

EMU

Dromaius novaehollandia

The Emu is Australia's tallest native bird, reaching between 1.6m and 1.9m & can weigh up to 45kg. Adult Emus are covered with shaggy grey-brown feathers except for the neck & head, which are largely naked & bluish-black. Although they have feathers, they cannot fly because their wings are too small & the sole purpose of the double-shafted feathers is to insulate against the elements. Their legs are long & powerful; each foot has three forward-facing toes & no hind toe. Emus can sprint up to 50kph.

DISTRIBUTION & HABITAT

The Emu is found only in Australia and lives throughout most of the continent. They were once found in Tasmania. They prefer dry, open forests, semi-arid grasslands & desert woodlands.

DIET

Emus feed mainly on grass, flowers, seeds, fruits & insects. Because Emus don't have teeth they sometimes consume stones which aid in the digestion process.

LIFE EXPECTANCY & BREEDING

Breeding season will usually occur between April & November. Emus will lay a clutch of 5 - 15 eggs which are dark grey-green in colour & are about 13.5cm in length and 9cm wide.



It is up to the male to take care of the eggs during the 60 day incubation period & he is the sole parent until they leave, up to two years after birth. After laying her eggs the female will find another mate with which she will lay another clutch of eggs. Emus are nearly fully grown at 1 year & may breed at 20 months. They can live up to 20 years in the wild, longer in captivity.

