

EMU

HABITAT

The Emu lives in sclerophyll forests, savannah woodlands and grasslands,^[1] avoiding extremely dry areas or rainforests.^[2] They are native to Australia.^[3]

DIET

They feed on fruits, seeds, growing shoots of plants, insects, other small animals, and animal droppings.^[4] They also eat stones, pebbles and charcoal to aid in plant digestion.^[5] They travel large distances to find abundant feeding areas.^[6]

REPRODUCTION

They breed between April and June, laying 5 to 15 eggs per clutch.^[7] The eggs have thick, dark green shells^[8] and weigh up to 450g each.^[9] Chicks hatch after 55 days, remaining in the nest for 7 days.^[10] Only males take care of them.^[11]

THREATS

They are vulnerable to habitat loss from native vegetation clearing,^[12] disease, and being hunted for their oil, leather and meat. Some isolated populations in NSW are listed as Endangered due to vehicle collisions, habitat loss, and an increase in feral dogs and pigs.^[13]

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

They are protected under Australian law, with populations being managed through humane methods.^[14] The NSW Government leads a coastal Emu conservation project through conservation actions like Emu-friendly fencing, and spreading awareness of conservation measures through community events.^[15]



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DESCRIPTION

They are 1.6 to 2m tall, with shaggy grey-brown feathers except for their necks and heads, which are mostly naked and bluish-black.^[16] They have small wings but long, powerful legs.^[17]

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Dromaius novaehollandiae^[18]

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern^[19]

CLASS

Birds^[20]

LIFESPAN

Up to 35 years in captivity/10 to 20 years in the wild^[21]

POPULATION SIZE

Approximately 725,000^[22]

FUN FACT

In many Aboriginal Dreaming stories, Emus are central figures and are often associated with creation, fertility, and spirituality.^[23]

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- [5] Animal Corner, 'Emu', Emu Diet.
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- [8] Aussie Animals, 'The Emu Australia's Iconic Flightless Bird', *Aussie Animals* (2024), Interesting Facts about Emus, <https://aussieanimals.com/birds/emu/>, accessed 22 Aug. 2024.
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- [21] Australian Geographic, 'Fact File: Emu', Average lifespan.
- [22] Animal Corner, 'Emu', Emu Conservation Status.
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