



Double-barred Finch



Black-throated Finch

Double-barred Finch *Taeniopygia bichenovii*, Black-throated Finch *Poephila cincta*

What do they look like? Small birds, about 10 cm long with short, wedge-shaped bills. Double-barred Finch has two black bands across a white chest, a white face and white-spotted wings. Black-throated Finch is a cinnamon brown bird with obvious black throat, blue-grey head, black tail and white rump (south) or black rump (north).

Where do they live? Double-barred Finches favour woodland to open forest with some lower shrubs. Black-throated Finches favour open Poplar Gum, Ironbark and Melaleuca woodlands with sparse grass cover. Double-barred Finches occur across the region, while Black-throated Finches are more restricted. The southern form of Black-throated Finch is endangered and has disappeared from much of its former range.

What do they need to live, eat and breed? All are granivores, taking most seed off the ground, and occasionally landing on grass heads to eat seed. They need a year-round seed supply, which means a wide range of grass species that seed at different times and whose seed can remain viable on the ground for some time. Nests are a round ball of grass, usually in low woody vegetation (Double-barred Finch) or high in tree hollows (Black-throated Finch).

When might I see (or hear) them? Early morning around watering points in dry weather as they congregate to drink and bath. Their soft, high pitched calls are often the first sign of their presence. Double-barred Finches are sometimes seen foraging about domestic fowl pens and aviaries.

What management actions affect this species? Double-barred Finches and Black-throated Finches disappear in the face of clearing, cropping and urbanisation. Maintain vegetation for nesting (tall tree and shrub layer) and feeding (diverse and vigorous native grass layer). Grazing systems which incorporate wet season spelling and allow grasses to set seed are beneficial. A patchwork of grazing and fire regimes will help maintain finch diversity.

How do they benefit the land I manage? As with many seed eaters, they help spread and germinate some perennial grass seeds through topsoil disturbance or direct transportation of seed stuck onto feet or feathers. They can also reduce single grass species dominance through seed consumption.

Similar species. Zebra Finches (*Taeniopygia guttata*), more common in drier or cleared country. Chestnut-breasted Mannikin (*Lonchura castaneothorax*).

