

CASSOWARY; EMU



1 SOUTHERN CASSOWARY *Casuarius casuarius* 170–175cm/67–69in

A massive, heavyset, flightless rainforest bird weighing up to 86kg (190lb), Southern Cassowary (family Casuariidae) has a coarsely feathered black body and a striking blue and red naked neck and head, which bears a distinctive, large triangular knob or helmet on top. Cassowaries have powerful legs with three-toed feet that possess a 13cm- (5in-) long claw on the innermost toe. Juveniles are buff-coloured with chocolate stripes. The adult's black colouration and the habitat separate this bird from the only other large flightless bird in Australia, Emu, which is never found in rainforests. Southern Cassowary is a shy and very local bird in tropical and subtropical rainforests and in palm groves north of Townsville (QLD); it has also become habituated around Mission Beach and Kuranda (QLD), where it can be seen readily.



2 EMU *Dromaius novaehollandiae* 150–190cm/59–75in

Emu, the only member of the family Dromaiidae, is the national bird, Australia's answer to the Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*) of Africa. It is one of only two huge, flightless land birds in the country, along with Southern Cassowary. It stands nearly 2m (6.5ft) tall, has a stride over 2.7m (9ft) long, and weighs up to 45kg (99lb). Emu is a massive brown bird of open country, differing in colour and habitat from the black, rainforest-dwelling cassowary. Emu is found in most open habitats but is especially common in non-irrigated croplands and pastures. Typically seen crossing red dirt roads or feeding in small groups (two to six birds), it is seemingly quite unafraid when approached slowly by a vehicle, though typically quickly runs away when pursued on foot.





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