

# Finch

*Includes red ear, silverbill, Gouldian, and others*



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Finches are small, gentle birds that originate in Africa, Asia and Australia, and can now be found almost everywhere in the world. Many people find their chattering to be pleasant. Finches come in a dazzling variety of colors, and should always be housed with at least one other finch, preferably more.



### Is a finch the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

- I have an appropriate and safe location for these birds.
- I understand finches are best kept in pairs or groups.
- I understand that these birds do not require handling or time outside a cage.
- The finches' natural sounds will be acceptable to family members and neighbors.
- A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered, "Yes" to these statements, a finch may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a finch and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

**Average Size** 3 to 8 inches long

**Life Span** 10+ years with proper care

**Diet** Specialized pelleted diets are highly recommended and should consist of 60-70% of the diet; use fortified seeds in moderation as they are higher in fat and less nutritious than pellets  
 Fresh greens several times a week, plus slices of raw apples and oranges  
 Clean, fresh, filtered and chlorine-free water changed daily  
 Do not feed birds fruit seeds, avocados, chocolate, alcohol, or caffeine as these can cause serious medical problems

**Feeding** If your bird is used to a seed diet, convert to pellets gradually; fresh pellets or seeds and fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should always be available  
 Fresh fruits and vegetables should be given daily and discarded when not eaten within 24 hours; finches appreciate quality and variety in their food

**Housing** Birds acclimate well to average household temperatures; be cautious of extreme temperature change; cage should be placed off the floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts  
 A rectangular flight cage, approximately 24"W x14"D x18"H, with metal bars spaced no greater than 3/8" apart, makes a good home for up to 3 finches; as with all animals, it is best to provide the largest habitat possible  
 Perches should be at least 3" long and 1/2" in diameter; a variety of perch sizes to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis is recommended  
 A metal grate over the droppings tray will keep the bird away from droppings; line the droppings tray with cage paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning; to avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches

**Bird owners should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes hazardous to your birds health**

- |                             |   |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Recommended Supplies</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Cage and cage cover        | <input type="checkbox"/> Bird bath          | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin supplements |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cage paper or substrate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Millet spray       | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of perches  |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Pellets and fortified seed | <input type="checkbox"/> Treats             | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of toys     |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Food dish                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Grit               | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers       |
|                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Water dish                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Book about finches | <input type="checkbox"/> Styptic gel         |

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**Normal Behavior and Interaction** Finches need the company of other finches  
Frequent, pleasant chirping  
They need room to fly in their cages

**Habitat Maintenance** Clean and disinfect the cage and perches regularly; replace substrate or cage liner weekly or more often if needed; replace food and water daily  
Replace perches, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged; rotate new toys into the habitat regularly  
Ensure that there are no cage parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead and lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird

**Grooming and Hygiene** Provide filtered, chlorine-free, lukewarm water regularly for bathing; remove the water when done; as an alternative, mist the bird with water or a grooming spray  
Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person to prevent injury to the bird

**Signs of a Healthy Bird**

- Active, alert, and sociable
- Dry nostrils and bright, dry eyes
- Clean, dry vent
- Eats and drinks throughout the day
- Beak, legs, and feet normal in appearance
- Smooth, well-groomed feathers

**Common Health Issues**

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Diarrhea	Fecal portion of stool not formed. Multiple causes, from change in diet to internal parasites.	Seek veterinary attention. Ensure correct diet. Reduce fruit intake.
Lice or Feather Mites	Restlessness, scratching, feather picking.	Clean cage; seek veterinary attention.
Mites (Scaly Face and Leg Disease)	White deposits on eyes, beak, legs, and feet.	Seek veterinary attention.
Pox	Lesions in mouth, scabs on eyes and face.	Isolate bird; seek veterinary attention.

**Red Flags**

- Beak swelling or accumulations
- Wheezing or coughing
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Fluffed, plucked, or soiled feathers
- Runny or discolored stools
- Red or swollen eyes
- Sitting on floor of habitat
- Favoring one foot
- Loss of appetite

**If you notice any of these signs, please contact your avian veterinarian.**

**Sources** *Avian Medicine: Principles and Application* by Ritchie, Harrison, and Harrison  
*The ASPCA Complete Guide to Pet Care* by David L. Carroll  
*The Simple Guide to Bird Care and Training* by Julie Rach

**Note:** The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.