

The Gouldian Finch

Background

Gouldian Finches are certainly the most colorful birds in the world. They are also known as Rainbow Finches for obvious reasons. One writer calls them “handcrafted statuettes” of beauty, emphasizing their sumptuous color schemes and standoffishness as pets. They are beautiful - and they know it - which makes them the little divas of the avian world. A few of their habits confirm this idea.



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Above all, *they don't like to be handled by humans!* Their “Don't touch the merchandise”

attitude spans the entire species. Fittingly, they are highly sensitive creatures and easily stressed, so they love the safety of their cages, and they thrive best at a pleasant seventy degrees room temperature. Gouldian Finches also tend toward delicate foods (tasty berries, dandelion greens, lettuce) rather than the hard nuts and briars most other finches eat, and they have smooth voices that chirp pleasantly rather than sing. Perfect divas.

By all accounts, most of them are also fairly negligent parents, to the point that it is best to make sure they live with other finches who can act as foster parents to their babies! On the positive side, they are highly social birds and strictly monogamous.



Origin

Gouldian Finches take their name from James Gould, an English ornithologist who identified the species in 1841. He named them the “Lady Gouldian Finches” in honor of his wife, Lady Elizabeth Gould. They are natives of the grasslands of northern Australia, particularly the Northern Territory and parts of Queensland and Western Australia. Gould exported the species to Europe, and the beautiful little species actually flourished in captivity.

Avian Facts

- There are only about 2500 Gouldians left in the wild; they are considered an endangered species in Australia;
- Their colorings become richer and more varied in captivity producing color schemes that are found rarely in their natural habitat (for example, only 1% of Gouldians in nature have orange heads, as opposed to a much higher percentage in captivity);

captivity producing color schemes that are found rarely in their natural habitat (for example, only 1% of Gouldians in nature have orange heads, as opposed to a much higher percentage in captivity);

• Gouldian Finches have a high metabolism and need a lot of exercise in order to thrive, which is why it is always recommended to keep them in large cages so they can flit about regularly, burn calories, and advertise their beauty;

• Their feathers are astonishingly brilliant: purple, red, yellow, blue, white, lilac, green, and silver although some are pastel shades; Gouldians are categorized by their head colors, red, black, and yellow/orange, rather than their plumage; the juveniles have olive color plumage until they molt and put on their adult diva outfits. *(Images 1 and 3: Wikimedia Commons)*



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