29.7.11 The Platypus

The platypus is a monotreme. A monotreme is an animal that only has one hole. There are only two animals that are monotremes, the platypus and the echidna. The scientific name of the platypus is Ornithorhynchus anatinus.

Male platypus weigh more than females do. Males weigh about 2100 kilograms and the female weighs about 700 kilograms. The platypus is quite small, approximately 34 centimetres long. All platypus have a flattened tail.

Platypus live in rivers, lakes and streams in Eastern Australia. Platypus dig burrows to live in beside the water level. They can move easily from their dry burrow to the water.

The platypus has its eyes and ears closed when it is in the water. The platypus has a very sensitive muzzle to help guide it under water. The platypus’s muzzle is like a duck’s bill.

The platypus eats small insects and small aquatic animals and tadpoles.

The platypus and the echidna are the only mammals that lay eggs. The eggs that the females lay are soft-shelled eggs. Platypus usually lay 2 eggs and it takes 10 to 12 days for the eggs to hatch.

Did you know that when platypus breed, the female stays in the burrow for up to 17 weeks with the babies, only leaving briefly to find food?

By Charlotte