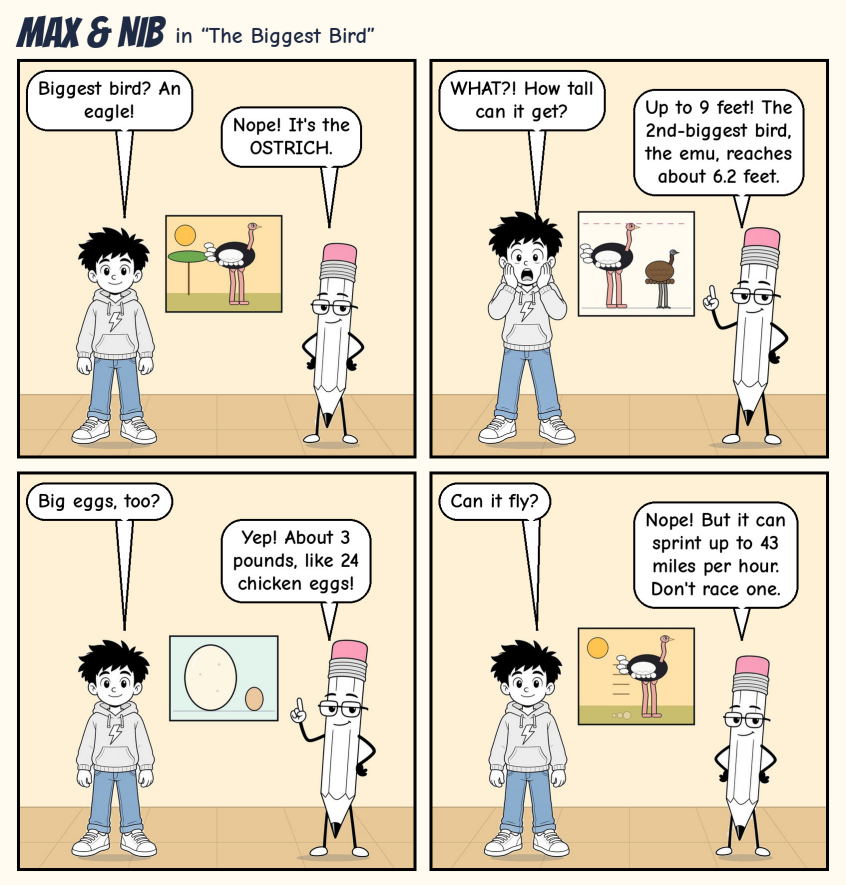


Name: _____ Date: _____

What's the Biggest Bird in the World?

Life Science · Grades 3–6 · About 15 minutes · Max & Nib

Cool facts

What is the biggest bird in the world? It is the ostrich, from Africa! The Smithsonian's National Zoo says an adult ostrich can stand up to 9 feet tall and weigh 200 to 300 pounds. The second-biggest bird is the emu, from Australia. Emus stand about 4.9 to 6.2 feet tall (San Diego Zoo). So the tallest ostriches are almost 3 feet taller than the tallest emus! Ostriches can't fly, but they lay the biggest eggs of any living bird. One egg weighs about 3 pounds, as much as 24 chicken eggs! Not every ostrich is 9 feet tall, though: females and many males are shorter.

Cool Fact An ostrich's eye is almost **2 inches** wide! (San Diego Zoo)

Questions

1. What is the biggest bird in the world?

2. Which bird is the second biggest, and where does it live?

3. Why does the sheet say an ostrich can be “up to” 9 feet tall?

4. One ostrich egg weighs about as much as 24 chicken eggs. About how many chicken eggs would weigh the same as 2 ostrich eggs?

Show your work

Write about it

If you could have one ostrich superpower (super height, super speed, or giant eggs), which would you pick? Why?

Word Record **Ratite**: a big bird that can’t fly, like the ostrich, emu, rhea, cassowary and kiwi. (Smithsonian)

What's the Biggest Bird in the World? — Answer Key

Grades 3–6 · For teacher or parent use

Answers

1. What is the biggest bird in the world?

   The ostrich.

2. Which bird is the second biggest, and where does it live?

   The emu. It lives in Australia.

3. Why does the sheet say an ostrich can be “up to” 9 feet tall?

   Because not every ostrich is that tall. About 9 feet is for the tallest adults; females and many males are shorter.

4. One ostrich egg weighs about as much as 24 chicken eggs. About how many chicken eggs would weigh the same as 2 ostrich eggs?

   About 48 chicken eggs (24 × 2 = 48, or 24 + 24 = 48).

Writing prompt: If you could have one ostrich superpower (super height, super speed, or giant eggs), which would you pick? Why?
Accept any reasoned answer for the writing prompt. For adults: the Smithsonian’s National Zoo gives adult ostriches as 200–300 pounds and up to 9 feet tall (including the neck). The San Diego Zoo lists male ostriches at 6.9–9 feet and females at 5.7–6.2 feet, and emus at 4.9–6.2 feet and 66–121 pounds; the Smithsonian calls the emu the second-largest living bird (average height about 5.7 feet). So the tallest ostriches are about 2.8 feet (almost 3 feet) taller than the tallest emus. The San Diego Zoo gives an ostrich egg as about 3 pounds, about the weight of 24 chicken eggs, and short sprints of up to 43 mph.

Sources

- Smithsonian’s National Zoo: Ostrich — https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/ostrich
- Smithsonian’s National Zoo: Emu — https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/emu
- San Diego Zoo Animals & Plants: Ostrich — https://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/ostrich
- San Diego Zoo Animals & Plants: Emu — https://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/emu

Cool Fact One running ostrich stride can be **10 to 16 feet** long, longer than many rooms! (San Diego Zoo)

Cool Fact Ostriches are the only birds with just **two toes** on each foot. All other birds have three or more. (San Diego Zoo)