

GOLDFINCH

Carduelis carduelis

Found all across the marina.



Its bouncy lively actions and flashing colours make them unmistakable.

DESCRIPTION – This small finch is strikingly colourful with its mixture of red, white and black on the head, golden brown body and bright yellow wing bars. Looking more closely, the crown is black, the chin and forehead are red and the cheeks are white. The body is predominantly golden or tawny brown, but the belly and rump are white. The wings are mostly black with a large striking yellow band. The bill varies from pinkish to pale grey, and the legs are flesh coloured.

The sexes are similar except that the male's red face extends slightly behind the eye. Juveniles are generally a dull brown with darker streaking on the body, and lack the red, black and white markings on the head.

HABITAT – Anywhere there are scattered bushes and trees, rough ground with thistles and other seeding plants. Likes orchards, parks, gardens, heathland and commons. Particularly if there are Alder and Larch. Less common in upland areas and most numerous in southern England.

FOOD – Goldfinches feed on various tree seeds, such as alder and birch, and on thistle, teasel and dandelion seeds, which it can obtain owing to its thin bill and light weight. Niger seed and teasels may attract them in gardens, especially if there are no fields nearby with thistles and dandelions, but they will also feed on sunflower hearts.

NESTING – The cup-shaped nest is built by the female with moss, grass and lichen, and lined with wool and plant down. The nest is usually in a tree towards the end of a branch or in a bush, and often in large gardens and orchards, but also in open woodland and hedgerows.

The 5-6 eggs are smooth and glossy, pale blue with reddish markings, and about 18 mm by 13 mm. Incubation is by the female only. The young are fed by both parents. They often have 2 broods a year between May & July.



SONG – A pleasant rambling twitter or tinkling best describes the most common call of the Goldfinch. The song is a composition of this call and other rattling notes.

OTHER FACTS – The Goldfinch is resident throughout the UK. The Goldfinches have more or less recovered from a serious decline in the 1970s and 80s that was possibly caused by increased use of herbicides, but changing agricultural practices still threaten this bird.