

Research by UNSW found that platypus observations declined 32% in NSW over the last 30 years and 27% in Queensland over the same time period. The overall distribution of platypuses across eastern Australia, as determined by sightings, was reduced by 22%, or about 200,000 km², over three decades.



PLATYPUSWATCH EVENTS CAN BE HELD ANYWHERE THESE MAMMALS MAY EXIST. WE HAPPILY PROVIDE INFORMATION, ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO ALL QUEENSLAND COMMUNITIES.

HOW ELSE CAN YOU HELP?

- Use wildlife-friendly yabby nets.
- Snip and carefully dispose of circular rubbish, like hair ties and rubber bands.
- Reduce water consumption and irrigation.
- Clean up polluted streams or rubbish.
- Remove weeds and rehabilitate banks.
- Avoid over fertilising or harsh chemicals, and be mindful of run-off into waterways.
- Leave logs in watercourses, and stop livestock and feral pigs damaging banks.
- Fish responsibly, ensuring any off-cut lines or lures are disposed of safely.
- Control dogs around watercourses, especially at dusk and dawn.
- Report sightings by using your phone to scan the QR code at right, or email a description of your sighting, location, and details to platypus@wildlife.org.au
- Donate online or check out our adopt-a-platypus program (www.wildlife.org.au/shop/adoptions/adopt-a-platypus), *Wildlife Australia* magazine, and merchandise that supports our conservation programs.
- Like and share our updates on Instagram ([#platypuswatchnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/PlatypusConservationNetwork)) or Facebook ([@PlatypusConservationNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/PlatypusConservationNetwork)).



Visit www.wildlife.org.au/platypuswatch for more.



PlatypusWatch is a citizen science project aimed at conserving platypuses and their habitat through community engagement.

WHO ARE WE?

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, founded in 1962, has proudly protected the state's native species and ecosystems for over 59 years.

Now known as Wildlife Queensland, it remains at the forefront of community engagement, advocacy, campaigning, and research for conserving Queensland's endemic flora and fauna.

PLATYPUSWATCH is a Wildlife Queensland program that aims to increase community awareness of platypus conservation and gathers population and distribution data from Queensland waterways.

Surveys by community groups deliver quantitative data that identifies where conservation actions are most required, ensuring these monotremes will persist into the future.



ENCLOSED YABBY TRAPS, OR OPERA HOUSE NETS, LEAVE NO ESCAPE AND DROWN AIR-BREATHING PLATYPUSES, RAKALI (AUSTRALIA'S OTTER EQUIVALENT), WATERBIRDS AND TURTLES IN MINUTES. PLATYPUSWATCH RECOMMENDS USING ONLY WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY, OPEN-TOPPED PYRAMID NETS (LEFT). YOU'LL CATCH JUST AS MANY YABBIES AND SAVE PLATYPUSES!

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PlatypusWatch

PLATYPUS CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Data collected enables Wildlife Queensland to raise awareness of important issues that affect platypuses and other aquatic species, allowing us to target conservation efforts where they matter most.



PLATYPUSES PREFER CLEAR, COLD WATERWAYS 1-5 M DEEP. THEY OFTEN BURROW CLOSE TO PERMANENT POOLS WITH SUBMERGED LOGS OR NEAR GENTLE RAPIDS FLOWING OVER SMALL ROCKS, UNDER WHICH THEY FORAGE FOR MACROINVERTEBRATE PREY.

HAVE YOU SEEN PLATYPUSES IN THE UPPER DAWSON REGION?

PlatypusWatch and Wildlife Queensland's Upper Dawson Branch are conducting platypus studies in the Taroom region. Using community-based observation surveys and eDNA studies, we will document platypus populations and distribution in local waterways. The project encourages residents to learn more about this unique mammal and its cryptic lifestyle while also learning science-based skills to observe and monitor platypuses in the wild.

Right: Platypuses have been reported in Castle Creek and in the Dawson River near Moura.

Map © Andrew Mackey / BioGeo.



PLATYPUSES NEED YOUR HELP!

Citizen science involves residents and volunteers in conservation research projects within their local area. The valuable data you help us collect might otherwise take scientists decades to gather!

PlatypusWatch has received a citizen science grant to survey and record platypuses within the upper Dawson River catchment and its creeks and tributaries. You can help us understand platypus distribution near Taroom by reporting sightings and learning how to sample waterways for platypus DNA.

Participants will be trained in observational survey best practice and eDNA collection and will work closely with the Wildlife Queensland Upper Dawson Branch. For more information, visit www.wildlife.org.au/platypuswatch

PLATYPUSES ARE CRYPTIC — WE CAN'T AFFORD COMPLACENCY!

The platypus is one of Australia's most amazing and iconic mammals; unfortunately, there is evidence its numbers are dwindling. Nearly half of this monotreme's known distribution falls within Queensland, yet there is no firm data on how many inhabit the state or exactly which waterways they rely on.

Urbanisation, invasive weeds, pollution, bank destabilisation, irrigation, erosion, netting and sedimentation affect platypus survival. If we can't measure

how platypuses are responding to these threats, we risk losing them from our waterways forever.

PlatypusWatch events encourage locals to look out for the wildlife in their backyards, creeks and streams. Working with councils, landholders and citizens, we record sightings and monitor platypus populations so we can design programs that raise awareness, protect and restore habitats, limit disturbance, and conserve these unique creatures.

CONSERVATION DRIVEN BY YOUR DATA

If we don't know exactly where platypuses thrive in your region, we can't protect them or predict declines due to drought, disease or development. PlatypusWatch observational records are entered into a database used for genuine conservation purposes, such as predicting population fluctuations. Joining a citizen science survey is not only a great way to see wild platypuses but also provides crucial data that will help us plan conservation initiatives.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL DNA?

Environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling is a non-invasive method to detect the presence of DNA from a target species within its environment. With platypuses, it is as simple as taking a water sample!

Since 2016, Wildlife Queensland has been regularly collecting eDNA samples and using them, along with observational records, to map platypus distribution across Queensland. Citizen science data, sightings and eDNA sampling will build an extensive dataset to develop specific conservation and management projects that will

protect platypuses and their habitat. A 2019 eDNA pilot study in the Dawson River detected platypuses in two out of the four sites sampled. With your help, we can extend our sampling efforts along the river system.

