



FASCINATING SOUTHERN CASSOWARY FACTS

- The modern cassowary has been wandering and helping regenerate Gondwanan rainforests for 5–7 million years, long before humans arrived. It shares a common ancestor with emus, ostriches, rheas and kiwis from around 80 million years.
- A single bird can:
 - Eat and disperse seeds from 250+ rainforest plant species.
 - Swallow large fruits and seeds whole.
 - Travel long distances dispersing seeds and improve their germination after passing them through its gut.
 - In places like the wet lowlands around Townsville and up into Paluma, they're a living seed delivery service for rainforest recovery.
- Cassowaries can weigh up to 74kg and live for decades, but their slow reproduction, flightlessness, and increasingly fragmented habitat make them vulnerable, leading to their listing as endangered in Australia.
- Cassowaries communicate using ultra-low frequency "bass" calls (~23 Hz) that travel long distances through dense rainforest, allowing them to stay in contact across lowland and mountain habitats.
- Known for powerful legs and sharp claws, cassowaries are rarely dangerous as they are naturally shy, with most incidents occurring when they are fed and become less wary of people.
- Cassowary parenting is one of the more unusual in the bird world:
 - Females may mate with several males.
 - Males incubate the eggs and raise the chicks solo.
 - Dad does the childcare while Mum moves on.



Report cassowary sightings

If you spot a cassowary or see evidence of one between Ingham and Townsville, scan the QR code to report it to NQ Dry Tropics.

