

Donation to help save the Gouldian finch

In 2005 The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia made a cash donation to the Australian Wildlife Conservancy to be allocated to their Gouldian finch project on Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia.

Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary

The Sanctuary is one of northern Australia's most important nature reserves. Cradled by the ancient sandstones of the King Leopold Ranges, it hosts a landscape of spectacular scenery. Flat-topped mesas cut by steep-sided valleys and gorges overlook vast savanna woodlands and a network of tropical rivers and streams. Some of the features that make Mornington so important include:

- Covering in total more than 312,000 hectares (780,000 acres), Mornington is one of Australia's largest non-government protected areas.
- Mornington is located in the Central Kimberley bioregion, one of the highest priority bioregions in Australia for the development of the National Reserve System.
- Mornington protects a diversity of ecosystems, including several ecosystems that are not protected in any existing national parks.
- Several rare and threatened species, such as the Gouldian finch and the purple-crowned fairy-wren, find refuge on Mornington. In total, over 170 bird species and potentially more than 40 mammal species occur on Mornington.

It is an enormous challenge for any organisation to implement an effective conservation program over such a large and remote area. However, with support from donors such as our Society and assistance from key organisations such as the Tropical Savannas Co-operative Research Centre and the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management, AWC is aiming to establish Mornington as a model for conservation and land management in northern Australia.

Gouldian finch

Researchers are hoping to unlock the key to the decline in numbers of the Gouldian finch. The finch is one of the world's most beautiful bird species, known for its green, gold and lilac coloured body, azure neck, and black, scarlet or gold face. It is estimated there are just 2,500 adults remaining across Northern Australia and it is hoped research could hold the key to its decline and that of other species such as flock bronze wings, doves and pigeons.



Gouldian finch