

Why a Finch?

by Myra Markley
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“Why a Finch?” My parents would not allow me to have a cat or a dog when I was young. My mother always had small birds and my father never had pets, so Finches were the first pets I ever owned – the first living creature for which I was responsible. Once that first egg hatched I was hooked!

But what makes a Finch the ideal pet and why are people drawn to them? Larger birds and parrots also come in a variety of colors and many species talk and enjoy being held by humans. On the other hand, Finches do not talk and will indeed flee any attempt by humans to handle them.

This natural fear of humans is the very reason that Finches make great pets. They do not want to be held; they do not want our undivided attention; they would prefer that we leave the food and water without trying to interact with them. What a great pet for someone who does not have the time or patience to work with a parrot. Your family can be busy running here and there all day long and the Finches will not feel neglected. In fact, they will enjoy the time spent with each other without meddling humans around to interfere while they sing, strut, eat, and enjoy other Finch activities.

I do not mean that you must totally ignore your Finch; after all, it is your pet but a pet that you can enjoy from a slight distance. Who does not enjoy taking a few minutes to simply watch the energetic and colorful little birds jump from perch to perch while listening to their enchanting beeps, squeaks, and

songs? I will readily admit that to some people the Finch noises are not necessarily pleasant, but we cannot all like the same things.

For those who do enjoy Finch vocalizations, there is a large variety of songs and sounds to delight the ear. Finches are found in almost every area of the world. Many species have been captured and bred in captivity for generations, and now the selection of Finches available in many pet stores and bird marts is simply amazing. Each of the many species has its unique combination of colors and vocalizations.

Many people buy Finches because of their color. Parrots are beautiful birds but it could be argued that no parrot can compare favorably to the rich and bold colors of the Gouldian Finch. Other Finches come in every color of the rainbow with varied shades and patterns to create a dazzling array of beauty.

One aspect that draws people to owning a few Finches is the fact that many species will breed easily in captivity. Not everyone wants to become a Finch breeder, but many people do let their Finches raise at least one clutch simply because those babies are so cute. Overall, breeding Finches is an educational and enjoyable experience for the whole family.

Care for the average Finch is usually not difficult. Plenty of seeds and fresh water, a warm and draft free location, some sunlight, a large cage or aviary with room to fly, and a location away from the heavy traffic areas

of your home will keep your Finches happy. Some of the more exotic species need a more specialized diet such as live foods. It is necessary to monitor the room temperature for species that need a room temperature of 80 degrees to be comfortable. Many of the more exotic Finches cannot be found in your local pet store because they are slightly more difficult to care for properly.

On average a Finch will live for 4-8 years, depending on a variety of factors. Unlike many parrot species, you probably will not need to write your pet Finches into your will. They are ideal for someone who does not want to spend the next 30 years with a pet. A Finch will not care if you get married and have a new family, or move to a new home to enjoy your golden years.

There are homes in which even a Finch would not make a good pet. These homes include those with heavy smokers since the smoke quickly kills your tiny Finches. Homes with small children who cannot keep their hands or fingers out of the bird cage or who tease and frighten the birds are not suitable. Finches do startle easily, especially in a new home, and can go into panic attacks and die. Finches should not be caged with any hookbill species because hookbills tend to bite the limbs of Finches while playing.

Overall, Finches can be a delightful addition to the home and they can teach responsibility and respect for all living creatures. ➤



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