

RUSTY, THE RAINBOW BIRD

BY ALEESAH DARLISON

TEACHING NOTES



RUSTY, the RAINBOW Bird



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aleesah Darlison

Aleesah Darlison is an award-winning author of over 50 books for children. She has won or been shortlisted for numerous awards including the Environment Award for Children's Literature, the CBCA Eve Pownall Award, and the Speech Pathology Book of the Year Awards. Many of Aleesah's books champion the cause of animals, the environment, and child self-empowerment.



A PICTURE BOOK FOR AGES 4 - 8 YEARS

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Fly with Rusty the Gouldian finch as he searches for a mate and saves his young family from fire.

Part of the Endangered Animal Tales Series written by Aleesah Darlison, illustrated by Mel Matthews and published by Penguin Random House Australia.

- Simple, accurate vocabulary for young readers.
- Story text perfectly complimented by bright, colourful illustrations.
- An important message about one of Australia's endangered animals.
- Includes fact boxes.

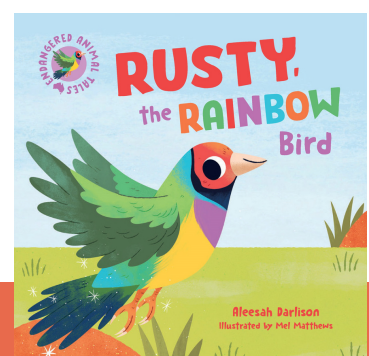
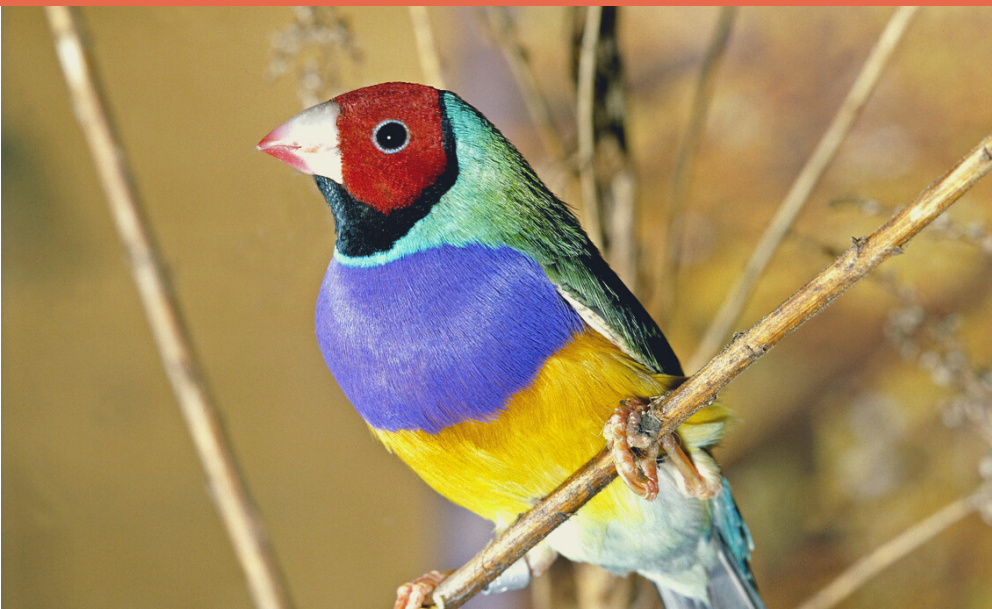
INCLUSIONS

- About the Author
- Gouldian Finch Fact Sheet
- Classroom Discussion & Activities:
 - Language
 - Literature
 - Literacy
 - Science Understanding
 - Humanities and Social Science
 - The Arts

BUY THE BOOK

Purchase the book at
www.penguin.com.au.

Find more Teaching Notes at
www.aleesahdarlison.com.





Fast Fact!

Gouldian finches are Australia's brightest coloured grassfinches. They're also known as 'rainbow birds'.

GOULDIAN FINCH FACT SHEET

- Gouldian finches are Australian native birds. They are only found in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.
- They are small birds with a bright green back, yellow belly, and a purple breast. They have a red, black, or yellow head.
- They live near waterholes in tropical savannah, thickets, and woodlands with grassy plains.
- They are active in the day and forage in small groups.
- Gouldians are quiet birds. Occasionally, they make a high-pitched whistle. They also make trills, soft chirps, and hisses.
- Gouldians are social and often forms flocks with other bird species.
- These finches are herbivores and feed on seeds and sometimes insects.
- Gouldians form long-lasting mating pairs.
- They are the only grassfinch that nests exclusively in tree hollows or holes in termite mounds.
- Females lay between 4-8 eggs at a time.
- Chicks are born helpless, naked, and blind. Both parents look after them.
- The chicks have brightly coloured gapes (mouths) and call loudly when their parents return to the nest so that they are able to find and feed them in the dark nest.



Baby Gouldian finches





CLASSROOM DISCUSSION & ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE

Look at the illustrations on Pages 6 and 7. Discuss the feelings being expressed by Rusty and Olive across these pages.

When Rusty meets Olive, it's love at first sight.
He bobs and whirls, puffs and fluffs. His courtship
dance sets Olive's heart aflutter.



What words does Rusty use in the story that show he's Australian?

What words does the author use to show that the fire is dangerous?

What does the word 'endangered' mean?

Research other Australian birds and finches. Write a story about one of them.





LITERATURE

Look at language devices such as alliteration and repetition in *Rusty, the Rainbow Bird*. Write an alliterative sentence about Gouldian finches. You might like to use the story or the facts in these Teaching Notes to help you.

Write an acrostic poem using the word 'FINCH' or 'RAINBOW'.

Using Rusty or Olive as a main character, write the next part of their story where they must set up a new nest. Write this as a short story or picture book. Draw picture(s) to accompany your story.

LITERACY

Discuss what happens in *Rusty, the Rainbow Bird*. What are some of the problems facing Rusty and his family as described by the author?

Write three descriptive sentences about Gouldian finches.

What colours does the illustrator use to depict the bushfire? How do these colours differ from those at the start of the book?





SCIENCE

Biology

Create an information poster about Gouldian finches. Draw a picture of a Gouldian finch. Colour it in. Label its external features. Add some key facts.

Nature & the Environment

Research bushfires. What causes them? How can they be managed better? What effect do they have on humans and animals?

Draw a picture of Australia and where Gouldian finches are found.

Discuss what types of things Gouldians eat.

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

History

Discuss how the introduction of non-native species might affect Gouldian finches and other native Australian animals.

Discuss how Indigenous people traditionally managed the land with fires. How does management by farmers differ?

Gouldian finches are endangered. What other Australian natives are endangered?

Geography

Draw a map of Australia and mark where the Gouldian finch lives.

Research tropical savannahs and grassy woodlands. Draw a picture.





THE ARTS

Study the illustration on Page 26 and 27 then discuss the feelings of Rusty, Olive, and their babies.



Draw a picture of Gouldian finches having fun at the waterhole.

Draw a picture of a bushfire. Use colour to show emotion and tone. Include some Australian natives animals that would be trying to escape the fire.

