



STRATEGEN
environmental consultants

**Ord River Irrigation Area -
Weaber Plain
Development Project
Gouldian Finch Conservation Plan**

APPROVED BY DSEWPAC ON
10 APRIL 2012

Prepared for
LandCorp
by Strategen

March 2012

**Ord River Irrigation Area -
Weaber Plain Development
Project**

Gouldian Finch Conservation Plan

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March 2012

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Gouldian Finch Conservation Plan has been prepared to ensure appropriate management of the Gouldian Finch and its habitat during construction and operation of Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA) Weaber Plain Development Project (the Project). It has been prepared to complement the State approval to implement the Project issued under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* as defined in Statement 830 as well as manage any potential impacts that could affect this Matter of National Environmental Significance as listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) (EPBC Reference 2010/5491).

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Western Australian Minister for State Development intends to develop an area of land for irrigated agriculture across the Weaber Plain in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, approximately 30 km north-northeast of Kununurra and adjoining the existing Ord River Irrigation Area.

The Project will require land clearing for farms, sourcing of road building materials, construction of the main M2 channel and smaller distribution channels to service agricultural lots, roads, power supply infrastructure, and stormwater management, groundwater management, drainage and flood protection infrastructure. The Project also involves release of irrigation water from Lake Argyle, which will be conveyed via the Ord River and Lake Kununurra and gravity-fed to the proposed Development Area via the M2 channel.

The key characteristics of the Project Area relevant to Gouldian Finch management include:

- irrigation with 80 to 120 GL/yr of water sourced from Lake Argyle
- clearing of approximately 9260 ha vegetation for farms and infrastructure including approximately 8205 ha for farmland
- clearing up to approximately 115 ha in the Buffer Area for sourcing of raw materials and construction laydown areas
- setting aside and management of approximately 11 470 ha of native vegetation as an environmental Buffer Area to protect watercourses and surrounding conservation reserves
- installation of infrastructure including channels, power supply, drainage and flood protection infrastructure and groundwater management infrastructure.

The Project is a component of the ORIA and is covered by the Ord Final Agreement (OFA), which includes the protection of vegetation and fauna habitat in six areas across the East Kimberley region over a total area of approximately 188 200 ha (Livistona Range Conservation Area, Pincombe Range Conservation Area, Ningbing Range Conservation Area, Weaber Range Conservation Area, Mt Zimmerman Conservation Area and Packsaddle Swamp Conservation Area).

The WA Minister for the Environment approved implementation of the Weaber Plain Development Project (as part of the M2 Proposal) in February 2002 subject to a number of conditions outlined in Statement 585. Some changes to Statement 585 were subsequently made, resulting in the issue of Statement 830 on 7 May 2010.

The Weaber Plain Development Project was referred under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) on 14 May 2010. The then Australian Government Minister for Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts determined in June 2010 that approval under the EPBC Act was required as the Proposed Action was considered a controlled action with the potential to have a significant impact on a number of Matters of National Environmental Significance

(NES). The Project was approved to be implemented, subject to a number of conditions, on 13 September 2011.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF CONSERVATION PLAN

The purpose of this management plan is to ensure the protection of Gouldian Finch populations, by preserving and maintaining habitat and ensuring the retention of corridors linking feeding areas across the project. It has been developed in response to preliminary survey work within the Weaber Plain Development Project Area, which identified the presence of Gouldian Finches and suitable habitat (Figure 1; Pryke 2010; Strategen 2010).

This document outlines specific and supplementary management actions to the Biodiversity and Habitat Management Sub-plan contained in the Ord River Irrigation Area – Weaber Plain Development Project Environmental Management Plan (Strategen 2011a), which addresses native vegetation and fauna conservation and biodiversity and nature conservation as per Schedule 2 of Statement 830.

Table 1 outlines the requirements of the EPBC approval conditions and where the requirements have been addressed in this Gouldian Finch Conservation Plan.

Table 1 Correlation between Gouldian Finch Conservation Plan and EPBC conditions

Item	Condition	Relevant section
6A	Monitoring program that includes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Baselines surveys of the quality and distribution of Gouldian Finch feeding habitat in the Buffer Area II. Annual monitoring of breeding populations, including timing and reproductive outputs (i.e. clutch size and fledging success) III. Annual wet-season monitoring of foraging activity in critical wet-season feeding areas in close proximity to breeding areas IV. Mapping, and annual monitoring of the phenology and productivity of wet season feeding habitat, and assessment of their use by Gouldian Finches. 	Section 3.5 Table 3 Item 1, 2 - 9
6B	A Fire Management Program developed and implemented to protect and enhance Gouldian Finch feeding and breeding habitat. The Fire Management Program must incorporate relevant findings from fire management projects such as, but not limited to, the Ecofire project conducted in the northern and central Kimberley (Rangelands NRM 2011, http://www.rangelandswa.com.au/pages/150/ecofire) and must be developed in close consultation with a Gouldian Finch expert.	Section 3.4 Table 2 Item 9
6C	Widening of all vegetation corridors indicated in Figure 2 of the Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (including between Lots 5 and 18 and Lots 9 and 14) to a minimum width of 400mm.	Section 3.4 Table 2 Item 3
6D	Avoidance of clearing any breeding habitat that has been utilised by the Gouldian Finch, as identified in Figure 1 of the Gouldian Finch Management Plan.	Section 3.4 Table 2 Item 2
6E	Salvaging of breeding hollows that are cleared for relocation in the Buffer Area and results of their use recorded as part of the monitoring program.	Section 3.4 Table 2 Item 5
6F	Performance standards in relation to the Gouldian Finch population.	Section 3.4 Table 2 Item 12
6G	Adaptive management triggers should performance standards not be met and contingency measures to be implemented if this occurs.	Section 3.5 Table 3
6H	An annual audit and review of the effectiveness of management measures, operating controls and implementation of any required improvements to management conditions.	Section 3.6
6I	Protocols and timelines for review and reporting to the department.	Section 3.6 and 3.7

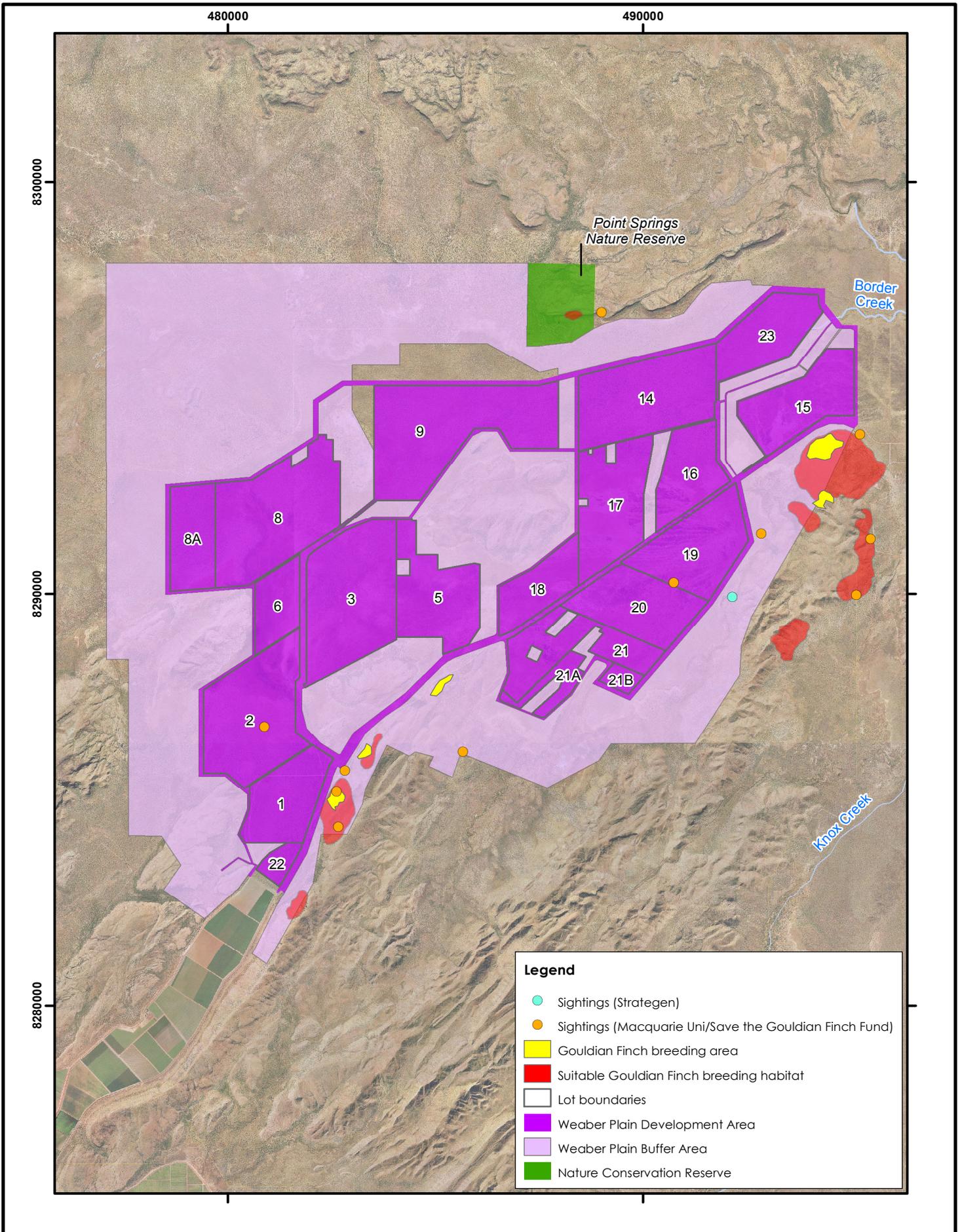
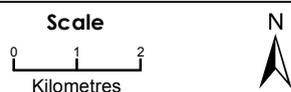


Figure 1 Goualdian Finch sightings and suitable breeding habitat



Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 52
 Date: 12/12/2012
 User: jcrute



1:120,000
 at A4

Source: Geoscience Australia 2006.
 McMullenNolan 07/12/2011, edited. S. Pryke 2010 and 2011.
 Note that positional errors may occur in some areas

2. DESCRIPTION OF FACTOR

The Gouldian Finch is listed as Endangered and Migratory under the EPBC Act. Furthermore, it is listed as 'rare or likely to become extinct' under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*. Current national Gouldian Finch estimates suggest a population of less than 2500 individuals with no more than 250 birds (and frequently much less) where sub-populations occur (Pryke 2010).

Populations and habitat for the Gouldian Finch are known to occur within the Weaber Plain Development Project area.

The Gouldian Finch (*Erythrura gouldiae*) is a medium-sized seed eating bird that lives only in the northern savannas region of Australia. Gouldian Finches once occurred across the northern third of the continent in flocks of thousands, but has now reduced to remnant pockets in numbers of just tens and hundreds. In recent times the species has been reliably recorded at only a few sites within the Northern Territory and Western Australia and is rarely observed in the wild in Queensland (Pryke 2010). Key populations of the Gouldian Finch are located in the Wyndham area, 100 km west of the Project area.

The onset of the annual monsoon causes widespread germination of seed reserves that are the staple of most tropical grassland granivores, such as the Gouldian Finch, during the dry season. Delay to the start of the monsoon can affect the availability of foraging resources for the Gouldian Finch. Fire and cattle grazing affecting the availability of grass seed and wildfire affects the availability of nesting hollows for the Gouldian Finch.

Gouldian Finch habitat varies between its breeding period in the dry season (February – July) and non-breeding times (July – January).

2.1 BREEDING HABITAT

Breeding habitat for Gouldian Finch includes rocky hills and hollow *Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia* tree species, with very specific nesting requirements comprising robust and deep hollows with small diameters (Brazill-Boast & Pryke 2010). Individuals may breed in small colonies due to localised tree suitability (Pryke 2010). While breeding, the birds appear to rely on feeding habitat located within or immediately adjacent to breeding habitats (<1 km) (Brazill-Boast et al. 2011), where they feed predominantly on annual spear grass or native sorghum (*Sarga* spp.) and spinifex (*Triodia* spp.), travelling up to 2 km to small perennial waterholes and springs (Pryke 2010; Brazill-Boast et al. 2011).

2.2 FORAGING (NON-BREEDING) HABITAT

Following breeding, Gouldian Finches move to lowland granite soil areas to feed on a range of grass species, including *Alloteropsis semialata*, *Chysopogon fallax*, *Heteropogon triticeus*, *Sehima nervosum*, *Themeda triandra* *Triodia* spp. (e.g. *T. acutispicula*, *T. bitextura*, *T. bynoei*, *T. caelestialis*, *T. epactia* *T. schinzii*), and *Xerochloa laniflora*. (Pryke 2010).

Areas of breeding and non-breeding (foraging) habitat exist within the conservation reserves including the Pincombe Range Conservation Area and Point Springs Nature Reserve, and within the Buffer Area to be established for the Weaber Plain Development Project.

3. MANAGEMENT

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS TO BE MANAGED

Aspects of the Proposal requiring management to minimise negative impacts on Gouldian Finch populations and habitat include:

- clearing of vegetation, resulting in loss of breeding habitat (particularly hollow-bearing *Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia* trees) and foraging habitat (i.e. preferred seeding grasses)
- construction works affecting soil seed banks.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Environmental objectives for the management of Gouldian Finch include to:

- maintain persistence of species in Project Area and surrounds
- enhance and maintain known breeding and foraging areas
- protect feed sources (grasses) from fire, stock and other destructive processes
- maximise nest site availability.

3.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER MANAGEMENT PLANS AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS

This management plan identifies management and monitoring actions to achieve the environmental objectives outlined in Section 3.2, using information described in the following documents:

- *National Recovery Plan for the Gouldian Finch* (*Erythrura gouldiae*) (O'Malley 2006)
- *EcoFire 2007-2009 central and north Kimberley fire pattern analysis* (Legge et al. 2010).

In addition, this management plan also identifies management measures that have been identified in the following ORIA management plans:

- Fire Management Plan (Strategen 2012b)
- Buffer Management Plan (Strategen 2011c)
- Environmental Management Plan, incorporating Biodiversity and Habitat Management Sub-Plan and Rehabilitation Management Sub-Plan (Strategen 2011a).

In the event sub-plans are revised, that sub-plan will be implemented in the place of the sub-plan outlined in Table 1 and Table 2.

3.3.1 Fire Management Plan

The Fire Management Plan (FMP) forms a significant part of the management regime for Gouldian Finch with respect to this Project. Typically, Kimberley fire category descriptions are categorised as:

- early dry season (Mar-Jun)
- late dry season (Jul-Sep)
- build-up or wet season storm fires (Oct-Dec).

The incidence of late dry season fires are recognised in the Gouldian Finch Recovery Plan (O'Malley 2006) as a significant threat to Gouldian Finch habitat. The extent and severity of these fires has the

potential to affect Gouldian Finch habitat. The late dry season fires are more likely to burn larger areas than would have been burnt in any year in traditional Aboriginal burning practices, which has resulted in a more uniform vegetation age. This uniformity in age can affect the availability of key wet season grasses that Gouldian Finches utilise. As cockatoo grass and curly spinifex seed production is reduced in areas burnt in successive years, widespread late dry season fires can result in food scarcity early in the year. The increase in severity of late dry season fires (in comparison to fires at other times of the year) also increases the likelihood of tree hollows being burnt, which decreases the likelihood of them being used by Gouldian Finches.

O'Malley (2006) identified that the use of a planned patch burning regime to create a mosaic would improve Gouldian Finch habitat by reducing the frequency, extent and/or intensity of late dry season fires. This approach was trialled in the EcoFire project.

The EcoFire project is located approximately 300 km east and has been implemented by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and DEC since 2009 over an area of 5.1 million Ha (Legge et al. 2010). This project has reduced the occurrence of large 'wildfires' and increased the availability of unburnt vegetation as a result of implementing the mosaic burning practices.

The FMP specifies the use of a patch (or mosaic) burning approach to break-up vegetation communities into 'cells' so that complete swathes of vegetation communities and landforms are not burnt during one year, or within one fire event. Creating early dry season fuel reducing buffers prevents large areas of the Buffer Area burning under inappropriate conditions. This is especially critical in those 'cells' that contain known Gouldian Finch habitat. This approach is consistent with the work of O'Malley (2006) and Legge et al. (2010).

3.3.2 Buffer Management Plan

The Buffer Management Plan includes the following management actions that complement the actions described in this management plan:

- control of human and vehicle access into the Buffer Area
- revegetation of areas of less than 'very good' condition as defined by Keighery (1994) vegetation condition rating in the Buffer Area
- weed control
- destocking of the Buffer Area.

3.3.3 Environmental Management Plan

The Environmental Management Plan contains the Rehabilitation Management Sub-Plan and Biodiversity and Habitat Management Sub-Plan, which include the following actions:

- implementation of a seed collection program before vegetation is cleared
- clearing of vegetation in a manner that facilitates later re-spreading in rehabilitation areas (where appropriate)
- progressive rehabilitation of disturbance no longer required for infrastructure operation or maintenance
- utilisation of topsoil on rehabilitation areas and active re-seeding of some areas where required
- use of seed mixes appropriate to the areas to be rehabilitated.

3.4 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Various components of the proposed Project footprint and layout have been modified in part to address concerns regarding potential impact to Gouldian Finch habitat. Relevant changes include modifications to lot boundaries and infrastructure alignments to improve the fauna corridor from the north of the Project Area to the centrally located Folly Rock area, which will facilitate bird (and other fauna) movement from Point Springs Nature Reserve to other areas within the Project Buffer Area. An area of approximately 105 ha south of Weaber Plains Road between Lot 1 and Lot 5 has also been proposed for removal from the Development Area and inclusion in the Buffer Area. Up to approximately 10 ha of this area may be disturbed for construction purposes, however it will be rehabilitated in accordance with the Buffer Management Plan and Rehabilitation Management Sub-Plan, post-construction.

Research has shown that custom-built nest-boxes specifically designed for Gouldian Finches can increase local densities and juvenile recruitment by up to 300% (Pryke 2010). As a result, the Project will collect suitable material (hollow branches of about 5 – 15 cm) from areas to be cleared and then relocate it to the surrounding Buffer Area and conservation reserves for use as nest boxes (Table 2).

Further management actions have been developed to meet the objectives (Table 2).

Table 2 Management actions for Gouldian Finch

Item	Action	Purpose	Timing	Responsibility
1.	Include in sale conditions the requirement for properties to be inspected prior to clearing so that suitable and salvageable tree (particularly <i>Eucalyptus</i> and <i>Corymbia</i> species) hollows are identified and retained.	Maximise nest site availability and maintain population numbers	Prior to farm lot sales	LandCorp
2.	Avoid clearing any breeding habitat utilised by Gouldian Finch, as identified in Figure 1 by ensuring all identified breeding habitat is included in the Buffer Area (where incorporated in the Project Area).	Maintain breeding areas	Prior to farm lot sales; During construction of infrastructure	LandCorp/ Proponent*
3.	Ensure all vegetation corridors are a minimum width of 400 m.	Maximise protection of finches during foraging activities	Prior to farm lot sales	LandCorp
4.	Within all areas to be cleared, identify and salvage (as agreed upon the advice of the STGF and/or DEC) suitable tree hollows (hollow branches of 5-15 cm).	Maximise nest site availability and maintain population numbers	Identify – prior to clearing Salvage - during clearing	RDL
5.	Install salvaged tree hollows under the direction of the DEC and also STGF, as appropriate, in the Buffer Area and/or adjacent conservation reserves. Record use of relocated hollows through annual monitoring.	Maximise nest site availability and maintain population numbers	Installation during the dry season of 2012. Recording the use of relocated hollows in accordance with Table 3 Item 3.	RDL
6.	Destock the Buffer Area (in accordance with the Buffer Management Plan).	Maintain breeding areas, protect food sources and maintain population numbers	Prior to completion of construction of farm lots	LandCorp
7.	Investigate control of wallaby numbers in the Buffer Area under the direction of DEC if required.	Protect food sources and maintain population numbers	Periodic if required	Proponent*
8.	Implement control of wallaby numbers as agreed with DEC if required.	Protect food sources and maintain population numbers	In response to a directive from DEC	Proponent*

Item	Action	Purpose	Timing	Responsibility
9.	Undertake annual fire management in the Buffer Area in accordance with the Fire Management Plan, maximising the protection and enhancement of Gouldian Finch breeding and feeding habitat.	Protect breeding areas and food sources and maintain population numbers	Annually for the life of the Project	Proponent*
10.	Undertake weed control in the Buffer Area in accordance with the Buffer Area Management Plan, focusing on the most degraded areas first and in accordance with procedures detailed in the Weed, Plant Pathogen and Pest Animal Management Sub-plan (Strategen 2011a).	Protect food sources and maintain population numbers	Within 12 months of completion of infrastructure construction and annually for the life of the project	Project Director
11.	Rehabilitate cleared areas of infrastructure corridors (in accordance with the Rehabilitation Sub-Plan of the EMP).	Encourage native feeding grass re-establishment - maintain population numbers	Immediately following construction	LandCorp
12.	Managing maintenance of vegetation (including slashing where required for road safety, fire management, etc) in infrastructure corridors in accordance with advice from STGF.	Provide connecting habitat between ranges and through farmed areas	Within 12 months of completion of infrastructure construction and annually for the life of the project	Proponent*, SWEK, WSP
13.	Identify performance standards in relation to the Gouldian Finch population (breeding and non-breeding populations, health and habitat condition) and annually audit against these standards. Identify triggers for adaptive management and appropriate contingency measures (see current corrective actions outlined in Section 3.5). The performance standards will identify what a significant reduction in population or habitat condition would be in accordance with advice from a recognised Gouldian Finch expert.	To ensure no significant reduction in habitat or population of Gouldian Finches	Performance standards will be finalised prior to the end of the 2011-12 wet season.	RDL

Acronyms: STGF - Save the Gouldian Fund, DEC - Department of Environment and Conservation, RDL - Regional Development & Lands, SWEK – Shire – Shire of Wyndham- East Kimberley, WSP - Water Service Provider.

*The Proponent will have responsibility for management, however at some point in the future an “appropriate body or corporate (yet to be determined)” may be established to facilitate management.

3.5 MONITORING REGIME

A monitoring regime has been developed to check whether the management plan objectives are being met (Table 3).

Table 3 Monitoring regime, targets and corrective actions for Gouldian Finch

Item	Activity and Location	Frequency	Target	Corrective action	Responsibility
1.	Conduct baseline surveys of Gouldian finches, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying the breeding populations identifying the non-breeding populations identifying and assessing the quality of feeding areas. 	Prior to the end of the 2011-12 wet season (indicatively February – April)	To determine relevant baseline data	Not applicable.	RDL

FINAL

Item	Activity and Location	Frequency	Target	Corrective action	Responsibility
2.	Undertake Gouldian Finch counts of the non-breeding population within the Buffer Area and immediate surrounding reserves utilising a specialist acceptable to DEC.	September annually for five years commencing after 50% of the clearing of farm lots has been completed**	No significant reduction in the non-breeding population of Gouldian Finches (consistent with definition developed under Table 2, Item 13 as determined on the basis of advice from a recognised Gouldian Finch expert)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate cause in consultation with DEC and also STGF, as appropriate. 2. Map extent of the area affected if the cause is associated with changes to vegetation. 3. Identify whether remedial action is required in consultation with DEC and/or STGF. 4. Implement remedial action as agreed by DEC and/or STGF in areas identified by mapping. 5. Monitor success of remedy and extend monitoring for an additional 5 years if remedy is not successful. 6. Undertake alternative action as agreed with DEC and STGF, if monitoring finds remedial action is not/will not address initial issue. 	RDL, Proponent*
3.	Undertake Gouldian Finch counts of the breeding population within the Buffer Area and immediate surrounding reserves utilising a specialist acceptable to DEC.	March-June annually for five years commencing after 50% of the clearing of farm lots has been completed**	No significant reduction in the breeding population of Gouldian Finches (consistent with definition developed under Table 2, Item 13 as determined on the basis of advice from a recognised Gouldian Finch expert)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate cause in consultation with DEC and also STGF, as appropriate. 2. Map extent of the area affected if the cause is associated with changes to vegetation. 3. Identify whether remedial action is required in consultation with DEC and/or STGF. 4. Implement remedial action as agreed by DEC and/or STGF in areas identified by mapping. 5. Monitor success of remedy and extend monitoring for an additional 5 years if remedy is not successful. 6. Undertake alternative action as agreed with DEC and STGF, if monitoring finds remedial action is not/will not address initial issue. 	RDL, Proponent*
4.	Undertake a health assessment of the non-breeding population of Gouldian Finches within the Buffer Area and immediate surrounding reserves utilising a specialist acceptable to DEC.	March-June annually for five years commencing after 50% of the clearing of farm lots has been completed**	No significant change in health (consistent with definition developed under Table 2, Item 13 as determined on the basis of advice from a recognised Gouldian Finch expert)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate cause in consultation with DEC and also STGF, as appropriate. 2. Map extent of the area affected if the cause is associated with changes to vegetation. 3. Identify whether remedial action is required in consultation with DEC and/or STGF. 4. Implement remedial action as agreed by DEC and/or STGF in areas identified by mapping. 5. Monitor success of remedy and extend monitoring for an additional 5 years if remedy is not successful. 6. Undertake alternative action as agreed with DEC and STGF, if monitoring finds remedial action is not/will not address initial issue. 	RDL, Proponent*

Item	Activity and Location	Frequency	Target	Corrective action	Responsibility
5.	Undertake assessment of vegetation condition in areas identified as key Gouldian Finch habitat within the Buffer Area and immediate surrounding reserves.	Annually for five years commencing after 50% of the clearing of farm lots has been completed**	No significant degradation of condition or loss of habitat (consistent with definition developed under Table 2, Item 13 as determined on the basis of advice from a recognised Gouldian Finch expert)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate cause in consultation with DEC and also STGF, as appropriate. 2. Map extent of the area affected if the cause is associated with changes to vegetation. 3. Identify whether remedial action is required in consultation with DEC and/or STGF. 4. Implement remedial action as agreed by DEC and/or STGF in areas identified by mapping. 5. Monitor success of remedy and extend monitoring for an additional 5 years if remedy is not successful. 6. Undertake alternative action as agreed with DEC and STGF, if monitoring finds remedial action is not/will not address initial issue. 	RDL, Proponent*
6.	Record loss of individual Gouldian Finch birds within ORIA and Buffer Area.	Upon reporting of loss of individuals	No bird deaths resulting from ORIA activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate cause in consultation with DEC and also STGF, as appropriate. 2. Identify whether remedial action is required, in consultation with DEC and/or STGF. 3. Implement remedial action as agreed by DEC and/or STGF in areas identified by mapping. 4. Monitor success of remedy. 5. Undertake alternative action as agreed with DEC and STGF, if monitoring finds remedial action is not/will not address initial issue. 	RDL, Proponent*
7.	Annual monitoring of breeding populations, including timing and reproductive outputs (i.e. clutch size and fledging success).	Annually - end of wet season (indicatively February-April)/early dry season (indicatively May-July)	No reduction in baseline breeding numbers which can be attributed to Buffer Area management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate cause in consultation with DEC and also STGF, as appropriate. 2. Map extent of the area affected if the cause is associated with changes to vegetation. 3. Identify whether remedial action is required, in consultation with DEC and/or STGF 4. Implement remedial action as agreed by DEC and/or STGF in areas identified by mapping. 5. Monitor success of remedy. 6. Undertake alternative action as agreed with DEC and STGF, if monitoring finds remedial action is not/will not address initial issue. 	RDL

Item	Activity and Location	Frequency	Target	Corrective action	Responsibility
8.	Annual wet-season monitoring of foraging activity in critical wet-season feeding areas in close proximity to breeding areas.	Annually – wet season (indicatively November–April)	No reduction in baseline foraging activity which can be attributed to Buffer Area management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate cause in consultation with DEC and also STGF, as appropriate. 2. Map extent of the area affected if the cause is associated with changes to vegetation. 3. Identify whether remedial action is required, in consultation with DEC and/or STGF 4. Implement remedial action as agreed by DEC and/or STGF in areas identified by mapping. 5. Monitor success of remedy. 6. Undertake alternative action as agreed with DEC and STGF, if monitoring finds remedial action is not/will not address initial issue. 	RDL
9.	Mapping and annual monitoring of the phenology and productivity of wet season feeding habitat, and assessment of their use by Gouldian Finches.	Annually – wet season (indicatively November–April)	No reduction in baseline phenology and productivity activity which can be attributed to Buffer Area management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate cause in consultation with DEC and also STGF, as appropriate. 2. Map extent of the area affected if the cause is associated with changes to vegetation. 3. Identify whether remedial action is required, in consultation with DEC and/or STGF. 4. Implement remedial action as agreed by DEC and/or STGF in areas identified by mapping. 5. Monitor success of remedy. 6. Undertake alternative action as agreed with DEC and STGF, if monitoring finds remedial action is not/will not address initial issue. 	RDL
10.	Monitor buffer perimeter fence condition and Gouldian Finch habitat to ensure stock excluded from Gouldian Finch habitat.	Commencing post clearing of farm lots and ongoing for the life of the project	No decline in habitat condition (as determined by Table 3, item 5) due to stock access	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify stock entry sites into buffer area 2. Remove stock 3. Repair fence damage 4. Monitor fence condition 	RDL
11.	Report findings to the DEC from monitoring actions listed above.	Annually after commencement of the action	N/A	N/A	RDL, Proponent*

Acronyms: STGF - Save the Gouldian Fund, RDL - Regional Development & Lands, DEC - Department of Environment and Conservation.

*The Proponent will have responsibility for management, however at some point in the future an “appropriate body or corporate (yet to be determined)” may be established to facilitate management.

** monitoring is expected to commence in 2014, until 2018, unless extend for a further five years under items 2 - 5.

3.6 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

An annual audit, review and reporting of the effectiveness of management measures, remedial actions operating controls and implementation of any required improvements to management conditions will

be conducted (as required by Condition 19 of the EPBC approval) under the guidance of an endorsed Gouldian Finch expert.

In addition, performance reporting of this Gouldian Finch Conservation Plan will be implemented consistent with the reporting requirements set out in the Ord River Irrigation Area – Weaber Plain Development Project Environmental Management Plan (Ord EMP), which is to produce systematic, comprehensive and informative reports on environmental management and monitoring for the Weaber Plain Development (Strategen 2011a). Under this regime performance will be reported in:

- an Annual Environmental Report (AER)
- a triennial Performance Review Report.

Both the AER and triennial Performance Review Report will be prepared by the Proponent. The reports will be provided to DSEWPac and made publicly available on the DSD website.

As described in the Ord EMP, the AER will:

- describe the status of work activities and environmental management
- outline the status of implementation of Procedure 14 of Statement 830 (relates to the creation of conservation reserves)
- identify any significant environmental activities that occurred over the previous 12 months
- present and provide interpretation of monitoring results from the previous 12 months
- outline developments scheduled to occur in the next 12 months
- outline the effectiveness of the environmental management measures currently implemented and detail actual environmental performance against the targets specified in environmental management documents.

Also as described in the Ord EMP the triennial Performance Review Report will:

- describe the status of work activities and environmental management
- outline the status of implementation of Procedure 14 of Statement 830
- identify any significant environmental activities that occurred over the previous three years
- summarise and provide interpretation of monitoring results from the previous three years
- outline the effectiveness of the environmental management measures currently implemented and detail actual environmental performance against:
 - targets specified in environmental management documents
 - environmental objectives reported on by the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) (2000, 2001) DLPE (2000) and DIPE (2002)
 - commitments documented in Schedule 2 of Statement 830.

3.7 REVIEW AND REVISION

Consistent with the Ord EMP and the EPBC Act approval, the Gouldian Finch Conservation Plan will be reviewed by the Proponent¹ as part of the annual environmental reporting process and revised as required. Construction personnel will be notified of revisions to the program at a site briefing or using other suitable methods as required. In addition, the proponent will ensure that continued improvement of the plan occurs in response to environmental incident resolutions, audit findings, monitoring results, and changes in regulatory requirements.

The DEC, the Save the Gouldian Fund and the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPAC) will be advised of any changes to the program and provided with the revised document. Major changes will be undertaken only in consultation with the DEC and the Save the Gouldian Fund. The revised Gouldian Finch Conservation Plan will not be implemented unless written approval is received from SEWPAC.

¹ The Proponent will have responsibility for management, however at some point in the future an “appropriate body or corporate (yet to be determined)” may be established to facilitate management.

4. REFERENCES

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