



Fourth Crossing Wildlife factsheet



Emu

scientific name
" *Dromaius novaehollandiae* "

other names
none known



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<https://mol.org/species/>

Description

Adults: Sexes similar, females slightly larger. Height up to 2 metres tall. General plumage dusky-brown to grey-brown with shafts and tips of feathers black. Feathers of upper neck are short and sparse, revealing blue skin, which is darker in females. Wings about 20cm long and not visible under feathers. Eye yellow-brown to dark brown. Bill brown to black. Legs are featherless, skin is dark brown to black. Large foot with three toes. The females darkens in colour during the breeding season.

Juveniles: Greyer or paler than adults, streaked in appearance. Body feathers have pale ends. Head and neck has black hair.

Voice: Usually silent, occasional low-intensity booming when approaching a strange object. In breeding season, deep thudding, booming and drumming by female. Male gives a low growl to communicate with newly hatched chicks.

The Emu is Australia's largest native bird. It is a land dwelling bird that does not fly at all. Widespread in the mainland of Australia, but not common in highly populated areas. The Emu's habitat is quite varied and includes open plains, scrubland, semi-desert areas and alpine pastures. It lives mainly in pairs, but also in family groups up to 12 birds or so, spacing 1km or 2 between themselves. It is a nomadic bird, wandering in response to favourable conditions. Mainly a vegetarian it eats a variety of leaves, fruits and flowers of native plants, but also takes insects, such as crickets, etc. Breeding is around April to October, with the bird often choosing an elevated site sheltered by shrubs or long grasses. It lays between 6 and 12 eggs which are incubated by the male. The chicks, which have large dark stripes on body, stays with the male for up to 18 months.