

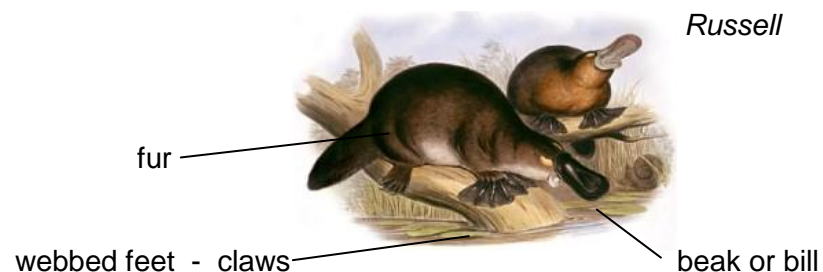
Levels 2 and 3

Look at the vocabulary list before reading this article. Match the vocabulary with the meaning

Vocabulary	meaning
fur	1. the skin of some animals
webbed feet	2. take away dirt
dig	3. toes joined with skin
pouch	4. home for animals
den	5. an animal eaten for food
lick	6. a pocket
prey	7. use the tongue
dusk	8. the start of night
poisonous	9. can hurt and harm
wild	10. outside a zoo

An Australian animal – The Platypus

*by Michael
Russell*



Platypus are small furry animals with a flat tail. They have a beak like a duck and webbed feet for swimming. They have long sharp claws for digging. They use these to dig a den or a home. Platypus live in the water and on land.

They lay eggs and also suckle their young. They have pouches in their cheeks for sand and gravel. This helps them eat worms and small animals with shells. Platypus close their eyes and ear openings when they swim under water.

The mother platypus makes milk from her stomach. The baby platypus or kittens lick the milk off her fur. The male platypus has poisonous spurs on his back ankles. These are to fight with.

The platypus is about 50cm in length. They weigh between one to three kilos and are big eaters. They feed between dusk and early in the morning. Platypus swim with their eyes closed. They find their prey with their bill.

Platypus have been kept in zoos. A New York zoo had two platypus named Cecil and Penelope. They ate twenty five thousand worms a month. They ate crayfish, frogs and fish egg custard. The Platypus were the most expensive animals to feed in the zoo because they ate more in money than the elephants.

The zoo keepers hoped they would have babies but they never did. Penelope escaped from the zoo, and she was never seen again. Cecil lived two more years and then he died.

Platypus can live in the wild for seventeen years because they don't have many enemies.

The platypus is now protected by Australian law.

Article Source adapted from EzineArticles.com

Answer these questions from the text

1. **Platypus are very unusual looking animals**
☐ true
☐ false
2. **The young ones suckle milk from their mother's teats**
☐ true
☐ false
3. **Which part of the body does a platypus use to find its food?**
☐ eyes
☐ beak
☐ ears
☐ tail
4. **Platypus like to eat worms**
☐ true
☐ false
5. **Platypus like to live in Zoos**
☐ true
☐ false
6. **Platypus in a Zoo in New York had young babies.**
☐ true
☐ false