

The Platypus

(Ornithorhynchus anatinus)



The platypus is a semiaquatic, egg-laying mammal found only in eastern Australia and Tasmania. It belongs to the monotreme group, along with four species of echidna.

Recognisable by its duck-like bill, webbed feet, flattened tail, waterproof fur, and small eyes, the male platypus also bears a venomous spur on its hind legs and has strong front limbs for swimming and digging.

Platypuses rest, sleep, or care for their young in burrows dug into riverbanks. Juveniles have teeth, but these are lost soon after leaving the burrow and replaced with tough dental pads.

The skull is specially adapted with electro- and mechanosensory organs in the bill, allowing them to detect and capture prey such as insects, larvae, freshwater shrimp, shellfish, and worms, which they crush with their dental pads instead of teeth.

