lower abdomen; lower tail-coverts white, with rufous tinge. *Female*. Somewhat similar to male, but smaller in size (190 mm. or 7.5 in.), the chestnut of the upper plumage paler and the grey of the lower plumage darker.

Distribution. There appears to be no previous record of this species in Siam. I obtained two specimens in my garden, one in 1913 (? July or September) and other in September 1914, and both have been identified by Mr. H. C. Robinson. *T. incii* is a Chinese form which extends into the Malay Peninsula as a winter visitor (Robinson, *A Handlist of the Birds of the Malay Peninsula, South of the Isthmus of Kra*, 1910, p. 13), so it would appear that the birds procured here by me were on migration. If this be the case, individuals ought also to be obtained at the end of the cold weather, on their return journey eastwards.

38 (601). *Hypothymis azurea*. *The Indian Black-naped Flycatcher*.

Description. Length about 165 mm. (6.5 in.), *Male*. Head and neck all round azure blue, except a patch on the nape, the extreme edge of the forehead and a narrow crescentic bar across the base of the neck below, which are black; remainder of upper plumage duller blue; wings dark brown, edged with blue; tail brown, suffused with blue on the median pair of feathers and on the outer webs of the others. Breast blue, shading off into white on abdomen and under tail-coverts. *Female*. Head and neck all round dull blue; back, wings, rump, upper tail-coverts and tail brown, the outer webs of the quills and the middle tail-feathers faintly washed with blue. Breast ashy blue; abdomen and under tail-coverts dull white, the flanks grey.

Iris dark brown. Bill very dark blue. Mouth greenish yellow. Legs bluish plumbeous to dark blue.

Habits, etc. A cold weather visitor to Bangkok, where it appears to occur from October to February, though it is not common. Its habits are similar to those of the other flycatchers, *i. e.*, it feeds on small insects which it takes in the air by a sudden dart from a perch. As far as my experience goes, the bird is a frequenter of dark undergrowth in well-wooded tracts, and avoids open country and high trees.

It is consequently only to be met with, as a rule, in a few suitable localities in the outskirts of Bangkok.

Distribution. Apparently widely distributed, as it is also recorded from Trang (Robinson and Kloss); from Northern Siam (Gyldensolpe); and from the Ratburi and Petchaburi Monthons (Gairdner); while I have obtained it on the East coast of the Gulf of Siam in October.

39 (606). *Rhipidura javanica*. *The Java Fantail Flycatcher*.

Siamese, นกหางแพน (Nok hāng p'hēn).

Description. Length up to 190 mm. (7.5. in). *Male.* Forehead, crown and sides of head sooty brown; the remainder of the upper plumage (including wings) brown, suffused with rufous; tail dark brown, the four outer pairs of tail-feathers broadly, the pair next to them narrowly, tipped with white; a short and half-concealed supercilium pure white. Chin, a band across the breast, and the sides of the breast blackish brown; remainder of lower plumage white, tinged with buff. *Female.* Somewhat smaller, upper plumage rather duller, and lower plumage more buff than the male.

Iris dark brown. Bill black, base of lower mandible dusky flesh-colour. Legs blackish brown to black, the soles dusky greenish flesh-colour.

Habits, etc. A permanent resident in Bangkok, and one of the commonest birds in our gardens, where its liveliness and its habit of flirting and dancing about with outspread tail (hence its name of Fantail Flycatcher) and half-opened wings, make it a most noticeable and attractive little bird. Its note is a joyous one, usually of five rather slowly drawn-out syllables, *cheech che-weech che-weech*.

The food of this bird consists, of course, of insects, which it pursues and seizes in the air, in the usual flycatcher manner, by darting at it from a branch, but the Java Fantail Flycatcher is also frequently to be seen on the ground dancing along with outstretched tail and wings in the manner above described.

Distribution. Apart from Bangkok, this bird appears, so far, to have been recorded only by Gairdner from the Provinces of Ratburi and Petchaburi, but I have met with it at Sriracha, Ayuthia and Koh Lak, at both of which last-named places I found it common.

(To be continued).