

Zebra Finch

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Species Profile: **Zebra Finch**



Zebra Finches are a favorite among avian keepers and breeders because they are extremely colorful, easy to care for, and relatively easy to breed. Zebra Finches are very social with birds of the same species and the males love to sing. Their soft chirping sound is similar to a beep and can erupt into intricate song that

many humans find soothing and pleasant. This is in stark contrast to other varieties of birds that tend to do more loud squawking. The females do not sing.

Zebra Finches have been the subject of much study relative to how songbirds learn to sing. Females judge a male's song when determining with whom to mate - the more robust the song, the more likely to be chosen...a kind of natural selection process ensuring the best singers produce more progeny.

Although Zebra Finches are considered seed eating birds, that does not mean that seed should be the only item in their diet. Finches are found all over the world from barren desert regions to areas of thick vegetation. Because of this they enjoy a variety of foods other than seed. Fresh vegetables, greens, and fruit are readily accepted and should be offered to all types of finches. This gives them a healthy diverse diet and keeps them from getting bored with the same old seed.

Zebra Finches love to fly and need a minimum of 20 inches of horizontal space to accommodate this natural behavior. They appreciate as big a flight zone as you can give them. Although very social with their own species, in fact, needing this social interaction, finches do not like to interact very much with humans. They should be kept in pairs, at least, and thrive in larger groups.

Interesting Facts:

Family: *Estrildidae*

Genus: *Taeniopygia guttata*

Size: 4" to 4-1/2" and weighs less than 1/2 ounce, depending on the color and origin.

Habitat: The Zebra Finch is considered to be an adaptive species, but is most commonly found in dry and arid areas of Australia. This species is generally found in open country with grass and some scattered trees and bushes.

Behavior: Very personable, incredibly intelligent, outgoing, playful, social, and vocal; they can also be quite sassy, stubborn, and self-confident.

Diet:	Feed a seed based diet, but be sure to offer fresh vegetables, greens and small amounts of fruit as well.
Life Span:	The Zebra Finch's life span generally ranges from 3 to 8 years.
Average Cost:	\$20-\$100, depending on coloration.