

RHEA

Kingdom: Animalia Phylum: Chordata Class: Vertebrata Order: Aves Family: Rheidae
Rhea americana

Description: The Greater Rhea is a large South American bird that resembles an ostrich.

Height: 5 feet

Weight: 44-55 lbs.

Lifespan:

Habitat: Pampas. Avoids open grasslands.

Range: Central and eastern South America

Status: Stable but declining

Diet in the Wild: Grasses, herbs, insects and small animals

Special Features:

- Rhea cannot fly, but has unusually long wings they use as a rudder to help avoid predators.
- Also called a nandu after its call.
- The beak is up to 5 inches long and is used to bite enemies and snap up prey.
- Its powerful legs help it move with great speed across the pampas. Each stride can span up to 6.5 feet. Can run up to 30 mph.
- Each foot has three toes.
- Named for Rhea the mother of Zeus.
- Live in flocks of 20-30 birds.
- Has excellent hearing and vision
- Gets most of its water from vegetation

Breeding/Care of Young:

- Sexual maturity is 2-3 years.
- Lays 13-30 eggs.
- Incubation is 25-40 days.
- The males incubate the eggs and will even vigorously defend the nest, even from females.
- One brood per year.
- One Rhea egg is equal in volume to 12 chicken eggs.
- The cock cares for the chicks for 6 months.

