



Amazing Animals Fact sheets

Finches

Finches are one of the smallest types of birds that exist on our planet.

Star Finch

This century had marked a serious decline in the Star Finch population. The causes are probably disturbance to its habitat – rank streamside grass and reeds in scattered eucalypt woodlands – as well as trapping.

Habitat

The Star Finch range once extended right across northern Australia to New South Wales. Today the bird has withdrawn almost completely to pockets in the northwest, from Arnhem Land to the Pilbara.

Diet

Star Finches flock to feed, drink and roost, in small groups of up to 20, sometimes larger. Apart from the occasional insects taken on the wing during breeding, they feed mainly on ripe and green seeds from heads of tall grasses. The birds rove agilely among the stems, clinging and holding down a flower spike to pick out seeds. Only when the grasses dry off do they forage on the ground.

Breeding

The Star Finch breeds between December and August, but mainly March – April. They build a rounded dome nest, with no entrance tunnel, of coarse grass or dried grass lined with wool and feathers. Both sexes choose a nest site with an elaborate ceremony of bowing deeply with tails twisted in grass tussocks or in small bushes about 6m up. Both sexes also incubate the 3-6 eggs for 12-14 days.

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