

Cassowary

Bird descended from the dinosaurs

- Scientists believe the casque on cassowaries' heads releases heat when they are too hot and retains heat in the cold.
- Black feathers help cassowaries to camouflage in the shadows created by the rainforest canopy.
- The plumage of cassowary chicks matches their environment. When close to the ground, they blend into the leaf litter.
- Male cassowaries care for their chicks, sitting on the eggs for around six weeks and caring for the young chicks.
- The cassowary cannot fly away from predators because it is a flightless bird. Instead, it uses sharp claws for defence.
- Cassowaries, like many birds, can see in the ultra-violet light spectrum. This helps them spot fruits among the leaf litter.
- Cassowaries have a strong digestive system, so they can break down the toxins in the most poisonous fruits on earth.
- They have a diverse diet of seeds, fish, yabbies, birds, rats, and small mammals in the rainforest.

The cassowary removes all flesh from fruits when it eats. When fruit passes out the other end on the forest floor, the seed emerges into another rainforest tree.



“The cassowary plum... only (cassowaries) can eat this. We can’t eat it. It can kill you. So, it’s very, very bad but we do use the sap for cuts and bruises.”

DESHELL,
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