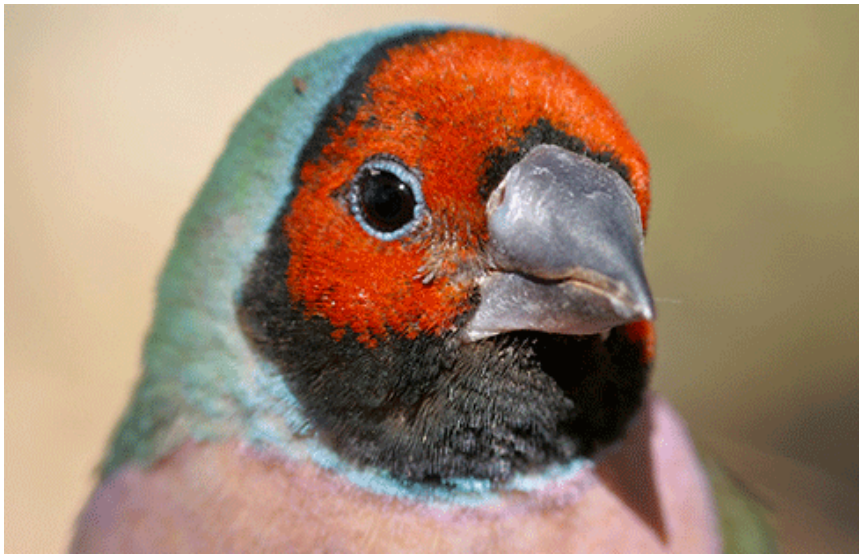


Rangers keep a sharp eye on rare Gouldian Finches

At least three small breeding populations of the rare and endangered Gouldian Finch have been located on the Dampier Peninsula, north of Broome.



Credit: © Mike Fidler

The Gouldian Finch is only known from a few records in recent years, however recent observations reveal there is a small and potentially increasing population of this rare and beautiful species.

The Bardi Jawi and Nyul Nyul Rangers have been working with Environs Kimberley and WWF-Australia, seeking out nests and spotting juvenile Gouldian Finches in eucalypt woodlands.

Senior cultural Bardi Jawi Ranger Kevin George suspects they were always around, but getting eyes back on the ground through the Ranger program helps to confirm this.

‘In the 1960’s people used to walk around a lot and had more eyes on the ground; most people from this time would say they had seen them around’, said Mr George.

The Gouldian Finch needs healthy savanna woodland with old gum trees that have hollows and healthy grasslands for year-round grass seed, two things that are heavily impacted by frequent wild fires.

‘In these places where we have seen the finches there is not much disturbance, but it is also important to communicate with local people living on nearby outstations to understand impacts, in particular the effect of fire,’ said Mr George.

Mr George believes the traditionally managed natural state of this area is a key reason these birds are still found there. ‘There’s not much development up here – there is room for them to move’, he said.

‘The fact that the finches are breeding on Bardi Jawi country and Nyul Nyul country, indicates that good healthy

savanna woodland still exists here' said Dr Steve Reynolds from Environs Kimberley.

Dr Alexander Watson from WWF-Australia said ongoing management by traditional owners and rangers was vitally important.

'The fantastic savanna fire management program that both ranger groups have been undertaking is likely to benefit the Gouldian Finch as well as other fire-sensitive species on the Peninsula,' Dr Watson said.

The Bardi Jawi and Nyul Nyul Rangers are facilitated by the Kimberley Land Council and are 2 of 14 Ranger groups working across the Kimberley addressing threats to natural and cultural values.

Source: WWF

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