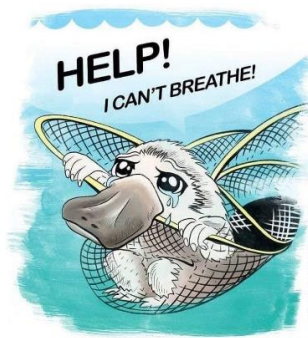


Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*)



The Platypus is a semi-aquatic mammal, endemic to Australia. Platypuses are grouped in a separate order of mammals known as monotremes, which are distinguished from all other mammals because they lay eggs. The Platypus is one of only two mammals in Australia that lay eggs, the echidna is the other. Platypuses forage for food underwater using their sensitive bill to find food. Platypuses are bottom feeders, they scoop up insects and larvae, shellfish, and worms in their bill along with bits of gravel and mud from the bottom of a river. Platypuses do not have teeth, so the bits of gravel help them to “chew” their food.

Threats to Platypuses and other air-breathing aquatic wildlife



There is increasing evidence that Platypus populations are declining due to multiple stressors, including habitat loss and poor river management. Furthermore, the platypus is now listed as “Near Threatened”, under the IUCN red list.

In NSW, air-breathing aquatic wildlife such as Platypuses, turtles and rakali are being caught and drowning horrible deaths in ‘set and forget’ enclosed yabby traps (such as opera house nets). These vile traps allow the air-breathing aquatic wildlife to enter but not find their way out, and so in just a few minutes, the results are inevitable and tragic.

Another concern, specifically to the female platypuses, is that many enclosed yabby traps are used during the summer months when the females are foraging for food to nourish their babies. If a mother platypus dies, her young will certainly also starve to death.

Wildlife conservation action is needed



The use and possession of enclosed yabby traps are banned in public waters east of the Newell Highway and in three stretches of the river west of the Newell Highway: the Edward River upstream of Stevens Weir, the Murray River upstream of the Echuca/Moama Rd Bridge and the Murrumbidgee River upstream of Darlington Point Rd Bridge. All enclosed yabby traps are required to have a bycatch reduction device with a maximum diameter of 90mm (fixed ring) fitted to all entrance funnels. However, there is still confusion around current regulations and traps, with any entrance size, are being used illegally in freshwater waterways and still causing deaths.

Formation of the NSW Platypus and Turtle Alliance

The Australian wildlife Society/NSW Platypus and Turtle Alliance is advocating for a full-ban on enclosed yabby traps (sale, use, and possession) in NSW to protect Australia's air-breathing aquatic wildlife. The alliance is being formed off the back of the success of the Victorian Alliance for Platypus Safe Yabby Traps and Queensland Alliance for Platypus. The Victorian success in banning enclosed yabby traps across the state has been a push for other states to step up and do the same. Legislation in the ACT has also been passed. For more information, please visit our website <https://www.aws.org.au/nsw-platypus-and-turtle-alliance-2/>

How you can help



- **Contact your local or state politicians** - politely ask them to support a change in regulations which ban the sale, ownership, and use of enclosed yabby traps, and explain why.
- **Spread the word** - many people are simply unaware of the regulations or about the risks that these traps pose, so please pass this information on. If you find an enclosed yabby trap being used illegally, immediately report this to the relevant authorities. In NSW, report to Fishwatch – 1800 043 536.
- **Talk to the retailers** – if you go into a fishing/outdoor store, ask if they sell enclosed yabby traps such as opera house nets and if the answer is yes, explain the issue to them and then ask them if there is a good reason they won't stop selling them.
- **Buy wildlife-friendly traps** - such as open-top or hoop nets – they catch just as many yabbies!

THE *amazing* PLATYPUS



HOW CAN YOU HELP THEM?

USE LESS WATER

The water we use in our homes and gardens can come from rivers where platypus live, so the less water we use, the more there is for platypus.

KEEP RIVERS CLEAN & HEALTHY

Pick up any plastic rings, rubber bands or hair ties you see, even those on the street. Rubbish can get washed into rivers and platypuses can get tangled in them. Try to pick up one piece every day.

FISH RESPONSIBLY

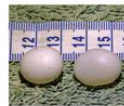
Don't use illegal opera house yabby nets. Let your parents know if you see any, as platypuses can drown in them. Also make sure you take all your fishing lines and rubbish with you.

Produced by Doug Gimesy and Joshua Griffiths. Supported by a grant from the Australian Wildlife Society. Image: Doug Gimesy. Report any sightings to www.platypusSPOT.org

INTERESTING FACTS

BUILT FOR AN AQUATIC LIFE

Platypuses have a streamlined body, waterproof fur and webbed feet. They swim with their front feet and steer with their back feet and tail.



AN EGG LAYING MAMMAL

Unlike most mammals that give birth to live young, platypuses (and echidnas) lay eggs. Newborn platypuses are small and hairless.

THEY 'SEE' WITH THEIR BILL UNDERWATER

Platypuses swim underwater with their eyes closed. To find their food, they use their bill which is covered with thousands of sensors.



VENOMOUS SPURS

Males have venomous spurs on their hind ankles that they use to battle other males during breeding season. The venom is extremely painful!

KEY THREATS

- Reduced river flows due to drought, dams, and human water use
- Climate change
- Habitat destruction from agriculture and urban development
- River bank erosion
- Pollution
- Entanglement in litter and fishing line

HOW CAN YOU HELP THEM?

USE LESS WATER

The water we use in our homes and gardens can come from rivers where platypus live, so the less water we use, the more there is for platypus.

KEEP RIVERS CLEAN & HEALTHY

Pick up plastic rings, rubber bands or hair ties – even those on the street. These can wash into rivers and entangle platypuses. Try to pick up one piece every day.

FISH RESPONSIBLY

Don't use illegal opera house yabby nets. Let your parents know if you see any, as platypuses can drown in them. Also make sure you take all your fishing line and rubbish with you.

BE A PLATYPUS CHAMPION

Spread the word so other people can help platypuses. If you are lucky enough to see one, record it using the platypusSPOT app. The more we know about where they are, the better.

Produced by Doug Gimesy and Joshua Griffiths. Supported by a grant from the Australian Wildlife Society. Images: Doug Gimesy