

# Meet the Platypus

## Unique Features

- It is a semi-aquatic mammal, living both on land and in the water
- It is one of only five species of mammals that lay eggs

## Physical Characteristics

- It is relatively small, with avg. length of 30-40 cm and weight of 1-2 kg
- It is covered in dense waterproof fur that provides thermal insulation
- Its distinctive bill is used to forage for food in streams and rivers
- It has webbed feet and a broad flat tail that make it an excellent swimmer

## The Platypus Lifestyle

- It is a solitary animal and is primarily active at night. During the day, it is most often found resting in its burrow.
- A females lays 1-3 eggs in a burrow on land, which hatch after about 10 days. The young are raised by the mother.
- It finds food using using its bill to detect movement of prey in the water. It feeds on insects, shrimp, and small fish.
- It is one of a very few venomous mammals. It has a gland in its bill that produces a toxin used to stun or kill its prey.

## Threats to the Platypus and Conservation Efforts

- It is facing several threats to its survival, including habitat loss, water pollution, and climate change.
- Conservation efforts include protecting river and stream habitats by creating of reserves and parks, and reducing water pollution by regulating industrial activities and pesticide use in agriculture.



## Did you know?

Often referred to as a “duck-billed platypus,” the species is best known for its distinctive bill (snout) which resembles that of a duck.

# Platypus *Facts*



## *The Platypus*

- mammal native to eastern Australia
- semi-aquatic (lives in water and on land)
- lay eggs instead of birthing live young

## *Characteristics*

The platypus is a relatively small animal, reaching an average length of 30-40 cm, and weighing between 1-2 kg. It is often referred to as the “duck-billed platypus” because of its distinctive bill.

The fur on its body is dense and waterproof, and it also has webbed feet, which make it an excellent swimmer.

## *Lifestyle*

The platypus lives in the streams, rivers, and lakes of eastern Australia. It is a solitary animal and is primarily active at night. During the day, it is most often found resting in its burrow.

The female platypus will lay one to three eggs in a burrow. The eggs hatch after about 10 days.

The platypus uses its bill to detect prey’s movement in the water. It then uses its webbed feet to paddle and its bill to scoop up shrimp, worms, and small fish.

The platypus has a gland in its bill that produces a toxin it uses to stun or kill prey. The platypus is one of the few venomous mammals in the world (the venom is not harmful to humans).

## *Threats and Conservation*

Despite its unique and interesting features, the platypus is facing several threats to its survival: habitat loss, water pollution, and climate change.

Conservation efforts are underway in Australia to protect the platypus and its habitat, including:

- the protection of river and stream habitats through the creation of reserves and parks
- reducing water pollution through regulation of industrial activities and agricultural pesticides



## Platypus Facts

by Lis Cinelli, contributor

The platypus is a semi-aquatic mammal native to the eastern regions of Australia. It is one of only a few species of mammals that lay eggs instead of giving birth to live young, and is often referred to as the “duck-billed platypus.” The species is known for its distinctive bill, which resembles that of a duck, and its webbed feet, which make it an excellent swimmer.

## Physical Characteristics of the Platypus

The platypus is a relatively small animal, reaching an average length of 30 to 40 cm, and weighing between 1 to 2 kg. The fur on its body is dense and waterproof, and

it has a distinctive bill that resembles that of a duck. The bill is used to forage for food in the streams and rivers where the platypus lives.

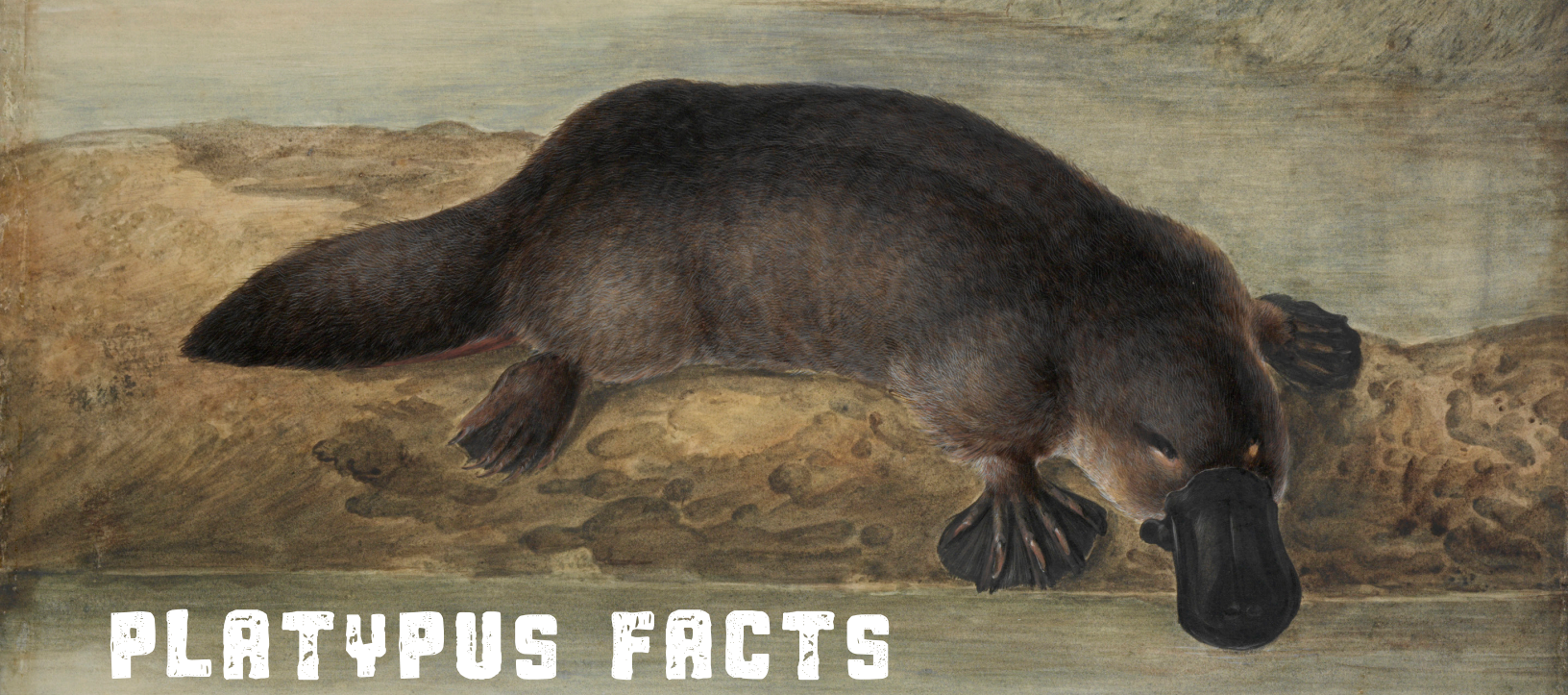
## The Platypus Lifestyle

The platypus lives in the streams, rivers, and lakes of eastern Australia and is a semi-aquatic species. It is a solitary animal and is primarily active at night. During the day, it is most often found resting in its burrow. The species is known to mate between June and October, and the female platypus will lay between one and three eggs in a burrow. The eggs hatch after about 10 days, and the young are raised by the mother until they are old enough to fend for themselves.

The platypus has a unique way of finding food. It uses its bill to detect electric fields generated by the movement of prey in the water, such as shrimp, worms, and small fish. It then uses its webbed feet to paddle and its bill to scoop up the prey and bring it to the surface. The platypus also has a gland in its bill that produces a toxin, which it uses to stun or kill its prey. This makes the platypus one of the few venomous mammals in the world, although the venom is not harmful to humans.

## Threats to the Platypus and Conservation Efforts

Despite its unique and interesting features, the platypus is facing several threats to its survival, including habitat loss, water pollution, and climate change. Conservation efforts are underway in Australia to protect the platypus and its habitat, including the protection of river and stream habitats through the creation of reserves and parks, and reducing water pollution through regulation of industrial activities and the use of pesticides in agriculture.



# PLATYPUS FACTS

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The platypus finds food by using its bill to detect the movement of prey in the water. It then uses its webbed feet to paddle and its bill to scoop up the shrimp, worms, and small fish and bring it to the surface.

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## THREATS AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS

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- climate change

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## THREATS TO THE PLATYPUS AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS

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