

Ostrich

Struthio camelus



ANIMAL FACTS



Physical Characteristics

- Ostriches are the largest birds on the planet.
- Males tend to be larger than females.
- Females have brown-gray plumage and males have black-white plumage.
- Their necks and legs are mostly bare of feathers.
- They have extremely powerful hind legs, that allow them to reach speeds of up to 40 miles per hour.

Size

- Height: 6-9 feet tall
- Weight: 200-290 pounds
- Wingspan: Average of 6.6 feet

Lifespan

- Wild: 40-45 years
- Zoos: 50 years

Behaviors

- Ostriches live in flocks of 5 to 50 individuals with multiple males and females.
- In these flocks, there are dominant females, which get to nest at the center of their chosen nesting site.
- They tend to be found around, and travel with, other grazing animals like antelope and zebra.

Diet

- Wild: Herbivorous, typically eating leaves, seeds, grains, nuts, and occasionally fruit.
- Zoo: Dark leafy greens, specially formulated dry food pellets

Reproduction

- Incubation Period: 40 days
- Fledging/Parenting: Both males and females take turns looking after nests, with males taking care during the night, and females during the day. The young leave the nest after a few days, and are cared for by the adults for up to 9 months.
- Clutch Size: 7-10 eggs
- During breeding season, flocks can occupy territories of up to 7 miles, which lasts about 5 months.
- During courtship, males display for females by crouching and fanning their wings. They'll also use similar behaviors, along with hisses or other noises, to intimidate other males.
- Ostriches have also been known to use communal nests, with anywhere from 15 to 60 eggs in a single nest.

Habitat and Range

- Habitat: hot, dry, sandy savannas and woodland areas
- Range: Central and Southern Africa

Conservation

- IUCN Status: Least Concern
- Contributing factors: While considered "least concern", some sub-species are considered threatened, even though there are no solid



numbers on their wild populations. It's generally agreed their population as a whole is on the decline.

- Ostrich are typically hunted for their hides (which makes a fine leather), feathers, and eggs.

Classification

- Kingdom: Animalia
- Phylum: Chordata
- Class: Aves
- Order: Struthioniformes
- Family: Struthionidae
- Genus: *Struthio*
- Species: *S. camelus*

Interesting Facts

- Contrary to popular belief, ostriches don't bury their heads in the sand. Rather, to escape detection, they've been known to lay flat on the ground with their necks outstretched- this is most likely the behavior that started that myth.