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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.