

Life Cycle of an Emu



Study*ladder*



Emus live only in Australia. They prefer grasslands and forested regions but can survive in arid regions too. They are flightless birds that can grow up to 2 m tall.

The breeding season takes place between April and June. Female and male birds perform a courtship dance and build a large nest on the ground together.

The female emu lays large eggs at intervals of 2-4 days. She lays a clutch of 5 - 15 eggs in total. The female does not look after the eggs once they are laid. That job is left to the male emu. The female emu leaves and may look for another mate.



The newly laid eggs are very large (130 mm X 90 mm) and a dark bluish green colour. The eggs fade with exposure to the sun.



The male emu looks after the eggs during the incubation period which lasts about 55 days. During this time the male does not leave the nest at all until the chicks have hatched. He sits on the eggs to keep them warm and aggressively protects the nest.



The newly hatched chicks are cream coloured with brown stripes. This helps them stay camouflaged. The chicks stay close by the male emu for about four months. Once their downy feathers are replaced by dull brown adult feathers they are ready to leave. Emus are mature enough to breed at about 20 months.



Compare the eggs: Ostrich egg, emu egg, chicken egg and quail egg.