

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Chaffinch: pp 259-260.



CHAFFINCH

Family Fringillidae

Species *Fringilla coelebs*

Common name Chaffinch

Status Introduced

Abundance Common

Size 150 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm)

Habitat From suburban gardens to parkland, farmland, scrublands and forests. Large populations exist in the exotic pine forests.

Worldwide range Europe to western Asia.

New Zealand range Found throughout New Zealand and on the offshore islands.

Description – male (above)

Forehead Black. **Crown and nape** Bluish-grey. **Face, throat and breast** Pinkish-

brown. **Back** Reddish-brown. **Wings** Blackish with two conspicuous white wingbars on each wing, one of which is on the shoulder. **Rump** Olive. **Underparts** Pinkish-brown tapering to white under the tail. **Tail** Brown with outer feathers black with white edges.

Description – female (below)

Upperpart Brownish-grey. **Wings** As for male bird. **Rump** Green. **Underparts** Greyish-brown. **Tail** As for male bird.



Conspicuous features

- Bluish-grey on the crown.
- Pinkish-brown around face, throat and upper breast.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Feeds on the ground but flies up for cover when disturbed.
- Shows a lot of white on wings and tail when in flight.
- In flight, when in forests, it is faster and more direct than native birds.
- Has a habit of hawking insects like a flycatcher, especially over water.
- Continually sings during the breeding season.
- During winter and early spring joins mixed flocks of other finches.

Call Its song, delivered by the male bird, is a happy “cherry cherry cherry cheery swee swee” repeated many times throughout the day. Throughout the year both sexes utter a metallic “pink pink” note. Song period is July to January.

Nest A neatly constructed cup of dry grass and moss, camouflaged with silver lichen, at about three metres from the ground, firmly placed on a branch or in a fork of a tree. Up to 4 bluish, purple-blotched eggs are laid.

Where to find

Common everywhere. In parks, birds become tame enough to beg for crumbs from the picnicing public.