

WHAT IS A FINCH?

Finches as small colourful birds that eat seeds. They are birds from Waxbills, Grass-Finch and Mannikins groups, of the Estrildidae family. Grass-finches have long tails while Mannikins are more robust. Finches are social and can often be found in flocks. Finches have distinct colours and are lively in behaviour. Australian finches have become popular aviary birds across the world. Finches can live for up to 7 years.

Gouldian Finches were once common across northern Australia; now only 2,500 exist in the wild living in flocks of less than 100 birds. Gouldian finches can still be found in the Kimberley; however they are threatened by changed fire regime.

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”



WHAT IS A FINCH?

Key characteristics to look for when identifying species:

Colour and pattern

Shape of body

Length of tail

Shape and colour of bill

There are 11 finches found in the Kimberley.

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

Painted Finch (Firetail)

FINCH 1



“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”



Painted Finch

Emblema pictum

Size: 10-12 cm

Distinguishing features: Red face, chin, mid belly and rump; Brown head and back; Flanks black and spotted with white; Long bill with red tip; and Female is duller in face with larger white spots.

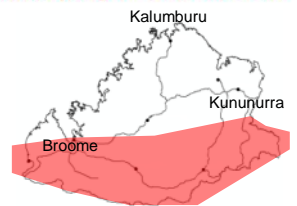
Habitat: Mainly stony hills also gorges and spinifex.

Distribution: Central WA, NT and SA.

Call: Harsh ‘trut...’

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au



Gouldian Finch

FINCH 2



ENDANGERED

© Save the Gouldian Fund

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”



Gouldian Finch

Erythrura gouldiae

Size: 14 cm

Distinguishing features: Bright grass green along back with blue rump; Purple chest and yellow abdomen; Black tail; Face black, can also be red or yellow; White bill with red tip; and Females are duller, more olive. **Habitat:** Open woodland and grassland.

Distribution: Kimberley, northern NT and QLD.

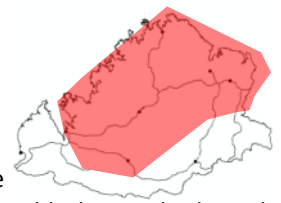
Status: Endangered, threat changed fire regime.

Call: ‘sssitt’

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au

www.savethegouldian.org



COMMUNITY PHOTO!

Pictorella Mannikin

FINCH 3



COMMON SPECIES

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”



Pictorella Mannikin

Heteromunia pectoralis

Size: 11 cm

Distinguishing features: Black mask with thick blue bill; Reddish brown body with white breast mottled black; White spots on wings; Yellow and black tail; Females have brownish black face, more black on breast; Juvenile has dark bill and is grey.

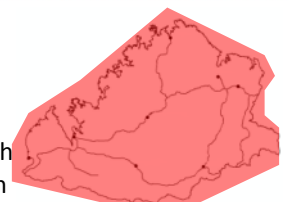
Habitat: Woodland and tussock grassland.

Distribution: Kimberley, NT and QLD.

Call: Loud, “...teet...”

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au



Chestnut breasted Mannikin FINCH 4



© Mel Mitchell

COMMON SPECIES

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

Kimberley Toad Busters

**Chestnut breasted Mannikin
*Lonchura castaneothorax***

Size: 10 cm

Distinguishing features: Solid finch; Black face and chin; Thick silver grey bill; Brown back; Orange rump and light yellow tail; Bright chestnut breast; white abdomen with black band; Female is paler; Juvenile has black bill and olive brown.

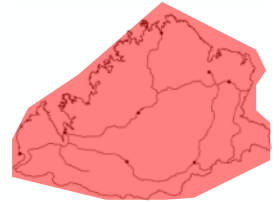
Habitat: Reed beds.

Distribution: Kimberley, NT, QLD and NSW.

Call: Like a bell “...teeet...”

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au



Yellow-rumped Mannikin FINCH 5



© Michael Todd

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

Kimberley Toad Busters

**Yellow-rumped Mannikin
*Lonchura flaviprymna***

Size: 10 cm

Distinguishing features: Solid finch; Thick greyish bill; Head pale grey; Back and wings brown; Cream underside; Yellow brown rump and tail; Black undertail; Juvenile has black bill and paler underside.

Habitat: Reed beds and tall crops.

Distribution: East Kimberley to Darwin.

Call: Like a bell “...teeet...”

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au

www.wildlifing.com



Crimson Finch FINCH 6



© James Adam

COMMON SPECIES

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

Kimberley Toad Busters

**Crimson Finch
*Neochmia phaeton***

Size: 12-14 cm

Distinguishing features: Slender; Upright; Deep crimson beak, face, abdomen and tail; Flicks long tail; Fine white spots on flanks; Male darker red; Female and juvenile more brown/red.

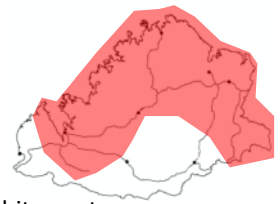
Habitat: Watercourses, tall reeds/grass, Pandanus, cane fields, drainage channels.

Distribution: Kimberley, northern NT and QLD.

Call: Piercing tick “che...che..che”

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au



COMMUNITY PHOTO!

Star Finch FINCH 7



© Dean Goodgame

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

Kimberley Toad Busters

**Star Finch
*Neochmia ruficauda subclarescens***

Size: 10-12 cm

Distinguishing features: Red face and Chin; Olive back and yellow-olive Underside; Chest, rump, flanks and tail finely spotted with white; Female only has red on cheeks and chin; Juveniles paler with black bill.

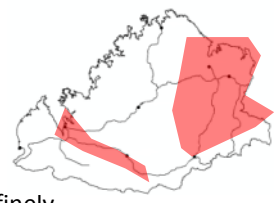
Habitat: Grasslands.

Distribution: Kimberley and northern NT. Sub-Species in QLD, NSW.

Call: Piercing “seeet”

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au



Long-tailed Finch



© Mel Mitchell

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

FINCH 8

COMMON SPECIES



Kimberley Toad Busters

Long-tailed Finch or Blackheart Finch

Poephila acuticauda

Size: 15-16 cm

Distinguishing features: Bill varies from yellow to red; Body fawn/tan with powder blue head; Black between eyes and beak (lores); Black bib; Long sharply tapered tail; White rump (seen in flight); and Pink/orange legs.

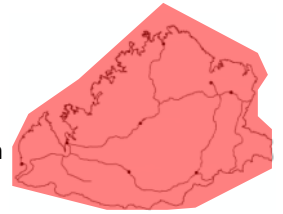
Habitat: Eucalypt spinifex grasslands; woodlands near creeks.

Distribution: Kimberley, Northern NT, NW QLD.

Call: High pitch soft “psssst”, long, loud whistle.

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au



Masked Finch

FINCH 9



© Andrew Walton

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

COMMON SPECIES



Kimberley Toad Busters

Masked Finch

Poephila personata

Size: 12 – 13.5 cm

Distinguishing features: Heavy, waxy yellow bill; Black face and chin; Light brown back with lighter abdomen; White rump with long black tail; Flicks tail; and Female has less black on chin and shorter tail.

Habitat: Eucalypt and Melaleuca paperbark woodland.

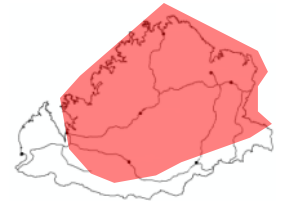
Distribution: Kimberley, northern NT and northern QLD.

Call: Soft song, long ‘tiat and soft ‘tet.’

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au

www.topendpictures.com



COMMUNITY PHOTO!

Double-barred Finch

FINCH 10



© Ray Lanaghan

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

COMMON SPECIES



Kimberley Toad Busters

Double barred Finch

Taeniopygia bichenovii

Size: 10-11 cm

Distinguishing features: Brownish grey and white; bill blue/grey; black wings spotted; black tail; white underneath; distinct with two narrow black bands above and below chest and white face.

Habitat: Varied; open forest to grasslands and beside creeks.

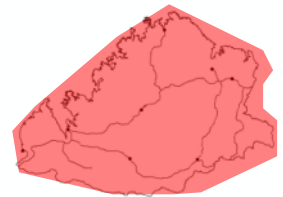
Common in backyards.

Distribution: Kimberley, NT, QLD and NSW.

Call: Nasal whine “tiaah...tiaah.”

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au



COMMUNITY PHOTO!

Zebra Finch

FINCH 11



© Katrina Nissen

Male

“WHAT’S IN YOUR BACKYARD?”

COMMON SPECIES



Kimberley Toad Busters

Zebra Finch

Taeniopygia guttata

Size: 10 cm

Distinguishing features: White rump with zebra-barred tail; black and white rear stripes on tail; male orange ear patch and paler abdomen; female grey/tan abdomen; and Juvenile has dark beak.

Habitat: Open savanna.

Call: similar to *T. bichenovii* (Double Barred Finch) not as high pitch; nasal twang “tiaaah...tiaaah”

Ref: Simpson K. & Day N. “Field Guide to the Birds of Australia”

www.canetoads.com.au

