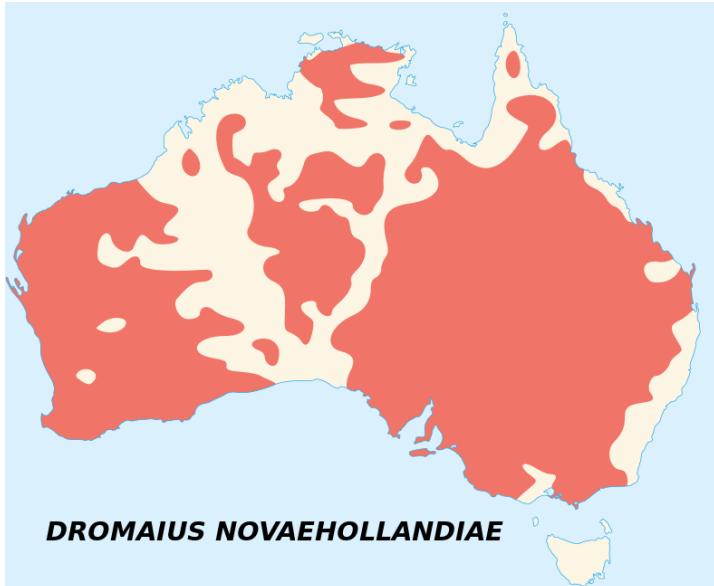




EMUS





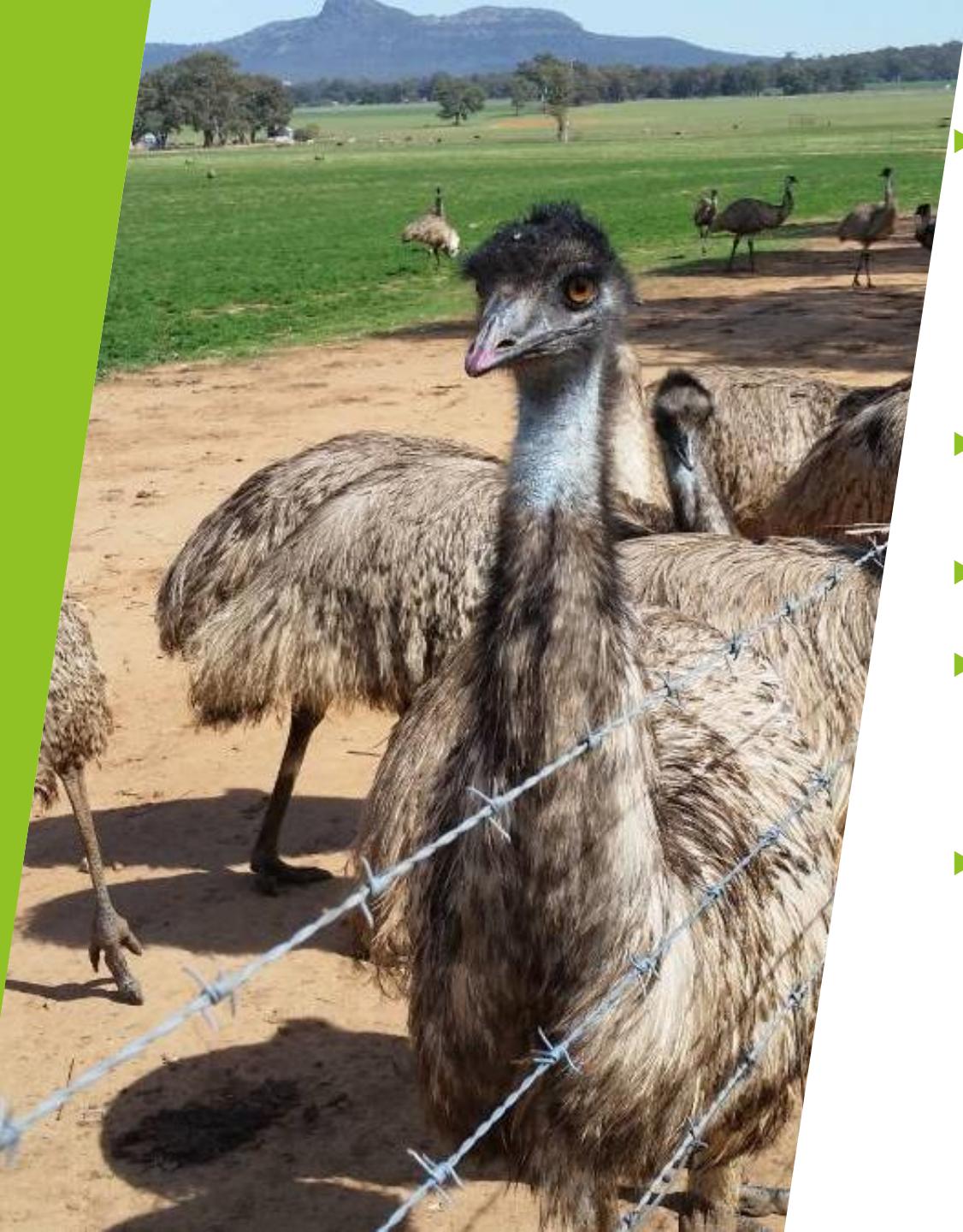
EMU SPECIES

- ▶ The emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) is the second-largest living bird by height, after its close relative, the ostrich.
- ▶ Native to Australia the emu is the largest native bird and the only living member of the genus *Dromaius*.
- ▶ Emus were first reported as having been seen by Europeans when explorers visited the western coast of Australia in 1696.
- ▶ The emu's range covers most of mainland Australia, but the Tasmanian, Kangaroo Island and King Island subspecies became extinct after the European settlement of Australia in 1788.
- ▶ This illustrates how our actions can affect the world around us.
- ▶ The bird is sufficiently common for it to be rated as a least concern species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.



WHEN DID EMU FARMING BEGIN?

- ▶ The earliest emu farm in Australia appears to have been operating in the 1930s at Dromana, Victoria. It was pictured in the *West Australian*, however no further references to it or what it produced have been found. It was most likely a petting farm.
- ▶ It took another four decades before anyone made a serious attempt to farm emus in Australia.
- ▶ Most sources claim our first commercial emu farm was set up by two Swiss families around 260 km north east of Perth.
- ▶ It was not successful and operated for only three years.
- ▶ In 1976 a government-backed farm was established in Wiluna, WA.



- ▶ The government-backed emu farm operating at Wiluna, on the edge of the Gibson Desert in WA was run by Applied Ecology Limited, a Federal Government-funded company established to research and develop viable projects in remote areas compatible with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- ▶ The farm was handed over to the local Ngangganawili Aboriginal Community in 1981.
- ▶ A second commercial farm was approved at Mt. Gibson in 1985.
- ▶ A former manager of the Wiluna farm now runs what he claims to be the world's oldest still-operating emu farm in the world at Toodyay, 85 km north east of Perth.
- ▶ There are now emu farms in most Australian states, as well as in many countries around the world, including North America, Peru and China. They have had varying success.

PEST TO PROTECTED

- ▶ Long before emus were commercially farmed in Australia, local farmers had been raising ostriches.
- ▶ The birds had been farmed in their native South Africa as early as 1865, and an ostrich farm was established at Murray Downs near Swan Hill, Victoria, in 1874.
- ▶ The birds were farmed for their feathers, which were favoured by ladies for their hats.
- ▶ In the early 20th century, the success of ostrich farms prompted a number of letters to newspapers suggesting the establishment of emu farms.
- ▶ At the time, emus were considered a pest, especially in the wheat belt of Western Australia, where large groups would trample crops.
- ▶ In 1922, that state passed an ordinance declaring them as vermin and a bounty was paid on emu beaks.
- ▶ Wild Emus are now protected throughout Australia, although the Western Australian government can still authorise culling for pest control.



EMU PRODUCTS

- ▶ In the early 1990s, several schemes promoted emu farming and by 1996 there were more than 500 emu farms in Australia.
- ▶ However, the schemes vastly over-estimated the demand for emu meat and other products and most collapsed.
- ▶ In 2018 fewer than 12 emu farmers remained in business in Australia but, according to the ABC, there was an increasing demand for emu products, including meat, leather, oil and eggs.
- ▶ One emu yields about 11 kilograms of meat and seven and a half litres of oil.
- ▶ The oil is said to aid in various conditions including arthritis and is used in a salve and swallowed as capsules.
- ▶ The emu industry is tightly regulated by state and territory governments. Wild birds, even if legally culled, cannot be used for meat, oil or leather production.



SOME FACTS ABOUT EMUS

- ▶ The Emu is a flightless bird native to Australia
- ▶ The Emu is the second largest living bird in the world!
- ▶ A full-grown Emu stands 1.5-2 metres tall and can weigh over 45 kg.
- ▶ Both males and females are brownish, with dark Gray head and neck.
- ▶ Emus can run at 50km per hour, which is faster than Usain Bolt, the fastest man.
- ▶ Its commonly thought that Emus are faster than the Eastern Grey Kangaroos - not correct, the Eastern Grey Kangaroo can reach a top speed of 71km per hour.
- ▶ If feeling threatened, they kick with their big three-toed feet.
- ▶ The Emus natural lifespan is between 10-20 years
- ▶ The meat has less than 0.05% cholesterol and is higher in iron, protein and Vitamin C than beef.
- ▶ One emu egg makes an omelette the size of one made with a dozen chicken eggs.





EMU PARENTING

- ▶ The mother lays 7 to 10 dark green eggs that are usually around 13 cm long, in a ground nest.
- ▶ However, it's the father that incubates them.
- ▶ The incubation period for emu eggs is 56 days.
- ▶ In this time, he will not leave to drink or eat. He does not leave the nest for up to two months.
- ▶ The striped young soon run with the adults. In small flocks' emus forage for fruits and insects.



WHAT SOUND DOES AN EMU MAKE?

- ▶ The peculiar structure of the trachea of the emu is correlated with the loud booming note of the bird during the breeding season.
- ▶ An Emu has a low deep voice that sounds a bit like a hollow drum.
- ▶ They can also grunt and whistle.
- ▶ The sound can be loud but is so low frequency it is hard to record.
- ▶ In some areas you can hear an Emu from two kilometres away.

HEALTH CARE, PESTS & DISEASES

- ▶ Animal health, welfare and biosecurity are all important stages of the livestock production chain. If managed poorly each can have adverse impacts on productivity.
- ▶ Biosecurity programs for farming industries are designed to prevent the spread of infectious disease and contain disease outbreaks when they occur.
- ▶ Parasites and disease impact on all animals, including Alpacas. Animals affected by disease may not always show obvious clinical signs.
- ▶ Biosecurity is important at the national, regional and property level.
- ▶ Producers are governed by Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines. State and territory governments are responsible for animal welfare laws and their enforcement. These are enforced through animal welfare or prevention of cruelty to animals' legislation.





RISKS & CHALLENGES

- ▶ Like any primary production enterprise there are risks associated with commercial production of Emu products. Some will be outside of a producer's control however experienced producers are usually able to manage these risks.
- ▶ Risks include the loss of vital export markets. The COVID-19 outbreak had a massive impact on a lot of our export markets.
- ▶ Disease and pests, it is extremely important that we maintain Australia's freedom from major diseases through strict quarantine laws and procedures.
- ▶ Here in Australia weather events such as drought, fires and flooding take a huge toll on our farming communities. They really need our support.

A photograph of two emus standing in a dry, yellowish-brown grassy field under a cloudy sky. One emu is in the foreground, facing right, and the other is slightly behind and to the left, also facing right.

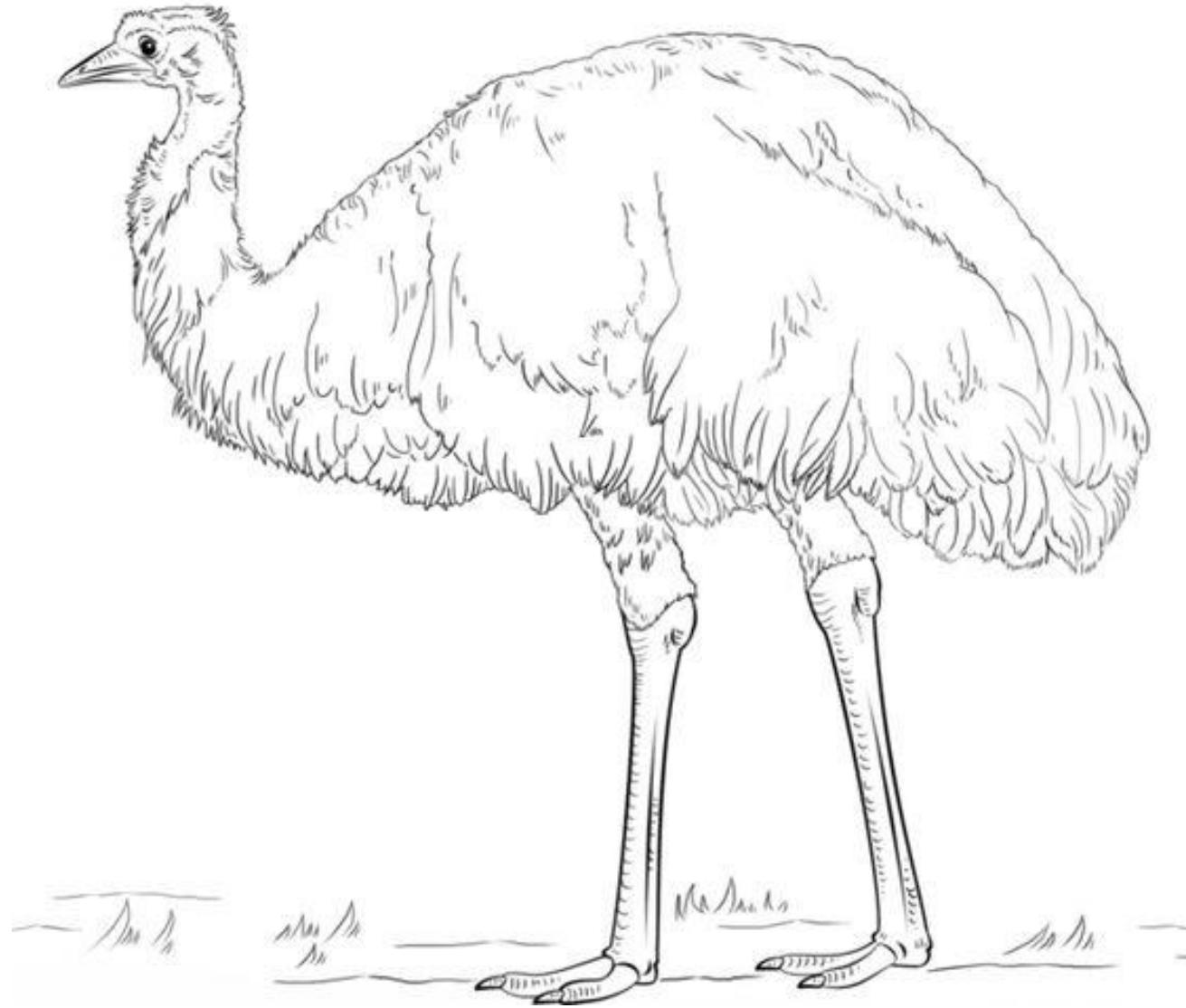
POP QUIZ

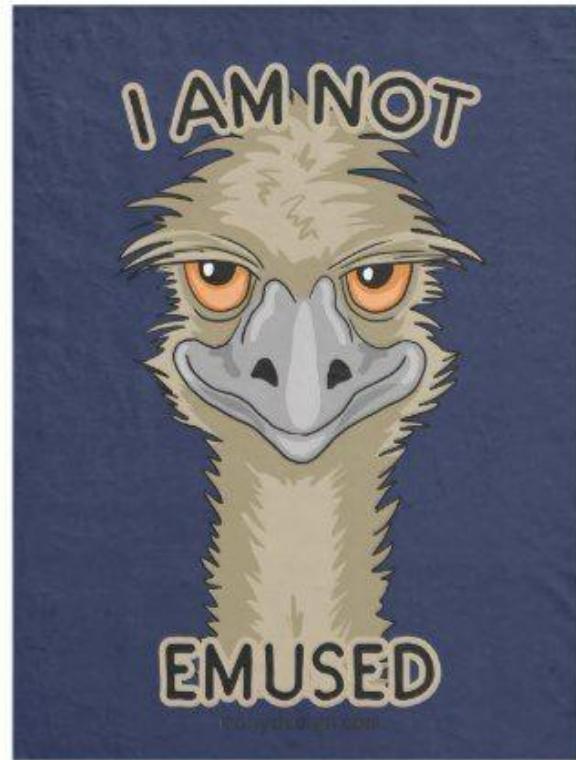
- ▶ The first Emu farm was reported to have started in _____
- ▶ Emus can live for _____
- ▶ Emus were imported into Australia
TRUE/FALSE
- ▶ The mother Emu raises the chicks by herself
TRUE/FALSE
- ▶ In some areas you can hear an Emu from _____ away.
- ▶ Emu egg incubation takes _____
- ▶ Emus can run up to _____
- ▶ Emus can fly over long distances
TRUE/FALSE
- ▶ Emus can grow to _____ tall and weigh up to _____

NOTES



EMU





RESOURCE

Wikipedia

australianfoodtimeline.com.au