

European Goldfinch Fact Sheet

Common Name: European Goldfinch
Scientific Name: *Carduelis carduelis*
German Name: Stieglitz

Description: The goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) is a strikingly beautiful bird, with a bright red face, black and white head, and a deep golden yellow bar on the otherwise jet-black wings. Another notable feature is the long, pointed beak, which allows this species to extract seeds from teasels. Males and females are similar in appearance, although females have shorter beaks. Juveniles have greyish-brown streaked heads, lacking the red, white, and black pattern of the adults. Flocks produce a delightful liquid twittering song and call.

Size Length: 12 - 13.5 cm

Wingspan: 21 - 25.5 cm

Weight: 14 - 19 g

Biology: Thanks to their long, pointed beaks, male goldfinches are the only birds that are able to extract seeds from teasel heads; they cling to the stem and tear into the seed head, accessing the seeds inside by probing with the bill. Females have shorter beaks and so they are unable to exploit teasel heads. In the autumn, when seed heads are common, goldfinches have a broad diet, feeding on groundsels, ragworts, thistles, and dandelions, as well as the favorite teasels and knapweeds. Outside of the breeding season, goldfinches roam in flocks in search of food during the day. At night, they roost in evergreens or thick scrub. Flock size varies depending on the availability of food, but groups of 100 birds are quite common.

During spring, goldfinches often display whilst sitting on branches, singing, drooping the wings, and swaying from side to side. Between four and six eggs are produced and these take up to 14 days to incubate. The young goldfinches will have fledged after 13 to 18 days.

Habitat: Breeds in mixed woodland, orchards, parks, commons, gardens, and pine plantations where there are thistles and other plants that produce seeds.

Diet: Seeds, feeding on groundsels, ragworts, thistles, and dandelions as well as the favorite teasels and knapweeds.

Range: Found throughout Germany and much of Western Europe. It does not migrate in Germany.

Threats: Agricultural use is a threat to this species because it destroys wild meadows where food sources grow.

Conservation Status: The goldfish is classified as Least Concern (LC) on the IUCN Red List. All birds in Germany are protected by the Bundesnaturschutzgesetz (BNatSchG) law.

Resource: <http://www.arkive.org/goldfinch/carduelis-carduelis/>

YouTube video about threats to goldfinch habitat:

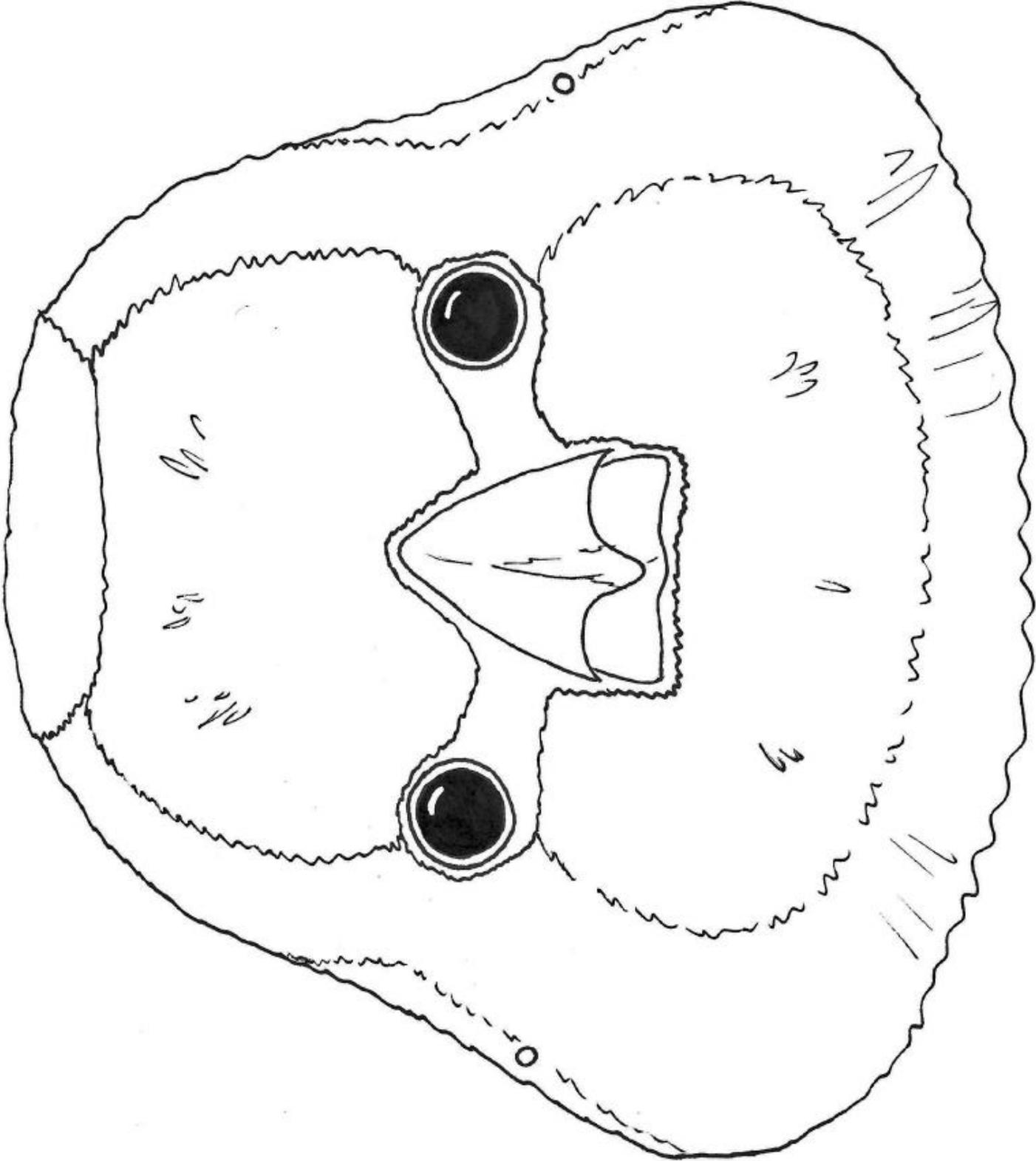
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1SSUziegMYg



By Francis Franklin - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=39228864>

European Goldfinch Mask

Create your own European Goldfinch mask!



Which One of These is Not Like the Other

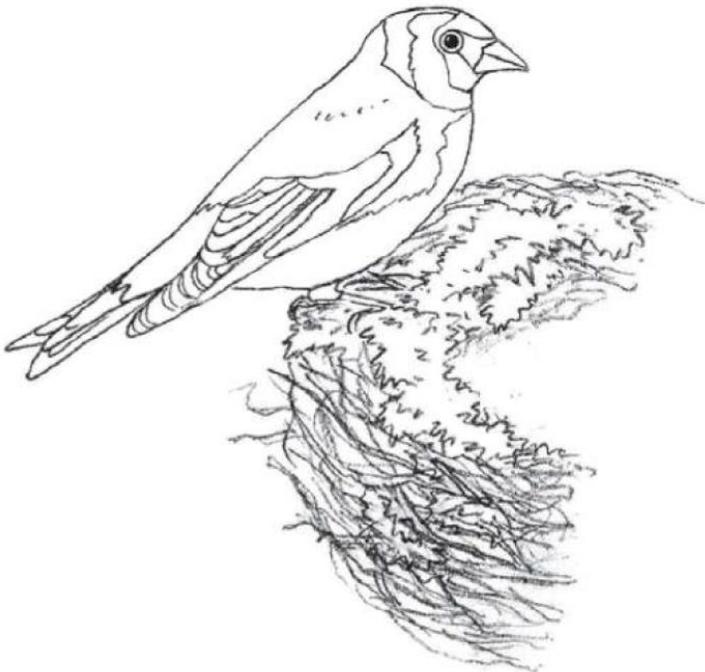
When observing and identifying birds, it is important to look for key features such as coloration, tail shape, eye color, wing shape, and silhouette to determine the species and gender. Work on your birding skills by circling the differences between the two birds.

Which one is the European goldfinch? _____



All About Eggs

Research European goldfinch eggs. How many do they lay? What do they look like? How long do they take to hatch? Once you are an expert, finish drawing the nest with eggs inside.



Dinner Detective

Get out your magnifying glass and find a meadow to investigate. Many of these plant species are food sources for the European goldfinch. How many of each plant do you find? Would this meadow make a good dinner buffet for the European goldfinch? Record your observations:



Daisy: _____



Nettle & Deadnettle: _____



Chamomile: _____



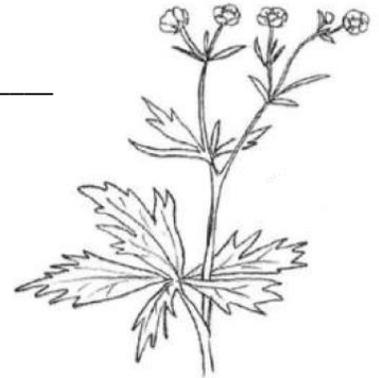
Clover: _____



Dandelion: _____



Thistle: _____



Buttercup: _____