



## **Flat Creek Station Sightings kit For all finches 2019**

This will be our 6th finch count here at Flat Creek Station.

This is an annual event to gather data on the finches living here on the property and hopefully record any Gouldian finches that are here as well.

We had a positive sighting (with photos) of 5 Gouldian finches in April of 2015 at the Rocky Dam. March of 2017 there was a single male Gouldian sighted at the rocky dam. There has been confirmed sightings of Gouldian Finches in the area in 2017 so fingers crossed that we sight some in our 2019 count.

There were good numbers of Plum Headed finches sighted here in 2017. Sighted 7 Plum heads in February 2017 near our cattle yards here at the Flat Creek homestead. By April 2017 their numbers had grown to around 20. Larger numbers of Zebra finches as well in 2017. In October 2018 count there was a marked increase in Zebra finches counted.

We have put together the following information for you. If we have omitted anything that would be vital for the finch count, please let us know.

The road from Georgetown to Flat Creek is in a decent condition, accessible to all vehicles caravans and motor homes with care. 4x4 vehicles need to access the dams and other areas of the property. Some of our watering points for the count will only be accessible by 4x4 vehicles.

Again in 2018 not all of our observation/watering points were maned. In total we have at 4 dams and 6 cattle troughs (two of the cattle troughs had double watering points e.g. either side of a road or fence).

We believe that the stock troughs are a vital focus point as we have observed finches watering at these points in the past. Also believe some finches like the clean water and the close proximity of the trees. We have observed that the finches when watering at the water troughs seem oblivious to any human activity that is occurring around them. Depending on the number of people we have for the weekend we may need to have two or more groups at some of the larger watering point (dams). Buchanan dam (FC1) is a large body of water so depending on the number of people here for the count this dam could support three or more couples.

Please bring with you for the count:

Binoculars

Bird Book

Datasheets (available at the homestead)

Pens/pencils and clipboard

GPS to record location of site

Watch or similar to record time of sightings

Chair, fold up

Water bottle & snacks

Hat/Sunscreen/repellents (duck lice are evident at some of the dams/waterholes)

Bag for any rubbish.

Record the GPS reading of your site. Size and type of watering point (dam, waterhole of stock trough).

Take note of birds' behavior e.g. mating/courtships or dominance of a particular breed/gender when watering. Record any little details even if you may think it is insignificant.



### Handy Hints

Have the rising sun behind you.  
Avoid making quick movements or locate too close to the water.  
Try not to sit under trees used for perching how ever do not sit in the open either ☺  
Have a clear view of the watering point.  
If possible try not to shift your position once counting has started.

Finches will perch and drink close to you if you are still. If possible 15 meters is a good distance to sit away from the water. The black throated finch can come within a few meters from you.

Large waterholes can be a problem when choosing a position. If you don't know the watering point it may be best to go the day before and observe the behavior of other birds and finches when watering so as to select a good position.

Each day's session will be over 3 hours starting at dawn. (There is room on the data count sheet for an extra 30 minutes if required). Starting time will be proximity 5.45/6.00am finish 9.15/9.30am. At the moment birds are starting to be vocal just before 6.00am.

The best way to count is in 5's. Use a tally method by using four vertical strokes and one horizontal stroke to mark off five birds.  
Only count the finches that actually drink. Don't count the finches that are frightened or fly off before drinking. (Please note if any Gouldian fly off without drinking)  
If there are large numbers of finches: Double Bars or Black Throated finch, record an estimate of that group as your count.  
Record all finishes that are on the count data sheet plus any other seed-eating birds or birds of interest.

We will hold the count over two consecutive mornings of the **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October and Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019**. Starting early so as to be at our observation point before the first sun rays hit the trees.

It will be warm to hot so bring adequate drinking water.

### **Meet and Greet.**

**Friday the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019** we would like all to meet here at the Flat Creek Homestead at 12.30pm to discuss, familiarize and to be delegated observation points.  
We will also go through the above information.

If you cannot make it to the Friday meeting, Don't Panic, we will place you with some one that is familiar with the area or has attended the meeting.

***Please confirm by the Friday before the finch count(18<sup>th</sup> October 2019) if you like to attend.***

***You can email us at: [flatck@bigpond.com](mailto:flatck@bigpond.com) or contact the homestead on 0740625304***

Thank you.

Peter and Adam.  
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