

The Australian Finch Society



THE AUSTRALIAN FINCH SOCIETY

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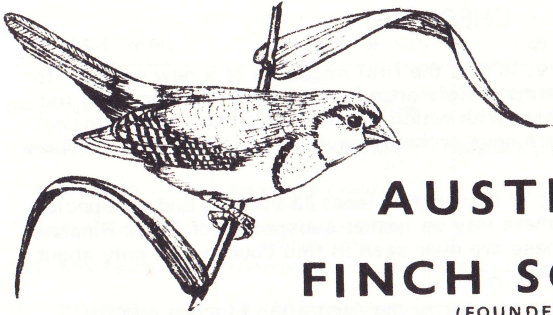
Auditors : MRS. J. MIZEN, MRS. B. ILES

All correspondence, subscriptions and donations should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. B. R. Thomas, 14 Green Lane, Rainford, Lancs.

All correspondence requiring a reply should be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope.

Articles of interest, letters, notes and queries are requested by the Editor who is not, however, responsible for any opinions expressed.

IT IS THE SINCERE HOPE OF THE OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE THAT MEMBERS WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO CONTACT EACH OTHER, EITHER BY A PERSONAL CALL, OR BY LETTER. WE FEEL SURE THAT ALL MEMBERS WILL BE MADE VERY WELCOME.



THE AUSTRALIAN FINCH SOCIETY

(FOUNDED 1971)

Vol. 1 No. 1

December, 1971

Price 10p

LETTER from the EDITOR

Dear Members,

I am pleased to take the opportunity to thank those members who have helped us so much in the production of this magazine, the first I hope of many.....Your Vice-Chairman Gordon Iles for the loan of his artist who produced the original of the outer cover and to Gordon for his painstaking work in the first production.....To Norman Heap who has supplied us with one of our first write-ups on sex linkage and colour inheritance of the Gouldian, he also has been responsible for the printing of the interior pages.....To Barrie Thomas for his check list of the Australian Finches, into which a lot of research has gone.

Now as we all well know the Gouldian is probably the most written-of species of the Australian Finch and I am sure a lot more will be written about it, and having 'played' with them for 14 years I still enjoy reading about them. But of course we don't want to fill this magazine with Gouldian features. I have just had a look at the members list and I find we are a very mixed bunch, regarding the types we keep. So let us hear from you members who have the numbers 2-15 placed after your name.

Our membership as yet is not large but is growing weekly. Can I suggest that we all make a concerted effort to enrol a new member in the ensuing weeks; we must all know of someone who could be persuaded to join our ranks.

May I conclude by wishing all our Members a Very Happy Christmas and many successes in the coming year.

A. GIBSON

CHECK LIST

I thought it necessary, in this the first magazine of a new society, to lay down as it were our 'Terms of Reference,' in the form of a complete list of the species and subspecies with which we are concerned. Many are familiar favourites but others have probably never been seen by our members, let alone kept by them.

I was rather surprised to find that at least 33 species and subspecies fall within our scope (and there may be further subspecies of Parrot Finches) and yet less than half of these are ever seen in this country and only about a third are regularly available.

The list is divided into two parts, the Australian Finches and the Parrot Finches. Only two birds overlap this division, the Gouldian Finch, which most authorities regard now as a Parrot Finch and not a Grass Finch, and the Blue-faced Parrot Finch which is the only true Erythrura species which occurs on the Australian mainland.

I have attempted to present the lists roughly in order of availability and have used the following letters as a guide to same.

Regularly available: A Sometimes available: S
Rarely available: R Virtually unknown: U



COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAMES	OTHER NAMES	AVAILABILITY
Longtailed Finch	<i>Poephila acuticauda acuticauda</i>		A
Subspecies	<i>Poephila acuticauda hecki</i>	Heck's Finch	A
Star Finch	<i>Bathilda ruficauda ruficauda</i>	Ruficauda Finch	A
Subspecies	<i>Bathilda ruficauda clarescens</i>		?
Diamond Sparrow	<i>Zonæginthus guttatus</i>	Diamond Fire-tail	A
Bicheno Finch	<i>Stizoptera bichenovii bichenovii</i>	Double-bar or Owl Finch	A
Subspecies	<i>Stizoptera bichenovii annulosa</i>	Black-ringed Finch	U
Parson Finch	<i>Poephila cincta cincta</i>	Black-throated Finch	A
Subspecies	<i>Poephila cincta atropygialis</i>	Diggles' Finch	R
Subspecies	<i>Poephila cincta nigropecta</i>		U
Cherry Finch	<i>Aidemopsyne modesta</i>	Plum-headed Finch	A
Masked Finch	<i>Poephila personata personata</i>		S
Subspecies	<i>Poephila personata Leucotis</i>	White-eared grass Finch	U
Chestnut-breasted Finch	<i>Lonchura castaneothorax castaneothorax</i>	Barley Bird	A
Subspecies	<i>Lonchura castaneothorax assimilis</i>		?
Painted Finch	<i>Emblema Picta</i>		R
Red-eared Firetail Finch	<i>Zonæginthus ocellatus</i>		U

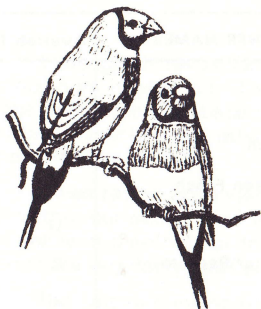
COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAMES	OTHER NAMES	Availability
Beautiful Firetail-Finch	<i>Zonaeginthus bellus</i>		U
Crimson Finch	<i>Neochmia phaeton phaeton</i>	Blood Finch	U
Subspecies	<i>Neochmia phaeton albiventer</i>	Pale Crimson Finch	U
Subspecies	<i>Neochmia phaeton evangelinae</i>		U
Pictorella Finch	<i>Heteromunia pectoralis</i>	Pectoralis or Pectoral Finch	R
Yellow-rumped Finch	<i>Lonchura flaviprymna</i>		R
Sydney Waxbill	<i>Aegintha temporalis temporalis</i>	Red-browed Finch	U
Subspecies	<i>Aegintha temporalis loftyi</i>		U
Subspecies	<i>Aegintha temporalis minor</i>		U
Gouldian Finch	<i>Chloebia gouldiae</i>		A
Blue-faced Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura trichroa</i>	Blue-headed or Tri-coloured	S
Pintail Nonpareil	<i>Erythrura prasina</i>	Pin-tailed Parrot Finch	A
Red-headed Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura psittacea</i>	Red-throated or Common	S
Tri-coloured Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura tricolor</i>		S
Peale's Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura Pealei</i>	Short-tailed or Fiji	S
Royal Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura cyanovirens cyanovirens</i>	Blue-bellied or Red-headed	S
Subspecies	<i>Erythrura cyanovirens regia</i>		?
Papuan Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura Papuana</i>		U
Green-faced Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura viridifacies</i>	Green-headed or Manilla	U
Black-faced Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura Kleinschmidti</i>	Pink-billed	U
Mt. Katanglad Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura Coloris</i>		U
Green Parrot Finch	<i>Erythrura hyperhythra</i>	Bamboo, Green-tailed or Mountain	U

It will be apparent that some confusion exists with regard to the common names of the *Erythrura* species, since the name Tri-coloured may be applied to both *E. trichroa* and *E. tricolor*; the Red-headed Parrot Finch on the other hand may be either *E. psittacea* or *E. cyanovirens*. Several of our members keep these birds and I feel that it would be an advantage if, as a society, we cleared up these anomalies and adopted standard English names.

Personally I should also like to see some other irregularities 'ironed out,' namely that the Diamond firetail should lose its title of 'Sparrow' and the orange-headed Gouldian should cease to be called yellow-headed.

I would welcome correspondence through these columns on this matter, and on any other discrepancies which may have occurred to other members.

BARRIE R. THOMAS



Colour Inheritance and Sex Linkage in Gouldians (1)

By N. HEAP

An Introduction

I have been invited to contribute a series of articles on this fascinating aspect and I will endeavour to give my own views and theories in the light of many years of Gouldian breeding with the accent in later years on a great amount of experimental colour breeding.

But theory is only the starting point; we must provide as much recorded and documented evidence to support our theories so that we establish as many facts as possible and pass these on to the benefit of all.

I promise to keep these notes as simple and easy to understand as possible. Forgive the symbols however, but these really are necessary, and save such a lot of space. If you find a sentence or paragraph difficult to understand, read it over and over again. If it still does not make sense, write me and I'll do my best to explain in a different way. I invite constructive criticism and any points occurring could be discussed in ensuing articles.

In this and future notes I shall rarely mention the word *Gouldian*. We will presume when I say '*bird*' I refer exclusively to Gouldians. Similarly when I say '*red*' I mean a red-headed Gouldian; a '*black*' will mean a black-headed Gouldian, and a '*yellow*' a yellow-headed Gouldian.

THE RED-BLACK INVOLVEMENT

A red and a black-headed bird form a sex-linked pair, red being dominant and black recessive. By this we mean if a red cock is paired to a black hen all the offspring will be red. Red visually, or in appearance, that is. But something unseen has happened to the offspring of this mating. By the genetic process a factor from the hen for black has transferred itself to the young cocks and this factor for black has become established on one of its pair of sex chromosomes. Fanciers call this a '*split*' for black, or red/black. All the young hens from this mating are red; they cannot carry the sex-linked or split factor for black as we shall see later.

Now, at this point, we introduce another known fact: that each cock bird has one pair of sex chromosomes (or x-chromosomes as they are called). Hens have only one x-chromosome on their pairing. Both x-chromosomes in the cock's make-up can carry two colour factors: *RR* (red and dominant), *rr* (black or recessive), or *Rr* (red/black). Notice that I have given the red or dominant a capital *R* and the black or recessive a small *r*. So, in future, when I refer to *RR* you will know that these represent the two red or dominant factors on the cock's x-chromosome pairing and *rr* as the two recessive factors on the cock bird's x-chromosome pairing.

We have now introduced symbols and seen that the dominant *R* and recessive *r* characters can be used to help us form associations with colours and *split* colours. We have also learned that the cock bird has *space* on both his x-chromosomes *XX* and the hen's *XY*). This *Y* has a special function in determining the sex of the offspring, but its action is not relevant at this stage. Instead I want you to substitute a capital *O* for the *Y* so the *O* can represent the absence of the second chromosome on the female's pairing. We can then represent in symbol form the hen's colour make-up: *RO* (red) and *rO* (black). As we have previously seen, she has only one *place* on her x-chromosome pairing for either *R* or *r*, an important fact now emerges: a red hen cannot be split for black because she cannot accommodate a second colour factor on her x-chromosome pair.

We now introduce another fact at this point regarding the hen. We know she has only one place for colour on her x-chromosome pairing; the other half of the pair is symbolised with a '*Y*'. (Geneticists call the cock bird's pair of x-chromosomes *XX* and the hen's *XY*). This *Y* has a special function in determining the sex of the offspring, but its action is not relevant at this stage. Instead I want you to substitute a capital *O* for the *Y* so the *O* can represent the absence of the second chromosome on the female's pairing. We can then represent in symbol form the hen's colour make-up: *RO* (red) and *rO* (black). As we have previously seen, she has only one *place* on her x-chromosome pairing for either *R* or *r*, an important fact now emerges: a red hen cannot be split for black because she cannot accommodate a second colour factor on her x-chromosome pair.

As symbols have helped us so far to associate colours, let us progress further and add sex to the symbols:

<i>RR</i> - Red cock	<i>RO</i> - Red hen
<i>Rr</i> - Red/black cock	<i>rO</i> - Black hen
<i>rr</i> - Black cock	

THE YELLOW-HEADED INVOLVEMENT

As in the previous red/black combination, we know that, as chromosomes appear in pairs throughout the animal world so can other pairs of chromosomes carry certain other characteristics, including colour. Suppose for instance another pair of chromosomes (called autosomes) did contain *space* or provide an allele as it is called for yellow-headedness, then it would be found on this type of chromosome pairing. It would also be possible for one or two yellow genes to settle there after mating, giving single or double '*doses*' of yellow.

Let us suppose either a single or double *dose* of yellow could appear on this autosome pair, then we can transfer this happening into symbols. As I remarked earlier there has to be a *vehicle* or allele to carry the yellow gene in single or double *dose* from one or both transmitting parents. Simplified we can say that *Y* represents the allele for yellow and *y* the yellow gene itself. *YY* therefore represents the autosome pairing.

As this affects both cocks and hens we arrive at an extension of our table:

<u>COCKS</u>	<i>RRYY</i> - Red	<u>HENS</u>	<i>ROYY</i> - Red
	<i>RRYy</i> - Red/yellow		<i>ROYy</i> - Red/yellow
	<i>RrYY</i> - Red/black		<i>rOYY</i> - Black
	<i>RrYy</i> - Red/yellow/black		
	<i>RRyy</i> - Yellow		<i>ROyy</i> - Yellow
	<i>Rryy</i> - Yellow/black		

The next article by Mr. Heap will deal with the controversial Yellow-Black involvement, with his reasons for identifying three separate types of Black-headed birds.

THE PICTORELLA FINCH

By C. ROBERTS, Kooweerup, Victoria (Reprinted from Australian Aviculture)

The Pictorella Finch is my favourite Australian Finch, being beautiful, friendly and non-aggressive. It is also called the White-breasted Finch, White-breasted Munia and Pectoral Finch. A description of this Finch is: grey above, tail darker, buff line across eye to sides of neck; throat and sides of head black; chest white with black bars giving a scaly appearance, a few black and white bars on flanks, beak bluish-grey, feet fleshy colour. The hen has dark areas on face and throat brown, compared to the glossy black of the cock, skull narrower and more white than black in breast patch. The length is from 4" to 4½".

The distribution of this Finch is across tropical Northern Australia, from about Derby across the Kimberleys and Northern Australia to Queensland. The exact southern extent of the bird's range is not known. Open savannah country is the chief haunt of these nomadic Finches. The Pictorella Finch has completely adapted itself to the arid Australian environment. Then it has developed peculiarities, mainly in behaviour, differing greatly from the other Australian Finches. The Pictorella inhabits open grass plains, with only a few scattered bushes, spending most of its time on the ground. It prefers the vicinity of creeks and waterholes, but sometimes is met far away from any surface water. They are nomadic Finches, appearing in districts where they have never been recorded before or deserting old haunts suddenly. Flocks of up to 200 or so of these Finches may be seen feeding on the ground or climbing the grass stalks to reach the seeding heads.

During the wet season the birds are scattered all over the country, whilst in times of drought immense flocks are driven nearer the coastal districts, where they congregate with other species, mostly Chestnut Breasts and Yellow Rumps. This is where the Pictorellas are trapped, at water holes when the droughts are on.

The Pictorella is a very good aviary bird, being docile and friendly. It is hardy and very attractive and will live in an aviary for up to seven or eight years. In the aviary it spends a lot of its time on the ground or quietly perched in a sunny position, usually in a corner. Pictorellas should not be kept in cages. If put in an aviary they can be almost ideal aviary birds, especially in a mixed collection, as they are completely peaceful towards other inmates. I once kept Pictorellas in a mixed collection, but now breed them on the colony system, as this brings better results. The aviary should be well planted with low bushes and different types of grasses, in order to give the birds dense corners in which to retire and build their nests. Offering dense cover is really the only way in which they become tame, otherwise they will never settle down. Seeing that this species does not build roosting nests it should not be left in outdoor aviaries during the winter. At least the birds should be able to retire to a sheltered room. As the Pictorella spends most of its time on the ground, care should be taken to ensure that the ground of the aviary never becomes too wet or too cold. Part of the accommodation should be provided with dry sandy soil.

In the Pictorella Finch one finds an entirely different mating display compared to the other Australian grass finches and invariably on the ground. Sometimes a straw is used, but not in the same manner as other Australian grass finches, this time being shortish and held in front of the bird. The male commences to dance in hopping jumps around the hen in a circle roughly two feet in diameter. This is

gradually reduced, and in so doing the tempo of the display is quickened. The hen remains still, not turning to follow the male, but is very aware of the proceedings. The male then drops his piece of grass and suddenly hops around the back of the female until his body is just parallel to her's. In this position, with the tail still fanned out, but slightly turned toward's the female, the male makes a deep bow. He then again hops around the back of the female until he stands parallel with her on the other side, again indulging in a deep bow. This procedure may be repeated several times until the female starts to quiver her tail, upon which mating takes place. The birds do not fly away immediately, but usually a one-sided squabble takes place with the hen being the aggressor. Certainly the courtship display of the *Pictorella* belongs to the most strongly stereotyped and most highly behavioural patterns of grass finches.

For any breeding success, you will have to have a well-planted aviary which offers a maximum of cover. I have found that if given the choice the birds will prefer to build a proper nest in a low bush or tussock of grass. Sometimes they use old nests built by other species of finches. For nesting construction most pairs will build with dried grasses of different qualities. Sometimes feathers are used in the final lining. As is usual in dry country grass finches, the nest is a somewhat untidy bulky, bottle-shaped structure, without an entrance tunnel. There is only a tiny entrance hole. Four to six eggs are normally laid and incubation takes 14 days. Both birds share in the brooding of the young.

(TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE)

SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Society is delighted to announce that Mr. Robin Restall, F.Z.S., at present in Madrid, has agreed to become our first Vice President, and we look forward enthusiastically to articles from his pen in future issues of the Magazine.

Would all members who have not completed their application form stating birds kept, please try to do so, in order that our records may be comprehensive.

Will anyone who has bred Longtails x Parson Finches, please get in touch with Mr. George Cooper of Stockport.

Mr. Percy Kinchington has generously donated a magnificent painting, by his son, of a pair of Red-headed Gouldians to the Society. Members who also subscribe to the Foreign Bird League will be familiar with the work of Mr. Kinchington, and its extremely high standard.

Mr. Kinchington has suggested that this work should be disposed of to swell the funds of the Society and suggestions as to how this might best be achieved will be welcomed by the Secretary.

SALES AND WANTS

WANTED:

H. Parry: Gouldians and/or Bichenos; will exchange for Diamonds or Longtails.
F. Pickering: Young English-bred Gouldians.
Major Collett: R/H Parrot Finches and hen Gouldian.
P. Grantham R/H or B/H Gouldians.
G. J. Norton: Hen Gouldian.
D. J. Style: Gouldians and Star Finches.
A. Andrews: Gouldians; Hecks, Diamonds.

SALES: G.R. Cooper: Young English-bred Diamonds.

If any member has surplus birds, and cares to contact the Secretary, he will attempt to place them in contact with prospective purchasers.

NEW MEMBERS up to and including December 10th 1971

R. RESTALL, Marmel Montilla 7, Madrid 16 (Vice President)
J. R. HENDERSON, 'Reef Point', Fishermans Walk, Bembridge 10W
Mr. & Mrs. D. HOOD, 14 Middlebrook Lane, Thorne, Nr. Doncaster
R. M. WARD, John Dando House, Hampstead Rd., Hampstead, Birmingham 22A
T. HOPPER, 5 King Edward St., Scunthorpe
TOONE & STOTHARD, 21 Endcliffe Ave., Bottisford, Scunthorpe
Mr. LAVERACK, 24 Derby Rd., Burton on Stather, nr. Scunthorpe
L. G. PEARCE, 'Melfryn', Danybryn Rd., Port Talbot, Glam. SA13 1AT
K. BROCKS, 11 Arden Rd., Worcester
J. E. PARKER, 61 Burses Way, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex
M. A. PUPER, Mrs, c/o Sgt's Mess, 24 Missile Regt., R.A., B.F.P.O.16
E. TOKARSKI, 4A Washdyke Lane, Hucknall, Notts
Mrs. R. CARPENTER, 487 Walsgrave Rd., Coventry, CV2 4AH
W. CAMPBELL, 6 Snowdon Rd., Cannock, Staffs
J. K. GODDARD, 41 Elm Rd., Slade Green, Erith, Kent DA8 2NN
D. J. STYLE, 14 Hargrave Close, Water Orton, Birmingham, B46
W. J. HARRIS, 87 Wilderness Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 7TA
G. R. COOPER, 45 Talbot St., Hazel Grove, Stockport (NR)
M. HESELTINE, 24 Fenland Rd., Reffley Est., Kings Lynn, Norfolk (NR)
H. PARRY, Mertyn Stores, Holway, Holywell, Flints, N. Wales (NR)
A. STEWART-CRAIG, Miss, Burgate Court, Fordingbridge, Hants (NR)
J. SMITH, Hilltop Nurseries, Thornton, Leics LE6 1AB (NR)
D. BLAIR, Mr. & Miss, 48 Weltmore Rd., Limbury Mead, Luton, Beds (NR)
A. J. KAVANAGH, 79 North Rd., Southall, Middx. (NR)
N. J. DOHERTY, 18 Rosstown Drive, Waterside, Londonderry N.1.
N. TOLMAER, 32 Freeks Lane, Burgess Hill, Sussex (NR)
G. M. SPARROW, Shawlands, Potten End, Berkhamsted, Herts.
J. H. WADELEY, 16 Greenbank Road, Altofts, Normanton, Yorks.
M. B. MASKELL, 21 Kirby Rise, Barham, Ipswich, Suffolk. 1P6 OAT

NOTE: (NR) No Return of Form.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Society will be held on **Sunday, March 5th, 1972** at the **Victoria Arms Hotel, Clee Hill, Near Ludlow, Shropshire**, beginning at **2-30 p.m.** We urge all members to do their utmost to keep this date free, and attend the meeting.

It is hoped that the meeting will be made more worthwhile by providing some form of informative lecture or panel. Any suggestions for this will be welcomed by the Secretary, as will suggestions for the A.G.M. to be held in July. If any member can propose a venue for this, and/or provide a meeting room, we shall be pleased to hear from him/her. Proposals and suggestions can be discussed at the March meeting.

Full details of this meeting will be published in the columns of "Cage and Aviary Birds" at a later date.

THE AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

1. The Society shall be called 'THE AUSTRALIAN FINCH SOCIETY'
2. The aim of the Society is TO ENCOURAGE THE BREEDING AND EXHIBITING OF ALL AUSTRALIAN FINCHES AND PARROT FINCHES (excluding Zebra Finches).
3. The Society's financial year to commence on 1st JULY and end on 30th JUNE. (Current membership will continue through until 30th June, 1972).
4. The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society shall take place in JULY each year, when all officials shall retire and be eligible for re-election, subject to nomination.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES : Family Membership £1, Unrelated Partnerships £1-50, Juniors (under 16) 50p.