



## ANIMAL SECTION - BIRDS

### GOULDIAN FINCH

#### ABOUT

The Gouldian Finch (*Erythrura gouldiae*) is a medium-sized bird that is only found in the northern savannas region of Australia. It is highly colorful, with a purple chest, yellow breast, and green back. The bird's legs and feet are yellow and it sports a long pointed tail. Females are not as colorful as males, and young finches are a dull green. These finches can have black, red, or yellow faces. In the dry season, the birds remain in their breeding habitat of hilly woodlands, then move to a variety of woodland types in nearby lowland country during wet season. Late in the wet season, this species finds hollows for nesting to raise their young, preferring those formed by termites in northern white gum and salmon gum trees near water. The female lays four or more eggs and both parents are involved in raising the chicks. Three clutches of eggs can be laid in a season. They usually breed in the second part of the rainy season because there is plenty of grass seed and insects to eat.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The Gouldian Finch is endangered in its natural habitat, however in captivity it is one of the most prized birds to have. In the past, populations were widely distributed, but they are confined now to isolated areas in the top end of the Northern Territory and Kimberley region of Western Australia. The bird relies on fire in the dry season to burn the undergrowth so they can find seeds on the ground. The greatest threat to this gorgeous bird is the changes to habitat as a result of changing fire patterns and grazing by cattle, horses and pigs, which affect their food source. In the wild these birds are quiet and like to be in unpopulated areas. Their diet during the wet season is seed from the perennial grass. During the dry season it eats seeds off the annual spear grass. John Gould discovered this finch and named the bird the Lady Gouldian Finch after his late wife –which has since been shortened.

For more detailed information visit: [www.wwf.org.au](http://www.wwf.org.au)

#### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Where in Australia is the Gouldian Finch found?

- a) Queensland
- b) The Barrier Reef
- c) Northern Territory and Kimberley region
- d) Kakadu National Park

Answer is C

