



© Sebastian Niedlich / www.flickr.com/photos/42311564@N00

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	ENDANGERED	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	EXTINCT
NE	DD	LC	NT	VU	EN	CR	EX



Geographical range

## Species of the Day: Lion Finch

The **Lion Finch**, *Leo fringilla*, is listed as 'Extinct in the Wild' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Once found throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa, the last two individuals of this charismatic species of bird were last seen in September 2009, in a Frangipani tree in Mrs Okeke's back garden on the edge of Lake Naivasha, Kenya.

Once an extremely valuable commodity in the pet trade, the Lion Finch faced severe persecution following the discovery that its fiery temperament led to the loss of numerous infant extremities. Unfortunately, this species was also considered to be the pinnacle of gastronomical delight, which caused such a catastrophic decline in numbers that Lion Finch populations were never able to recover.

The impact of collecting and shooting has been substantial on this species, and breeding programmes involving individuals in captivity have not been hugely successful. However, they are to be continued in the hope that introductions can be made into managed habitats to maximise the retention of genetic diversity, with active protection of nest sites against poachers and collectors for the pet trade.

*We hope you enjoyed this April Fool!*

[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)  
Help Save Species



Species of the Day is sponsored by



The production of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is made possible through the IUCN Red List Partnership: IUCN (including the Species Survival Commission), BirdLife International, Conservation International, NatureServe and Zoological Society of London.