

Name _____

From Giants to Miniatures: Exploring the World of Bird Sizes

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. The ostrich's speed and size are significant adaptations for survival in its habitat. Its ability to run at high speeds allows it to outrun predators, while its large size acts as a deterrent to potential threats. Additionally, its height provides an advantage for scanning the horizon for signs of danger.
2. The small size of the bee hummingbird benefits its foraging behavior by allowing it to access nectar from tiny flowers that larger birds cannot reach. This gives the bee hummingbird access to a rich food source while minimizing competition from larger birds.
3. The ostrich plays an important role as a seed disperser in its ecosystem by consuming fruits and seeds and dispersing them over large distances through its droppings. This helps maintain plant diversity and contributes to ecosystem health. Similarly, the bee hummingbird serves as a key pollinator, transferring pollen between flowers as it feeds on nectar, which is essential for the reproduction of many plant species.
4. One unique behavior of the bee hummingbird is its ability to enter a state of torpor—a temporary hibernation-like state—during the night or periods of low food availability. This behavior allows the bee hummingbird to conserve energy and survive harsh environmental conditions.

