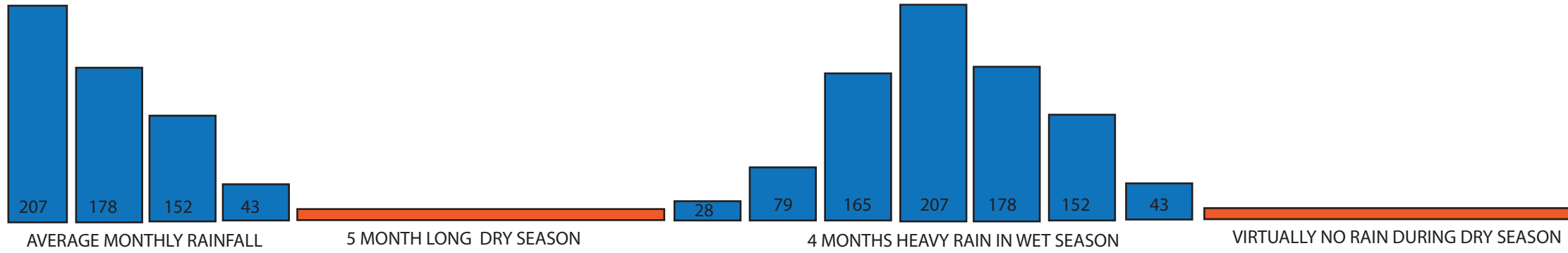


WET SEASON

DRY SEASON

WET SEASON

DRY SEASON



AVERAGE MONTHLY RAINFALL 5 MONTH LONG DRY SEASON 4 MONTHS HEAVY RAIN IN WET SEASON VIRTUALLY NO RAIN DURING DRY SEASON

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEPT



Gouldian finches forage near their breeding sites in hill woodlands during dry season and then move to adjacent lowlands when perennial grasses start producing seeds during the wet season.

A gap period in seed availability may occur during drought and delay the moult.

SPEAR GRASS (*Sorghum spp*) is an annual grass that germinates at end of wet season in response to dry heat and has a high seed production. These weather conditions stimulate breeding behaviour in Gouldian finches. An abundant availability of ripening seeds at the end of the wet season initiates breeding activities. Fallen seed form the staple diet for Gouldians throughout the dry season. Sorghum spp. dominate the understory of the breeding areas but are also present in the lowland areas.

FIRE GRASS (*Schizachyrium spp*)
Germination of this annual responds to increasing soil temperatures during August/September. Produces a high number of seeds. Seed availability supports the peak period of the moult. Drought conditions over the previous year reduce germination and may delay the moult. Good wet seasons and traditional fire practices increase Fire grass seed availability and the likelihood of a compressed moult.

COCKATOO GRASS (*Alloteropsis semilata*)
One of the first perennial grasses to germinate in response to heavy rain. Tussock growth stimulated by heavy rainfalls in October may produce a plentiful supply of seed that may initiate a compressed moult when drought conditions prevailing over the previous year - or incorrect fire regimes - have reduced fire grass availability and delayed the moult.

PERENNIAL GRASSES
Triodia spp, Chrysopogon fallax, Heteropogon triticeus and Alloteropsis semilata. The perennial grasses grow and seed in response to rain. They produce fewer seeds that are less nutritious than annual grasses and may not provide enough nutrients to support breeding activities or a rapid moult. Sequential seeding of the different perennial grass species helps provide a continual food supply during the wet season when foraging is more demanding.

CURLY SPINIFEX (*Triodia spp*)
RIBBON GRASS (*Chrysopogon fallax*)
HETEROPOGON
ALLOTEROPSIS
SORGHUM

SPEAR GRASS (*Sorghum spp*)
This highly nutritious and productive annual seeding grass covers 95% of the understory at the breeding areas of the Gouldian finch. Gouldian finches rely upon eat its ripening and fallen seed for breeding success.. There is however a great diversity of other annuals and perennials in adjacent lowland areas where Gouldians may reach with little effort.

Grasses currently classified within the Sorghum genus are likely to be split into Sorghum, Sarga and Vacoparis genera in the near future.