

Emu

**Scientific Name:**

Dromaius novaehollandiae

Range:

All of Australia EXCEPT wet, coastal areas and thick forests

Habitat:

Flourishes in a variety of habitats, including semi-desert, open grasslands, open woodlands, scrublands and even upland snow fields.

Average Size:

Length: 6 ft long, 5 feet tall
Weight: 40-150 pounds

Lifespan:

Up to 25 years in captivity

Diet:

Wild: Omnivore – eats plants, grasses, fruit, berries, seeds, grain, blossoms, even insects. Emus are especially fond of grasshoppers.

Zoo: Various types of produce, bread and even dog food.

Reproduction:

Incubation: 56-60 days

Clutch size: up to 11 eggs

Appearance:

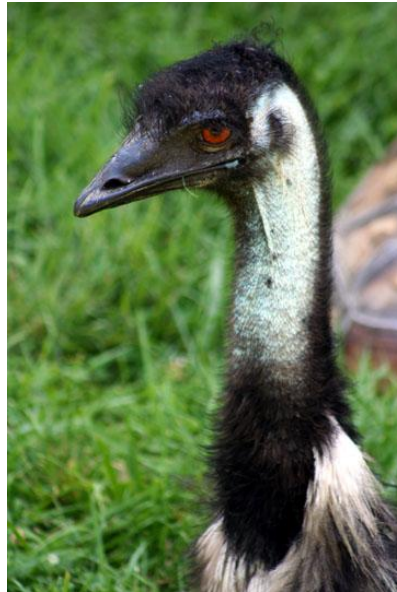
This flightless bird has a body covered with soft, light brown feathers that give it a shaggy appearance. The head and neck are nearly bare and are colored blue. The eyes are large and reddish brown in color

Predators:

Humans. As chicks, foxes, feral pets

Population Status:

Stable

**About the Animal**

Emus belong to a family of birds known as *ratites*. Ratites are unable to fly, and include ostriches, rheas, cassowaries and kiwis.

The word *emu* comes from the Portuguese word 'ema', meaning 'large bird'. It certainly applies, as the Emu is the third largest of the ratites – right behind Ostriches and Cassowaries. An adult Emu will reach 6 ft. in length, stand nearly 5 ft. tall and weighs up to 150 pounds. Despite its size and weight, the Emu is shy and curious in nature. They will follow familiar humans around and investigate any changes in their environment.

Emus prefer to live in pairs or small groups, and depend upon the members of the group to help detect danger. When a threat is spotted, Emus will make a deep booming call and take off running. If necessary, this bird can reach speeds of up to 30 mph.

Mating and Reproduction

In Emus, is the male that is solely responsible for the eggs. When nesting season approaches, males lose their appetite and dig out a shallow depression in the soil. Female come along and lay eggs in the nest – often the eggs the male incubates are not all his! When the chicks hatch, the male cares for and defends them and teaches them how to find food. Chicks are full grown in 5-6 months, but stay together as a family group for up to 6 additional months.

Amazing Information

Unlike most birds, even ratites, the feather of an Emu has two distinct parts. Each feather has two separate braches emerging from a single shaft.



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