

----- Breeding

Breeding finches is also a wonderful hobby. Watching, helping or hand-raising the youngsters can turn into a rewarding past time. Many owners enjoy seeing two birds together & may wish to breed them. Sexing the birds is normally very easy with finches as the male & females normally will have distinct markings or songs. Nests are basket-shaped & usually built in trees, bushes or between rocks. 'Prepared' nests available are suitable.

Female finches do/can lay eggs without a male partner but these eggs are unfertilized and will not hatch. 4-6 eggs are incubated for 12-18 days, with the young fledging about 21 days after hatching. Over breeding can kill the female, 2 clutches per year maximum is best advice. Male Finches ignore the young.

Seek veterinary attention if your pet changes behavior or becomes inactive; this may indicate the pet has an illness.

As a pet owner, you are responsible for proper pet practices. Be prepared to take an ill pet to a Veterinarian & know which Veterinarian in your area can treat your pet.



check-list ✓

Your pet Finch requires...

- Cage of appropriate size & wire size
- Perches of assorted sizes (must have)
- A variety of play & health conditioning toys
- Food / Seed dish(s)
- Daily water source
- Bathing dish or bowl
- Fruits & Veg 'dish (separate from seed)
- Cuttle bone or Mineral Block (supplement)
- Finch or Canary (appropriate) Seed
- Millet sprays (seed)
- Clips for doors & food treats



Finches

A small birds, 9-10 cm long with an average wing length of 90 mm & noted for their activity, variety & song.

Life Span: 7 - 10 years on average in captivity, may live longer, if well cared for.



----- Personality

The true finches are passerine birds in the family Fringillidae. They are predominantly seed-eating songbirds. Most are native to the Southern Hemisphere, but some live in Hawaii & Central climates. They typically have strong, stubby beaks, which in some species can be quite large & their colour variety can rival any other bird species. Finches have a bouncing flight, alternating bouts of flapping with gliding on closed wings. Most sing well & several are commonly seen cagebirds; foremost among these is the domesticated Canary, Strawberry & Zebra finches.

Finches are typically inhabitants of well-wooded areas, but some can be found on mountains or even in deserts. They are primarily granivorous (seed eaters) but also eat bugs, worms fruits & vegetables. They ground forage & are industrious & active making them an excellent cage bird for their antics. Finches come in a vast array of colours & shapes & have become popular amongst bird collectors because of their feather & song variety. The finch family is very large & very old. An unidentifiable finch fossil was found in Hungary, from around 10 million years ago.

They are well known to be continual 'beepers' & their sounds can be loud at times (in groups) but is normally very pleasing. Female finches are not as talkative as the males & rarely will a female finch 'sing'. Some finch varieties have beautiful & complex songs to share. Small, thin framed birds require much more effort to become physically engaged with, but it is commonly done. With effort they can be trained & handled. When a bird is raised by hand, extra time & attention has been given to ensure the bird "takes" to a human. The chick is hand nurtured by a person, supplanting the real parents with a person. The chick learns to accept food first, & then being handled by human's. **Hand raised birds require more attention & interaction than one that was not.**

----- Feeding



Finches may live near 10 years, provided with the nutrition & care they need. Canary & Finch seed diets are available. Their natural diet mainly consists of seeds & berries. They require a variety of foods, including vegetables, seeds, & fruits; nevertheless, **some human foods are unsuitable or poisonous for them, including dairy products, chocolate, sugared food, avocado, rhubarb, & strawberries.** Perishable food in the birds' housing for more than 24 hours is also likely to be unsuitable. Fresh is best! - for all animals. Grapes, carrots, beans, squash, corn, millet, quinoa & winter wheat are excellent foods. Fresh fruit & veg' should be served in a separate dish, apart from the regular seed (diced).

They also eat various manufactured food pellets & pastas. Suitable seed or pellet mixes include a large array of different seed types. Fresh greens, fruits & vegetables should be offered daily to all birds. Pellet- eating birds tend to take these foods readily, especially when chopped & mixed with their pellets. Change any moistened foods frequently to prevent spoilage. Fresh corn on the cob or lettuce are favorites of most birds. For a young bird, avoid weaning onto seed if hand-raising (use a much healthier formulated diet for weaning). These contain vitamins and minerals so there is no need to add supplements to the drinking water each day.

Offer calcium in the form of a mineral block or cuttle bone.

----- Care, Training & Behavior

Finches & Canaries are pretty easy to manage for most people. They are small & tend to be good in groups. The finch family is large & encompasses many species with a huge variety of colours & songs. They do tend to throw their food around a bit, but are not as destructive or as noisy as larger counterparts. They can be aggressive towards other birds, but mostly they are rather shy. They are smart & will require toys or shiny things to keep them entertained (don't we all?). Both Canaries & finches breed well in cages & small baskets or premade nests are readily available for sale. Canaries & Finches can be 'finger' trained given enough attention, however they are not known as 'social birds' unless hand-raised & are usually kept as song birds.

A hand raised bird requires more attention than does a standard (natural) raised bird; You must be prepared to give these birds the level of physical interaction they will require. A hand-raised bird **MUST HAVE** interaction with you at least **TWICE A DAY** (this can include "fly" time, finger games, riding on you, baths in the sink or with you & their favorite; naps on your shoulder).



Make sure cages are properly locked when birds are left alone, they are surprisingly smart & will find a way out if they put their mind to it. Be aware of open doors & windows also. Get in & out of the house as quickly as possible if your birds are aloud to roam free when you are not there. Many owners trim their bird's wings in the summer months when the pet is more likely to escape through an open window or door. Wing trimming is not difficult & is easily learned from a veterinarian or pet supplier. Finches & Canaries a tiny & sudden shift in climate can be fatal. Avoid placing your cage near drafts or cold areas & try to keep them near a warm area.

Use perches of different diameters to exercise the feet properly. Most veterinarians recommend fresh, natural branches as part of the cage furniture. Your bird will enjoy perching on these & peeling the bark from species such as apple, alder, beech, maple, eucalyptus, citrus & many others. Toys are highly recommended for birds. Those with mirrors, open bells & chewable items such as plaster are particularly valuable for canaries & zebra finches. Mirrors are a huge favorite toy of zebra finches & highly recommended. Check with your retailer or veterinarian about toy safety for your particular bird. Finches will couple with another bird (given the chance) & are known to get lonely when separated. Finches are happiest with company & more than one is ideal. A lonely bird is unlikely to sing (or be very entertaining).

Small birds like Canaries & Finches are kept for their songs & antics & not usually "out of cage" birds, so be generous with cage size. If you can't have a roomy cage, try to allow your bird(s) out once daily; check the "flight room" for safety first. Make sure other family pets are kept separate. Don't forget to give your birds the opportunity to bathe several times weekly. A gentle mist from a plant mister is ideal. Many birds also enjoy playing in a dish of clean water. Happy & healthy birds will be active, entertaining & will reward you with a wide variety of song.

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