

# Platypus Month Communications Pack 2025

**KEEP PLATYPUS SAFE FROM LOOPY LITTER**



*Melbourne Water, WaterWatch Victoria, River Detectives, North Central CMA, Zoos Victoria, Australian Platypus Conservancy, Bacchus Marsh Platypus Alliance, Werribee River Association, ACT WaterWatch and Merri Paddle.*

*With special thanks to Hobart Rivulet Platypus, Reach out Wildlife Australia, The Changesmiths and Mass Motion.*

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## Purpose

This Communications Pack is designed to help you promote Platypus Month within your community and networks. During Platypus Month, which is held in September, we aim to build awareness of the harmful impacts of loopy litter—such as rubber bands, hair ties, fishing line, plastic rings, string and twine—and encourage correct disposal of these items to protect the platypus. While this Communications Pack is tailored for a Victorian audience, organisations in other states and territories may also find its content valuable for promoting platypus conservation messages.

## Background

September is one of the best times to spot platypuses in Victoria, as it coincides with the peak breeding season, when males are most actively searching for mates. In previous years, organizations such as Melbourne Water and Australian Conservation Foundation have celebrated Platypus Month during September and encouraged citizen scientists to collect sightings of the platypus. In 2025, we aim to build on this momentum by delivering targeted platypus conservation messaging that addresses the harmful impacts of ‘loopy litter’. Loopy litter is any type of litter that forms a ring or loop and includes:

- Hair ties
- Elastic or rubber bands
- Fishing line
- Plastic or metal rings (including bracelets, sealing rings on jar lids, cable ties etc)
- String or twine

These litter items are particularly harmful to the platypus. It is estimated that [4% of Greater Melbourne’s Platypus population](#) is entangled in loopy litter at any given time. In some waterways, like the Werribee River, [rates of entanglement are higher at 15%](#).

Loopy litter poses a significant threat to the platypus due to its body shape and feeding behaviour. Platypus are carnivorous and feed almost exclusively on aquatic macroinvertebrates or ‘waterbugs’. They forage underwater by swimming along the bottom of rivers and creeks with their eyes closed, using electroreceptors in their bills to detect prey. During this process, loopy litter can easily become entangled around their head or bill. Because of their streamlined, tapered body shape, these litter items then tend to migrate further down the platypus’ body until they fit very tightly around the neck, torso, or shoulders.

Once entangled in loopy litter, the platypus is often unable to free itself. Litter entangled around a platypus causes problems by cutting gradually into the flesh, interfering with movement and creating deep wounds. Loose line trailing from a loop can also get snagged underwater and drown

the animal. Captured platypus entangled in litter are generally in poor condition and often do not survive, despite receiving medical treatment.

Community engagement initiatives to educate the public around the dangers of these litter items are vital to protect the platypus. As [higher rates of platypus litter entanglement are associated with areas of greater human population density](#), community education is essential to prevent this issue from escalating into the future.

**If you find a platypus in distress or entangled in litter, please contact Wildlife Victoria:**

**24/7 phone line:** (03) 8400 7300

**Online form:** <https://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au/report-a-wildlife-emergency>

## How you can help

**We would greatly appreciate your help in promoting Platypus Month and building awareness of the impact of loopy litter during September.** We can reduce the occurrence of loopy litter in our waterways by encouraging people to collect and correctly dispose of litter they encounter through the ‘Seize it, Snip it, Bin it’ campaign created by Hobart Rivulet Platypus:

- Seize it: Pick up any discarded litter, especially loopy litter
- Snip it: Cut any loops you find in litter or rubbish before disposing
- Bin it: Dispose of the litter correctly in a bin to prevent it from entering waterways.

By sharing the information included in this pack, you are encouraging positive behaviour change to support the platypus.

## What is included?

- Social media templates
- Short form copy – suitable for newsletters, websites
- Long form copy – suitable for newsletters, websites, blogs
- Case study article on the platypus found with a hair tie around its neck in Bright in May 2025 – suitable for newsletters, websites, blogs
- Suggested activities to hold during Platypus Month
- Visual assets – campaign graphics and images

### **To download visual assets:**

1. Click on the link provided next to the asset or hyperlinked text
2. Right click the asset
3. Select ‘Save image as’

## Campaign evaluation



We aim to capture baseline engagement data of the ‘Seize it, Snip it, Bin it’ Platypus Month campaign to compare future Platypus Month campaigns against. To assist us in this evaluation, please capture the following data during September when using this pack:

- How many times your organization promoted the ‘Seize it, Snip it, Bin it’ campaign through media releases, newsletters, social media, website or blog articles
- Social media engagement metrics – likes, comments, shares, engagement rate, reach
- Number of Platypus Month events held and event attendance rates
- Feedback from your audiences

Engagement data can be submitted at the end of September via our [Microsoft Form](#).




**We thank you for your support.**

## Social media templates




Post	Timeline for posting	Copy	Visual Assets
<b>Week 1: Introduce Platypus Month and the ‘Seize it Snip it Bin it’ campaign</b>	During last week of August or first week of September	<p><b>Protect the Platypus this September!</b> 🙌</p> <p>Loopy litter like rubber bands, hair ties, fishing line, and string can be deadly for platypuses. Take action this September!</p> <p>💧 <b>Seize it:</b> Pick up litter—what’s dropped on the ground ends up in our rivers and creeks.</p> <p>✂️ <b>Snip it:</b> Cut any rings or loops, like hair ties or rubber bands, before disposal to reduce the risk of entanglement.</p> <p>🗑️ <b>Bin it:</b> Dispose of litter correctly to stop it from reaching our waterways.</p> <p>September is a crucial time for platypuses in Victoria - it’s their breeding season! As platypuses are out searching for mates, they become even more vulnerable to the dangers of litter in their environment.</p> <p>Let’s make a difference during this important time – Seize it, Snip it, Bin it to protect the platypus! ❤️</p> <p>Graphic: @thechangesmiths</p> <p>#SeizeItSnipItBinIt #PlatypusMonth2025</p>	<p><b>1080 x 1080 Graphic</b></p>  <p>Or</p> <p><b>1080 x 1920 Graphic</b></p> 

<p><b>Week 2: Threatened Species Day Post</b></p>	<p>Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September</p>	<p><b>Act for the Platypus this Threatened Species Day!</b></p> <p>👉</p> <p>Every year National Threatened Species Day draws attention to the thousands of Australian plants and animals facing extinction. This year, let's shine a spotlight on one of Australia's most iconic and elusive animals – the platypus, now listed as vulnerable in Victoria.</p> <p>You can help protect the platypus in two simple ways:</p> <p>💧 <b>Record sightings</b> using PlatypusSPOT Platypusspot.org Every observation helps scientists better understand where platypuses live and how to protect them 🔍</p> <p>💧 <b>Seize it, Snip it, Bin it</b> – Stop loopy litter like hair ties, rubber bands and fishing line from reaching our waterways and harming wildlife. Pick up litter, snip any rings or loops and dispose of correctly ♻️</p> <p>Every action counts—let's work together to protect the platypus for future generations. ❤️</p> <p>#ThreatenedSpeciesDay #SeizeItSnipItBinIt #PlatypusMonth2025 #ProtectOurWaterways #CitizenScience #WildlifeConservation</p>	<p>Consider using an eye catching close up of a platypus or interesting stock footage of a platypus in its natural environment.</p>
<p><b>Week 3: Stormwater network &amp; loopy litter</b></p>	<p>During the third week of September</p>	<p><b>Did you know?</b> 🗑️ ➡️ 🌊</p> <p>Litter dropped on the ground doesn't just disappear— it often ends up in our rivers, creeks, and lakes.</p>	<p>Multiple visual assets (carousel post)</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Image 1</u></a></p>



		<p>When it rains, litter is washed into our stormwater system, which flows directly into local waterways.</p> <p>Loopy litter like rubber bands, hair ties, and plastic rings enter platypus habitat through the stormwater network, where they become deadly traps for wildlife.</p> <p>You can help!</p> <p>💧 Seize it: Pick up litter before it reaches our waterways</p> <p>✂️ Snip it: Cut any rings or loops, like hair ties or rubber bands, before disposing</p> <p>🗑️ Bin it: Dispose of litter correctly</p> <p>Graphic: @thechangesmiths</p> <p>#SeizeItSnipItBinIt #PlatypusMonth2025</p>	 <p>Image 2</p>  <p>1080 x 1080 graphic</p> 
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<p><b>Week 4: How does loopy litter harm the platypus?</b></p>	<p>During the fourth week of September</p>	<p><b>How does loopy litter harm the platypus?</b> 💡</p> <p>Platypus feed on waterbugs like insect larvae, yabbies, shrimp, and snails 🐌🦋 They swim along riverbeds with their eyes closed, using receptors in their bills to detect prey.</p> <p>Loopy litter like <b>hair ties, elastic bands, fishing line, and plastic rings</b> can get caught around the platypus' bill, neck or body while hunting for food. Over time, these litter items can tighten around the platypus, causing serious injury or even death.</p> <p>📊 It's estimated that <b>4% of platypuses in Greater Melbourne</b> are entangled in litter at any given time. In some places, like the <b>Werribee River</b>, that number jumps to <b>15%</b>.</p> <p>You can help protect the platypus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>💧 <b>Seize it:</b> Pick up litter before it reaches our waterways</li> <li>✂️ <b>Snip it:</b> Cut any rings or loops, like hair ties or rubber bands, before disposing</li> <li>🗑️ <b>Bin it:</b> Dispose of litter correctly</li> </ul> <p>Every action counts. Let's keep our waterways safe 🌱</p> <p>Graphic: @thechangesmiths</p> <p>#SeizeItSnipItBinIt #PlatypusMonth2025</p>	<p>Multiple visual assets (carousel post)</p> <p><b>Image 1</b></p>  <p><b>Image 2</b></p>  <p><b>1080 x 1080 graphic</b></p> 
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## Short form copy

Suitable for newsletters and websites.

### Title:

Protect the Platypus: Seize it, Snip it, Bin it 

### Copy:

Take action this September for Platypus Month and protect these incredible animals from **loopy litter**! Items like rubber bands, hair ties, plastic rings, fishing line, string, and twine are deadly traps for the platypus.

### How You Can Help

Join the **Seize it, Snip it, Bin it** movement and help protect our unique platypuses:

- **Seize it:** Pick up any litter, especially loopy litter. Litter dropped on the ground ends up in our rivers and creeks.
- **Snip it:** Cut rings or loops, like hair ties or rubber bands, before disposal to reduce the risk of entanglement.
- **Bin it:** Always dispose of litter correctly to stop it from reaching our waterways

Platypus can become entangled in litter when swimming or foraging for food underwater. Loopy litter can get caught around their bills and bodies, tightening over time and causing serious injury or even death.

Every action counts. Together, we can protect the platypus from loopy litter and keep our rivers and creeks safe.

### Visual assets:

One of the following campaign graphics

- 1080 x 1080 graphic – [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water\\_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it\\_1080x1080-1.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it_1080x1080-1.jpg)
- 1080 x 1920 graphic – [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water\\_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it\\_1080x1920.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it_1080x1920.jpg)
- 3200 x 1600 graphic – [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water\\_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it\\_3200x1600-1-scaled.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it_3200x1600-1-scaled.jpg)

Please see [visual assets](#) for a list of recommended platypus images.

## Long form copy

Suitable for newsletters, websites and blogs.

### Title

Take action this Platypus Month: Seize it, Snip it, Bin it! 

### Copy

Join us this September for Platypus Month and protect these incredible animals from the dangers of loopy litter! Items like rubber bands, hair ties, plastic rings, fishing line, string, and twine are deadly traps for the platypus.

### How you can help

Join the **Seize it, Snip it, Bin it** movement and help protect our unique platypuses:

- **Seize it:** Pick up any litter, especially loopy litter. Litter dropped on the ground ends up in our rivers and creeks.
- **Snip it:** Cut rings or loops, like hair ties or rubber bands, before disposal to reduce the risk of entanglement.
- **Bin it:** Always dispose of litter correctly to stop it from reaching our waterways.

### How does litter end up in our waterways?

Many people don't realise that litter dropped on the ground doesn't just disappear—it often ends up in our rivers, creeks and lakes. In urban areas, rain washes litter into the stormwater system, which flows directly into local waterways. Loopy litter like rubber bands, hair ties, and plastic rings, enter platypus habitat through the stormwater network, where they pose a serious threat to the platypus and other wildlife.

### Why is loopy litter so dangerous?

Platypus can become entangled in litter when swimming or foraging for food. Platypuses eat waterbugs, including insect larvae, yabbies, shrimp, worms, and snails. They search for waterbugs by swimming along riverbeds with their eyes closed, using receptors in their bills to detect prey. While hunting for food loopy litter can get caught around the platypus' bill, neck or body. Over time these litter items can tighten around the platypus, causing serious injury or even death.

It's estimated that [4% of platypuses in Greater Melbourne are entangled in litter](#) at any given time. In some waterways, like the Werribee River, litter entanglement rates are [estimated to be much higher at 15%](#). Most commonly reported entanglements involve loopy litter like hair ties, elastic bands, fishing line or plastic ring seals from food jars.

### Why is Platypus Month in September?

September is a critical time for platypuses in Victoria—it's their breeding season! As platypuses are out searching for mates, they become even more vulnerable to the dangers of litter in their environment. You can make a real difference during this important time by seizing, snipping, and binning loopy litter.

**Spotted a platypus during Platypus Month?** Make sure to record your platypus sightings using [PlatypusSPOT](#). Every observation helps scientists better understand where platypuses live and how to protect them!

Every action counts. Together, we can protect the platypus from loopy litter and keep our rivers and creeks safe.

### Visual assets:

One of the following campaign graphics

- 1080 x 1080 graphic – [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water\\_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it\\_1080x1080-1.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it_1080x1080-1.jpg)
- 1080 x 1920 graphic – [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water\\_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it\\_1080x1920.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it_1080x1920.jpg)
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Please see [visual assets](#) for a list of recommended platypus images.

## Case Study Article

Suitable for newsletters, websites and blogs.

### Title

Platypus hair tie tragedy – Take action this Platypus Month

### Copy

Loopy litter – items like hair ties, rubber bands, plastic rings, fishing line, string, and twine - pose a serious threat to the platypus and other wildlife. Loopy litter is often found entangled around platypuses with [30% of all litter-related platypus deaths caused by hair ties](#).

In May this year, a young male platypus was found in distress near the junction of Morses Creek and the Ovens River in Bright, Victoria. The young platypus remained in shallow water, scratching repeatedly under its neck. Although passers-by noticed the unusual behaviour over several days, tragically, no one realised the animal was in serious trouble until it was too late.

The platypus was eventually captured by Wildlife rescuer Chris Lehmann from Reach Out Wildlife and transported to Alpine Animal Hospital in Porepunkah, where it was discovered a hair tie was deeply embedded around the animal's neck and behind its front leg.

Hair ties can easily become entangled around platypuses when they are swimming or foraging for food. Platypuses eat waterbugs (insect larvae, yabbies, shrimp, worms, and snails) which they find by swimming along riverbeds using receptors in their bills to locate prey.

While searching for food, a young platypus may easily mistake a hair tie or litter item for prey and become entangled. Unable to grip the litter item with its front feet (which are paddles), the platypus will use its back feet to try to remove the item, often dragging it further along its body.

By the time the young platypus was rescued, the hair tie had cut deeply into the young platypus' skin, causing severe pain. Every time the animal tried to move, the hair tie would have sliced deeper until it would have been too painful to swim or feed. When eventually he was rescued, the young male platypus was close to starvation.

After urgent consultation with Healesville Sanctuary, the platypus was transferred to their wildlife hospital for specialist veterinary care. Sadly, despite receiving the best possible treatment, he was too weak to survive, and passed away a few hours into surgery.

This tragedy highlights the serious threat posed by **loopy litter** – items like hair ties, rubber bands, plastic rings, fishing line, string, and twine.

If you find a platypus in distress or entangled in litter please contact **Wildlife Victoria**:

**24/7 phone line:** (03) 8400 7300

**Online form:** <https://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au/report-a-wildlife-emergency>

**Visual assets:**

One of the following campaign graphics

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Case study images:

- Case study image 1 - <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Platypus-Month-Case-study-1.jpg>



- Case study image 2 – <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Platypus-Month-Case-study-2.jpg>



- Case study image 3 - <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Platypus-Month-Case-study-3.jpg>





## Visual assets

### Seize it, Snip it, Bin it campaign graphics

1080 x 1080 graphic – [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water\\_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it\\_1080x1080-1.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it_1080x1080-1.jpg)

1080 x 1920 graphic – [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water\\_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it\\_1080x1920.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it_1080x1920.jpg)

3200 x 1600 graphic – [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water\\_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it\\_3200x1600-1-scaled.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Melbourne-Water_Seize-it-Snip-it-Bin-it_3200x1600-1-scaled.jpg)

### Platypus entangled in loopy litter images

Image 1: <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/plat-litter-round-bill-Hobart-2020-Oct-Pete-Walsh.jpg>

Image 2: <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/plat-rubber-band-Tucki-Ck-2019-June-Wal-Bailey.jpg>

Image 3: [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Dead-Platypus\\_entangled\\_elasticband-Preston\\_00382573\\_004-scaled.jpg](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Dead-Platypus_entangled_elasticband-Preston_00382573_004-scaled.jpg)

Image 4: <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Plat-litter-Moorabool.jpg>

### Bright case study images

Case study image 1: <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Platypus-Month-Case-study-1.jpg>

Case study image 2: <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Platypus-Month-Case-study-2.jpg>

Case study image 3: <https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Platypus-Month-Case-study-3.jpg>

## Platypus Month Activities

### Hold a platypus spotting event

September is one of the best times to spot platypuses in Victoria, as it coincides with the species breeding season when individuals are actively searching for mates. During this peak time in activity, there's a good chance you might spot a platypus!

If you haven't had the pleasure of seeing a platypus previously in the wild, check out these [Spotting Hints](#) from Australian Platypus Conservancy. The page provides detailed advice about where and when to look, and what to look for!

Australian Conservation Foundation have made it easy to organise your own platypus spotting event. Their [Platy-Project Toolkit](#) contains everything you need to organise a spotting event. Once you have held your event, remember to enter your platypus data into the [PlatypusSPOT platform](#). Every observation helps scientists better understand where platypuses live and how to protect them!

- Spotting Hints - <https://platypus.asn.au/spotting-hints/>
- Platy-Project Toolkit - <https://www.acf.org.au/get-involved/the-platy-project/platy-project-toolkit>
- PlatypusSPOT platform – <https://platypusspot.org/>

See [Appendix 1](#) for suggested event outline and talking points.

### Spotted a platypus during Platypus Month (or anytime)?

Make sure to upload sightings using the [PlatypusSPOT](#) platform. Every observation helps scientists better understand where platypuses live and how to protect them!

### Platypus Guardian watch party

Witness the story of Pete Walsh, a Tasmanian man who befriends a platypus he names 'Zoom'. With the help of experts, Pete learns more about the platypus's secret world in a mission to protect them from the dangers of urban development.

Watch the Platypus Guardian documentary solo or bring your community together to learn more about the platypus and what threatens this unique and iconic species.

The Platypus Guardian is rated PG and can be viewed for free on ABC iview:

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/platypus-guardian>

## Hold a litter cleanup event

Collecting litter before it enters our waterways is essential for protecting the platypus and other wildlife. By holding a litter cleanup event, you can make a real difference to your local waterway.

Things to consider before holding a litter clean-up:

- **Location:** Litter-hotspots are locations where litter frequently accumulates in significant quantities, making them important areas to priorities for clean-up activities. Hotspots are usually near areas of high human activity like parks, transport hubs and roadsides. Eventually litter from these areas will enter our waterways via the stormwater network. Contact your local council or catchment management authority for advice on suitable litter-hotspot locations for clean-up events.
- **Safety:** It is important to make sure you conduct a site visit, risk assessment and obtain any necessary permissions from local authorities before holding your clean-up event. Check weather conditions in the lead up to your event and provide attendees with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like gloves and tongs.
- **Recording litter data:** Recording data on collected litter is a great citizen science activity and helps researchers understand more about littering and litter-hotspots. If you are based in Victoria, record litter data from your event using **LitterWatch**:  
<https://www.litterwatchvictoria.org.au/>
- **Snipping loopy litter:** Remember to encourage event attendees to snip any loopy litter before disposing in the bin! At the beginning of your event you might want to talk about why loopy litter is a threat to our wildlife and how it impacts the platypus.

It is **highly recommended** that you connect with your local council or catchment management authority prior to conducting a litter clean up event. They will be able to assist you with choosing a location, making sure your event is safe and in some cases, provide equipment and useful resources.

Clean up Australia Day encourages communities, schools and businesses to participate in litter clean-ups everyday through its 'Every Day Clean Up' program. You can register your event with the program to receive a Clean Up Kit containing PPE equipment and helpful resources:

<https://www.cleanup.org.au/clean-up-australia-day#>

## Activities for children

These activities are suited to middle primary, upper primary and lower secondary but can be adapted for other age groups. There are suggestions for a variety of learning styles.

### Tuning In videos:

Platypus Keeper Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4ZOWLvHb1c>

Melbourne Water Platypus Program <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAVXiKMhckw>

### Tuning In Fact sheets:

What does a platypus eat? [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/What-Does-A-Platypus-Eat\\_ScreenReady.pdf](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/What-Does-A-Platypus-Eat_ScreenReady.pdf)

Where are the waterbugs? [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Where-are-the-Waterbugs\\_ScreenReady.pdf](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Where-are-the-Waterbugs_ScreenReady.pdf)

Why are waterbugs so important? [https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Why-are-Waterbugs-so-Important\\_Screenready.pdf](https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Why-are-Waterbugs-so-Important_Screenready.pdf)

Ways to be Smart	Activity outline
<b>Word Smart</b> I learn best by reading, writing & speaking	<p>Read this <a href="#">article</a> about the unacceptable impacts of litter on the platypus. Watch this <a href="#">video</a> about the role of urban stormwater in transporting litter and this <a href="#">video</a> about the impact of deadly pieces of Loopy Litter.</p> <p>Write an article for your school newsletter, content for an educational facebook post, design a powerpoint presentation, narrate a video or write a letter to the editor/article for a local media outlet to educate people about loopy litter and how it impacts the platypus. You could even get creative and write a rap or song to get the message across.</p> <p>Include the slogan, ‘Seize It, Snip It, Bin It’ in your piece:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seize it: Pick up any litter, especially loopy litter. Litter dropped on the ground ends up in our rivers and creeks.</li> <li>• Snip it: Cut any rings or loops, like hair ties or rubber bands, before disposal to reduce the risk of entanglement.</li> <li>• Bin it: Always dispose of litter correctly to stop it from reaching our waterways</li> </ul> <p>Or be creative and develop your own slogan that covers the above actions!</p>
<b>Number Smart</b> I learn best by working with numbers/science	<p>Platypus eat 20% of their body weight in waterbugs each day! Check out these <a href="#">water bug fact sheets</a>, noting bug sizes.</p> <p>Choose your favourite waterbug. Estimate the weight of your favourite waterbug. How much do you think a platypus weighs?</p> <p>If a platypus was to eat only your chosen waterbug species, how many bugs would the platypus need to eat each day?</p> <p>Repeat the activity for another waterbug species.</p>

	<p>Use the habitat information on the <a href="#">fact sheets</a> or use this <a href="#">poster</a> to learn which waterway habitat zone your chosen waterbugs live in. How might loopy litter prevent a platypus from eating their daily fill?</p> <p>Brainstorm some other examples of loopy litter that a platypus might get entangled in.</p> <p>How many potential loopy litter items can you count in your classroom? i.e. items that if washed into waterways could harm the platypus.</p> <p>What can you do to stop these items from entering our waterways and harming the platypus?</p>
<p><b>Picture Smart</b> I learn best by drawing and visualising</p>	<p>Highlight the issue of Loopy Litter in an eye-catching simple manner, educate others about the threat to platypus and outline what they can do to help.</p> <p>You might design a poster for display at school, a mural, a sign for your local waterway, a flyer to hand out at an event, a stormwater pit stencil or a cartoon strip for friends, etc.</p> <p>Use any media you like but include the slogan, 'Seize It, Snip It, Bin It':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seize it: Pick up any litter, especially loopy litter. Litter dropped on the ground ends up in our rivers and creeks.</li> <li>• Snip it: Cut rings or loops, like hair ties or rubber bands, before disposal to reduce the risk of entanglement.</li> <li>• Bin it: Always dispose of litter correctly to stop it from reaching our waterways</li> </ul>
<p><b>Body Smart</b> I learn best by being active and hands on</p>	<p>Make a model platypus from clay or playdough. Add captions on toothpicks to your model to label/explain how the parts of a platypus help it survive.</p> <p>Now make another model including a piece of Loopy Litter around the platypus. Use captions on toothpicks to explain how this would impact the health of the platypus.</p> <p>Or make a diorama showing either a healthy platypus environment or a dangerous platypus environment including items of loopy litter.</p>
<p><b>People Smart</b> I learn best by working with others</p>	<p>Explore the map on <a href="#">PlatypusSPOT</a>. Where and when have platypus been sighted near you?</p> <p>Use the resources in the <a href="#">platy-project toolkit</a> to head to a waterway with others (make sure you are with an adult). See if you can spot a platypus. Upload your results to <a href="#">PlatypusSPOT</a> and work out what might be needed to make your waterway more platypus friendly.</p> <p>Plan and perform a dramatisation of a healthy platypus environment or a dangerous platypus environment where loopy litter is present. Freeze the scene at various points and ask your audience to share how they are feeling.</p>
<p><b>Self Smart</b></p>	<p>Loopy litter is the most common type of litter found entangled around the platypus. Loopy litter is anything circular or can form a loop, that can get caught around a platypus. Brainstorm the everyday items from your house/school/shed that could</p>

I learn best by  
myself

become dangerous loopy litters for platypus in a waterway. There are more than you think!

How does the issue of platypus entanglement make you feel? Think about it and what you can do to help while you do some [mindful colouring](#).

Make a pact to always 'Seize It, Snip It, Bin It' and think about how you could share this message with others.

### Explore the Zoos Victoria Website

There are platypus teaching and learning resources for [Primary](#) and [Secondary](#), including [VCE](#).

## Appendix 1 – Platypus spotting event outline & talking points

### Event agenda:

- Activity briefing: 5-10 minutes
- Visually observing waterway for platypus for at least 30 minutes at each site. Event attendees can be split into groups to observe more than one site at time.
- Reconvene at meeting spot to discuss any sightings (platypus or other species): 5-10 minutes

### Equipment:

- Binoculars
- First Aid kit
- Water and food
- Mobile phone
- Pen and paper
- Pictures of platypus and Rakali to show event attendees (optional)

### Activity briefing talking points:

Introductions and Acknowledgement of Country

What do platypus look like?

- Dark brown on top, white underneath
- Broad bill and paddle-like tail
- 50cm in length
- Can be very difficult to spot - often won't see a platypus up close in the wild!
- Float low in the water – top of head and back visible, sometimes tail

Rakali & platypus

- Rakali is Australia's native water rat and are often mistaken for platypus
- Both occupy similar environments – rivers, lakes, creeks, however rakali will inhabit coastal environments.
- Very similar in appearance – main distinguishing feature is the tail. Platypus have a broad paddle-like tail. Rakali have a long thin tail with a white tip
- It's important to observe behaviour of the animal to be able to distinguish between platypus and rakali:
  - Rakali are often seen on land, while it is uncommon to see platypus on land.
  - Platypus tend to swim along the surface of the water, with a narrow v-shaped wake.



- Platypus will dive for about a minute before resurfacing in the same spot. A Rakali will dive and swim below the water surface, resurfacing further away.

#### When to look

- Platypus are nocturnal – best too look for them at dawn and dusk when there is enough light to see them exiting or entering their burrows
- Active periods:
  - Late Summer to Autumn is when juveniles are leaving their burrows
  - Spring during the species mating season, ideally September up until first week of October
- Females will enter burrows within first two weeks of October (activity dies down).

#### Today's activity

- Will be observing platypus at each site for at least 30 minutes. Explanation of site locations
- Important to be quiet and stand back from the river bank. Children should be supervised by an adult at all times.
- If you see a platypus, try to take a photo or video. Note down the time, your location (using google maps or a GPS), the number of platypuses you observed and any behaviour or field notes. Hand this information back to your event leader at the end of the event to be uploaded to [PlatypusSPOT](#).