

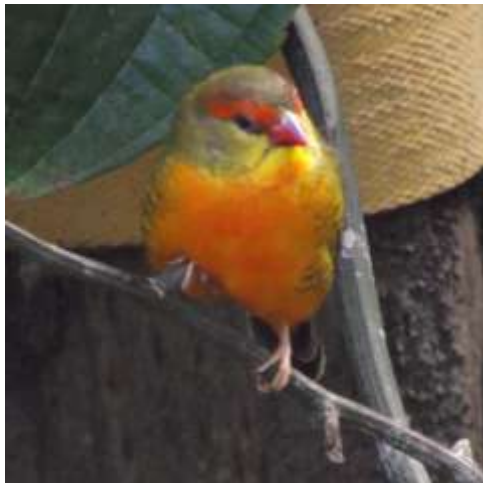
Bloedel Bird of the Month – The Gold Breasted Waxbill



The Gold Breasted Waxbill (*Amandava subflava*) is a tiny finch from tropical Africa. It lives in grasslands and sparse woodland. The bird is common in all parts of its very large range. In the wild they live in flocks that roost together. They are sociable with other waxbills and finches.¹ Breeding birds may be territorial, but this is rare if they have a safe place to go that is out of sight.²

Their diet is mainly seeds, insects and shoots. Usually they feed on the ground or from the stems of long grasses.

Stripes on its sides give it another name as the Zebra Waxbill.³ Males and females are similar, but the male has brighter colours, a red or orange rump and a thick red stripe over its eyes. Juveniles are duller than their parents. A red eye stripe, or its lack, makes it easy to tell which sex they are when they are quite young.⁴ Newly hatched chicks have tiny white tufts of down on their heads and are about the size of a bee. A YouTube video shows a young chick.⁵



Vital Statistics

Length: 8.75-10 cm
or 3½-4 inches
Weight: ≈ 7 g or ¼ oz
Lifespan: 5-6 years⁶

¹ http://www.waxbillfinchsociety.org.uk/species_profiles_noJS.html

² <http://blogs.thatpetplace.com/thatbirdblog/2011/08/19/the-natural-history-and-captive-care-of-the-gold-breasted-or-zebra-waxbill/#.WuJHf38h2Un>

³ For 70 synonyms, see: <https://avibase.bsc-eoc.org/species.jsp?avibaseid=ECC40D44CF305866>

⁴ <https://www.petcha.com/meet-the-gold-breasted-waxbill/>

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4nzQRTLkOw>

⁶ <http://www.thefinchfarm.com/gold-breasted-waxbill/>

Breeding

Gold Breasted Waxbills make their own nests, or ‘adopt’ those left by other birds.⁷ There are usually 3-6 eggs. After the third or fourth egg, both parents will incubate during the day. Only the females incubate at night. Eggs hatch after 11-14 days and birds fledge 17-21 days later. Parents stop feeding chicks 6 weeks after hatching.

Gold Breasted Waxbill eyes have a dark red iris



Gold Breasted Waxbill next to a nest at Bloedel Conservatory



Birdsong

The song is a monotonous, high-pitched, series of chirps. Males sing in the early morning hours, starting before dawn, and again at dusk; sometimes they will sing during the day.

Hear them at Bloedel Conservatory or listen to a recording!⁸



⁷ <http://www.hofmann-photography.de/html/goldbreast.html>

⁸ [https://www.xeno-canto.org/sounds/uploaded/YTUXOCTUEM/XC309968-Amandava_subflava-FL%20calls%20\(mainly%20this%20sp\)%20nrAirport%20Lilongwe%20%204Dec15%207.25am%201220m%20LS118863b.mp3](https://www.xeno-canto.org/sounds/uploaded/YTUXOCTUEM/XC309968-Amandava_subflava-FL%20calls%20(mainly%20this%20sp)%20nrAirport%20Lilongwe%20%204Dec15%207.25am%201220m%20LS118863b.mp3)