

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Struthioniformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Casuarus casuaris*

**Family:** Casuariidae  
**Common Name:** Southern Cassowary

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None

**Photo (Male): ON LEFT**



**Photo (Female): ON RIGHT**



## NATURAL HISTORY:

**Geographic Range:** Europe  Asia  North America  Neotropical   
 Africa  Australia  Other Papua New Guinea and surrounding islands.

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal   
 Riverine  Montane  Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Circadian Cycle:** Diurnal  Crepuscular  Nocturnal  Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Cold Tolerance:** To 70° F  To 60° F  To 50° F  To 40° F   
 To 30° F  To 20° F  Other  Can tolerate colder temperatures for short periods of time if provided shelter such as a barn to get out of the weather. Should not be allowed outside for extended periods of time when below freezing, due to risk of frost bite. Do not allow out with ice on ground due to slip related injury potential.

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F   
 To 110° F  Other  Can tolerate warm temperatures provided they have access to shade and shallow pools to lay in to cool off.

**Diet:** Frugivore  Carnivore  Piscivore  Insectivore   
 Nectivore  Omnivore  Folivore  Other (Add Below)

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## Captive Dietary Needs:

Primarily frugivore, but have been known to eat animal protein. Are kept on a pelleted diet with fruit and vegetables in captivity. Please contact studbook keeper for recommended diet.

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 35-40 Females: 35-40

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: 40-50 Females: 40-50

## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: 4-5 years, one male reported successful breeding at 3 years. Females: 4-5 years

**Courtship Displays:** The male will dance around the female and boom; the female will then allow the male to mount.

**Nest Site Description:** Generally a shallow scrape in the ground

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** 2-6 pale greenish-blue eggs

**Incubation Period:** 47-54 days

**Fledgling Period:** Chicks are unflighted and precocial, typically independent by 6 months but can remain with the father for up to 9 months.

**Parental Care:** Cared for strictly by the male, no female involvement.

**Chick Development:** Chicks hatch out with striped down. At about 3 months they begin to lose stripes and by 6 months are completely brown and the head and neck coloration is starting to become visible. It can take up to 3.5 years to reach full adult plumage.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Solitary in the wild with possible overlapping territories. Females will spend time in the males territory prior to copulation and egg laying

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Individuals should be housed separately with some visual barriers from other cassowary. If housing a pair, birds should be housed separately and introduced only during breeding season when both birds show interest in one another. They should be separated again once the female has completed her clutch.

**Minimum Group Size:**  
One

**Maximum Group Size:** Two, but separated for ~8-10 months a year. Can house the male with offspring until the offspring are 9-12

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months old. May begin to see aggression sooner depending on his interest in breeding with the female.

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:**

Varies

**Comments:**

Some facilities have been able to house wallabies with success, allowing the wallabies areas to escape that the cassowary cannot enter.

**Optimal Habitat Size:** 1500 Sq Ft

**Management Challenges:**

This species is generally easy to maintain in captivity. They do however require a protected contact set up due to their aggressive nature

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Please contact studbook keeper for access to husbandry manual.

## REFERENCES:

Biggs, James International Cassowary Husbandry Manual, 2013.

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## COMPLETED BY:

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