



STILL CREEK LANDCARE

PLATYPUS, THEY'RE HERE

I'm sure you've all heard about recent Platypus sightings in our creeks. Well, it's true! As a matter of fact, they've even been spotted in local dams near creek lines.

With this information, Hornsby Shire Council in partnership with Still Creek Landcare, Streamwatch, and Friends of Berowra Valley are working to identify the range and populations of the Platypus.



Through monies received through Sydney Water's 'Healthy Waterways' Community Grants, we are undertaking eDNA testing of over 20 sites across a number of catchments including Still Creek, Glenorie Creek, Halls Creek, Charltons Creek, Tunks Creek and some unnamed creeks. It's been a lot of work, planning and coordinating to prepare for this survey and by the time this article goes to print, we hope to have completed the first of the two DNA samplings and have some results. Keep your fingers crossed.

So to prepare you for the Platypus invasion and the questions the kids will be asking here are some facts.

- When first discovered by modern science, the Platypus was thought to be a hoax
- It is Venomous but thankfully only in mating season. Venom is excreted through a hollow spur behind the Males hind feet. Extremely painful!
- It lays eggs and hatch their young in their burrow
- It hunts with its eyes, ears and nose closed by using electrolocation from sensors in their bill.

- Platypus don't have stomachs, their gullet connects directly into their intestine.
- Platypus don't have nipples, mothers feed their young Milk through mammary gland ducts on their belly.
- The front feet on platypus have retractable webbing (see photo and compare them)
- Platypus don't have teeth, they use gravel stored in their cheeks to help crush food.
- They are a threatened species due mainly to land clearing, fires, drought, pollution, pesticides and predation by dogs, cats and foxes.

Hornsby Shire Council in coordinating this monumental effort and has set up an email address platypus@hornsby.nsw.gov.au for you to report sighting. Council has also set up a web page www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/platypus which is full of useful information.

It would be a great Christmas present for everyone if you keep your eyes open and report any Platypus sighting you make.

For more information, contact Nick on 9653 2056, www.stillcreeklandcare.com.au email Stillcreeklandcare@iinet.net.au or Facebook.

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