

# GOULDIAN FINCH



# Introduce

The **Gouldian finch** (*Chloebia gouldiae*), also known as the **Lady Gouldian finch**, **Gould's finch** or the **rainbow finch**, is a colourful passerine bird that is native to Australia.

## Description

Both sexes are brightly coloured with black, green, yellow, and red markings. The females tend to be less brightly coloured. One major difference between the sexes is that the male's chest is purple, while the female's is a lighter mauve.

Gouldian finches are about 125–140 mm long. Gouldian finches' heads may be red, black, or yellow. Formerly considered three different kinds of finches, it is now known that these are colour variants that exist in the wild. Selective breeding has also developed mutations (blue, yellow and silver instead of a green back) in both body and breast colour.

There are several "prominent rounded tubercles" with an "opalescent lustre" at the back of the gape. These tubercles are commonly (and incorrectly) described as phosphorescent in spite of much scientific evidence to the contrary. It is believed that these tubercles simply reflect light and are not luminescent.

## Distribution and habitat

Prior to the Australian government's ban on the export of Australian fauna, Gouldian finches were exported worldwide. These birds have resulted in viable breeding populations being held in many countries.

## Behaviour

Outside the breeding season, Gouldian finches often join mixed flocks consisting of long-tailed finches and masked finches. Flocks can consist of up to 1,000–2,000 individuals. During the breeding season, they are normally found on rough scree slopes where vegetation is sparse. In the dry season, they are much more nomadic and will move to wherever their food and water can be found.