**Platypus**

**he platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*), sometimes referred to as the duck-billed platypus, is a**[**semiaquatic**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_semiaquatic_tetrapods)**egg-laying**[**mammal**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal)[**[3]**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platypus#cite_note-3)[**endemic**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endemic_(ecology))**to**[**eastern Australia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_states_of_Australia)**, including**[**Tasmania**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tasmania)**. Together with the four species of**[**echidna**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Echidna)**, it is one of the five**[**extant**](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/extant)**species of**[**monotremes**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotreme)**, the only mammals that lay**[**eggs**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egg_(biology))**instead of giving birth to live young. The animal is the sole living representative of its**[**family**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_(biology))**([Ornithorhynchidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ornithorhynchidae" \o "Ornithorhynchidae)) and**[**genus**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genus)**(*Ornithorhynchus*), though a number of**[**related species**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil_Monotremes)**appear in the fossil record. The first scientists to examine a preserved platypus body (in 1799)**[**[4]**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platypus#cite_note-ASN-4)**judged it a fake, made of several animals sewn together.**[**[5]**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platypus#cite_note-5)

**The unusual appearance of this egg-laying,**[**duck**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duck)**-billed,**[**beaver**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaver)**-tailed,**[**otter**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otter)**-footed mammal baffled European naturalists when they first encountered it, with some considering it an elaborate hoax. It is one of the few species of**[**venomous mammals**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venomous_mammals)**: the male platypus has a**[**spur**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spur_(zoology))**on the hind foot that delivers a**[**venom**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platypus_venom)**capable of causing severe pain to humans. The unique features of the platypus make it an important subject in the study of**[**evolutionary biology**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolutionary_biology)**and a recognizable and iconic symbol of**[**Australia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia)**; it has appeared as a mascot at national events and features on the**[**reverse**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obverse_and_reverse)**of the**[**Australian twenty-cent coin**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_twenty-cent_coin)**. The platypus is the animal emblem of the state of**[**New South Wales**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_South_Wales)**.**[**[6]**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platypus#cite_note-6)

**Until the early 20th century humans hunted the platypus for its fur, but it is now protected throughout its range. Although**[**captive-breeding**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captive_breeding)**programs have had only limited success, and the platypus is vulnerable to the effects of pollution, it is not under any immediate threat.**