

THE SOUTHERN CASSOWARY

Find out more about Australia's very own living dinosaur!

BEHAVIOUR



If a Cassowary is approached it will generally stand its ground. If the intruder approaches too close, the bird will stretch itself as tall as possible, ruffle its feathers and let out a loud hiss in an attempt to scare the intruder off. They are equipped with dangerous claws, and will readily attack a persistent intruder, although they usually retreat into the dense rainforest.

HABITAT



The dense rainforest habitat and the Cassowary's secretive nature make individuals difficult to see. Throughout their range, Southern Cassowaries live alone, and inhabit the same area all year round.

ADAPTATIONS



The Southern Cassowary's diet of fallen fruits and fungi includes species which are poisonous to humans as their digestive system is adapted to deal with the toxins safely.

FEEDING AND DIET



The Southern Cassowary feeds mostly on fallen fruit. It will also eat anything from snails to small dead mammals and normally feed alone. If two males should meet, they have a stand off where both birds stand tall, fluff up their feathers and rumble at each other until one retreats. If a male and female meet, the male will move away, as the female is dominant.

COMMUNICATION



The calls of the Southern Cassowary consist of an assortment of rumblings and grunts. These calls are often heard long before the bird is seen, and are usually given in response to the sight of potential danger.

DISTRIBUTION

Southern Cassowaries are found in northern Queensland.

The species is also found through New Guinea and eastern Indonesia.



HOW TO IDENTIFY

Large size

Greyish Helmet (casque)

Red back of neck

Black hair-like feathers

Blue skin on head & fore-neck

Red Wattle

