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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Goldfinch: pp

261-262.



## GOLDFINCH

**Family** Fringillidae

**Species** *Carduelis carduelis*

**Common name** Goldfinch

**Status** Introduced

**Abundance** Common

**Size** 130 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Chaffinch 150 mm)

**Habitat** From gardens and parks to pastureland and open country. Also found in exotic forests but not into tall indigenous forest.

**Worldwide range** Europe to Asia.

**New Zealand range** Found throughout New Zealand and on some offshore islands.

## Description

**Crown** Black from centre crown to back of head. **Face** Red to under chin, with broad patch of white behind the eye and on the throat. **Back** Brown. **Wings** Primaries and secondaries black with a gold bar between and some white on ends of feathers. **Breast** White with a brown wash. **Underparts** White. **Rump** White. **Tail** Black spotted white near the tip.

## Conspicuous features

- Sexes are alike.
- Red and white of face.
- Gold bar on wings.

## Conspicuous characteristics

- Forms into large flocks after the breeding season.
- Regularly feeds on the ground on sow thistle seed (*Sonchus oleraceus*) and grass seed (*Poa annua*), but also high up in trees such as alder trees (*Alnus glutinosa*).
- Flies with undulating flight showing slightly forked tail.
- Utters a fragile twitter while in flight. Don't mix with Redpoll flight-song which is loud and clear by comparison.

**Call** Song delivered by the male bird is a rather thin but persistent jingling twitter, usually uttered from power wires or a high perch. Song period is from October to February.

**Nest** A neatly made cup of fine twigs and grasses camouflaged with silver lichen and lined with feathers or wool, placed on a branch or in a fork of a tree high up. Up to 5 blue, brown-spotted eggs are laid.

## Where to find

**South Auckland** – Miranda Large winter flocks of up to 500 birds regularly assemble here on the coastal flats with Greenfinches.