

using bait to help prevent deep hooking of fish

> Use barbless hooks to make removal easier

> Avoid using lead-based fishing tackle. Lead is a toxic metal that in sufficient quantities has adverse effects on the nervous and reproductive systems of mammals and birds. It is found in most fishing jigs and sinkers. There are alternatives to the traditional lead tackle. Anglers can now use sinkers and jigs made from non-poisonous materials such as tin, bismuth, steel, and tungsten-nickel alloy

> Collect and dispose of all unwanted fishing line

> If possible cut unwanted fishing line into small pieces to avoid entanglement from other animals, such as birds that may scavenge through bins

> If you hook wildlife accidentally, do not cut the line. Gently reel in the animal and place a towel or shirt over its eyes and head and carefully attempt to remove the hook or line. If it is too deeply hooked or it has swallowed the hook, do not release the animal call the WIRES Hotline 1800 641 188 or Sydney Wildlife Rescue Hotline (02) 9413 4300.

For more information on the Platypus visit:

Office of Environment and Heritage

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/animals/ThePlatypus.htm>

Australian Platypus Conservancy

<http://www.platypus.asn.au>



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Wildlife Fact Sheet

Platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*



a city of choice and opportunity in a natural environment

Where do platypus live?

The platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) is found along the east coast of Australia from Tasmania to tropical Queensland. They live in both slow and fast moving rivers and creeks and are even known to occasionally inhabit artificial water bodies, such as farm dams, particularly those close to natural watercourses.



When they are not foraging for food they spend most of their time in burrows that they dig along the banks of the rivers and creeks. They can also be seen burrowing under roots, leaves and in rock crevices and have been known to have a home range up to seven kilometres.



Platypus have been discovered in the Georges River in the past, with sightings as recent as 2011 however the size and extent of the population is largely unknown.

What does the platypus eat?

Platypus are largely nocturnal and crepuscular, which means they forage mainly at night, dawn and dusk. They are carnivorous, feeding on worms, insect larvae, freshwater shrimps, and yabbies. They require at least 20% of their own body weight in food per day. Most foraging is done on the bottom of riverbeds and along and adjacent to river banks.

Platypus do not use their eyes or ears for hunting, instead the upper and lower bill surfaces are packed with hundreds of receptors which respond to touch and the tiny electric currents produced when invertebrates such as shrimps and larvae, move in the water. These receptors are also believed to be vital to the platypus's ability to navigate successfully among rocks and other obstacles when the platypus is underwater.

The life cycle of the platypus

Platypus are monotremes, which means they are egg laying mammals. The female can lay one to three eggs once each breeding season from about two years of age.

The breeding season is between October and March in NSW. The young stay with the mother in the burrow until they are about 3-4 months old. Whilst platypus have been known to live up to 16 years in the wild, the average lifespan is thought to be four to seven years.

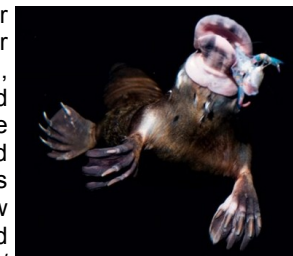
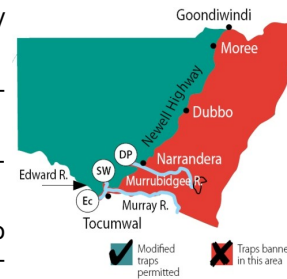
Male and female platypus will generally avoid each other, except to mate. Males have also been known to fight each other during the breeding season and may inflict wounds on each other using their sharp ankle spurs.

Protecting the platypus habitat

The biggest threats today to platypus are:

- > urbanisation
- > reduction in water quality
- > fishing litter
- > illegally used yabby traps
- > clearing of riparian vegetation
- > disturbances from foxes, dogs and cats.

Yabby traps are known to catch and drown air-breathing animals such as platypus, turtles, water rats and birds. They enter the traps looking for food, and become trapped and drown. The use of these traps and the associated accidental platypus deaths are continuing. In New South Wales the use and possession of yabby/ opera house traps are banned in public waters east



of the Newell Highway and in three stretches of river west of the Newell Highway: the Edward River upstream of Steven's Weir, the Murray River upstream of the Echuca/ Moama Rd Bridge and the Murrumbidgee River upstream of Darlington Point Rd Bridge (see the map of yabby/opera trap house trap closures. This area includes the whole of the Campbelltown Local Government Area.

Further information is available from www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au If you find a trap, you can report it to DPI Fisheries or the Fisher Watch phone line on 1800 043 536.

Like most Australian wildlife the Platypus is protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

Platypus in Campbelltown

In late 2011 two platypus were found in the Georges River, marking the first official sightings in three years. Unfortunately both animals were dead, one as a result of drowning in a yabby trap and the other becoming tangled in fishing line.

There have been seven official sighting locations since 1976 in the Campbelltown Local Government Area and more than likely there have been many more unreported sightings.

Most platypus sightings are at dawn and dusk when the animals are most actively foraging.

If you see a platypus in the Campbelltown Local Government Area, contact Council's Environment Unit by phone on (02) 4645 4000.

What can I do to help?

Unwanted fishing line and hooks can cause injury and death to aquatic wildlife and birds. Ways you can to help reduce this and help to improve the habitat of our native animals include:

- > Do not fish near feeding and nesting birds.
- > Avoid leaving your line unattended.
- > Avoid stainless steel hooks because they take years to break down in the environment.
- > Use artificial lures or non-offset circle hooks when