

Platypus Month Schools Pack 2026

Take the Lead for Platypus

Purpose

This Pack is designed to help you celebrate Platypus Month within your school. The theme of the 2026 Platypus Month in October is Take the Lead for Platypus – Care for dogs, care for wildlife, care for Country.

Please use/adapt the content that is most relevant to your cohort of students. A general Communications Pack is also available to help promote Platypus Month in your local community.

<https://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au/project/take-the-lead-for-platypus-platypus-month-2026>

Calls to action

1. Leash your dog around waterways and on-leash areas.
2. Choose walking routes that permit dogs when visiting waterways with your dog.
3. Spotted a platypus? Record your sighting on PlatypusSPOT <https://platypusspot.org/>

Key Messages

- **Off-leash dogs threaten platypus** - Off-leash dogs can disturb and attack platypuses. A dog's presence alone can interrupt feeding, resting and breeding, while attacks can cause fatal injuries.
- **Keeping dogs on-leash around waterways keeps everyone safe** - Keeping your dog on-leash around waterways protects them from dangers such as snakes and ticks, while reducing risk to other walkers and dogs.
- **Victorians are counting on you to do the right thing** - Most people expect dog owners to do the right thing to protect platypus and other wildlife around waterways. This includes keeping dogs leashed near waterways and respecting areas where dogs are required to be on-lead or aren't permitted.
- **Platypus live in many of Victoria's waterways** - Platypus live in many of Victoria's waterways, including urban creeks and rivers. Platypus are shy, nocturnal animals, so encountering one in the wild is a rare and special experience. Even if you haven't spotted one they could be living in your local waterway.

How you can help at school

1. Platypus Month school activities

You can educate your students about platypus and build awareness of the impact of off-leash dogs during October.

Some resources to tune in:

Videos about platypus:

Platypus keeper talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4ZOWLvHb1c>

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

Zoos Victoria platypus video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YL7jBj6Jlto>

Fact sheets about platypus:

Food webs in our waterways [Food-Webs-in-Our-Waterways_Screen-Ready-By-line-added.pdf](#)

What does a platypus eat? https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/What-Does-A-Platypus-Eat_ScreenReady.pdf

Why are waterbugs so important? https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Why-are-Waterbugs-so-Important_Screenready.pdf

Article / video about the threat of off-leash dogs on platypus:

Platypus killed in suspected dog attack article:

<https://rangestrader.mailcommunity.com.au/news/2020-12-14/platypus-killed-in-suspected-dog-attack/>

Platypus Guardian documentary short clip: <https://www.abc.net.au/education/the-platypus-guardian-baby-platypuses/102463448>

Videos about the impact of dog droppings on waterways:

How dog droppings travel through urban stormwater systems:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/289844498765891>

Impact of dog droppings on waterways: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1531317831450799>

A fun animated jingle: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/652952901080786>

Video about how specially trained dogs can be useful in the detection of platypus:

Sniffing out platypus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEI5RJiiLbk>

The activities on the following pages are suited to middle primary, upper primary and lower secondary but can be easily adapted for other age groups. There are suggestions for a variety of learning styles.

Ways to be Smart	Activity outline
 Word Smart <i>I learn best by reading, writing & speaking</i>	Read or watch some of the tuning in resources on the previous page then . . . • write an article for your school newsletter • create content for an educational facebook post • design a powerpoint presentation • make/narrate a video • write a letter to the editor to educate people about the issue of off-leash dogs near waterways and how it impacts the platypus. Hold a debate between responsible dog owners and dog owners who don't feel anyone should tell them how to walk their dog.
 Number Smart <i>I learn best by working with numbers/ science</i>	Let's calculate the potential impact of dog droppings in your town. It might be a bit gross but the numbers don't lie! To get started, survey all the students of your class/school to see how many of them have a dog. Now let's use this to extrapolate: How many households are in your town? How many of those households own a dog? On average, how many dogs do those households own? How many times per week are those dogs walked? During a walk, how many times might dogs poop? What would be the average weight of one dog's poop? If NO ONE in your town picks up after their dog, how much dog poo (in kgs) could end up in your local waterway in one week? One month? One year? What impact would this have on your local waterways?
 Picture Smart <i>I learn best by drawing and visualising</i>	Explore the map on PlatypusSPOT. Where and when have platypus been sighted near you? Explore Google maps and find out what your nearest waterway is. Where does it start, what other waterways does it connect to and where does it end up? A quick google search reveals that there are NO Australian promotional material about how to keep platypus <i>and</i> your dog safe around waterways. It's time to design one!

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 stencil for the walking track at your waterway or a cartoon strip for friends, etc.
Make it simple, visual with clear messages for dog owners that will empower them, not shame them. See the key messages and calls to action on Page 1.

Use any media you like but include the slogan, 'Take the Lead for Platypus - Care for dogs, care for wildlife, care for Country.'

Use the resources in the [platy-project toolkit](#) 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 [PlatypusSPOT](#) and work out what might be needed to make your waterway more platypus friendly.

Make up a bingo board to survey your family and friends and see if you can find someone DIFFERENT for every box. For example:

Someone who has a dog. _____	Someone who walks their dog near a waterway on-leash. _____	Someone who takes their dog to an off-leash dog park or knows where their dog can be safely walked off-leash. _____
Someone who pledges to encourage others to leash dogs around waterways. _____	Someone who can give 2 reasons why off-leash dogs near waterways can be a problem for the waterway. _____	Someone who can give 2 reasons why off-leash dogs near waterways can be a problem for their dog. _____
Someone who ALWAYS picks up after their dog. _____	Someone who has seen a platypus in the wild. _____	Someone who can tell you 2 other things that threaten platypus health. _____

Can you think of other categories?



People Smart
I learn best by working with others

 Self Smart <i>I learn best by myself</i>	Watch the fun jingle about the impact of doggy doo on our waterways. https://www.facebook.com/reel/652952901080786 Can you write your own jingle, rap, song to get the message across for an Australian audience? How does the issue of platypus attacks make you feel? Think about it and what you can do to help while you do some mindful colouring. Make a personal pact to always 'Take the Lead for Platypus – Care for dogs, care for wildlife, care for Country' and think about how you could share this message with others.
 Body Smart <i>I learn best by being active and hands on</i>	Take a walk along your nearest waterway with a footpath or area for dog walking. Quietly observe and count how many dogs you see on-leash and how many off-leash. Invent and make a prototype for a: • new-fangled leash that detects when you are near a waterway • machine that can automate the picking up of dog poo • another contraption that might help minimise the issue of dogs near waterways How does it work? What are its features? What are its advantages / disadvantages?

2. Explore the Zoos Victoria website

There are platypus teaching and learning resources for [Primary](#) and [Secondary teachers](#). There are even some for [VCE](#).

3. Report platypus in distress

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>

Other useful resources

Platypus Month campaign graphics and animations



Best for **stories** on Facebook and Instagram and newsletters

- [Tile: Lead for Platypus campaign graphic – story tile 1080 x 1920px](#)
- [Animation: Take the Lead for Platypus campaign – story animation 1080 x 1920px](#)

Best for **posts** on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn

- [Tile: Take the Lead for Platypus campaign graphic – square tile 1080 x 1080px](#)
- [Animation: Take the Lead for Platypus campaign animation – square animation 1080 x 1080px](#)

Platypus photos

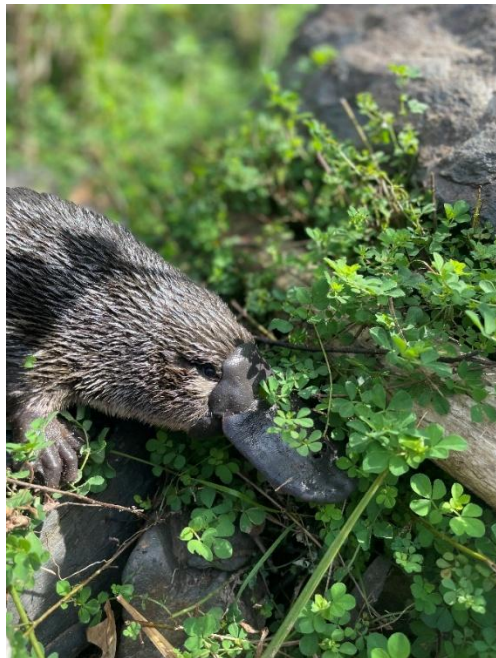


Image 1: credit Arthur Rylah Institute, Jarod Lyon



Image 2: credit Arthur Rylah Institute



Image 3: credit Arthur Rylah Institute Peter Menkhorst

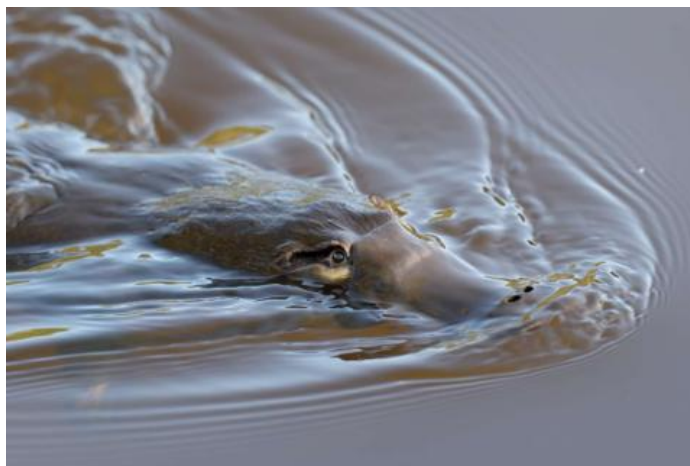


Image 4: credit Ian Wilson

You can access the digital files here:

Image 1: [Platypus-in-the-clover- Jarod-Lyon-scaled.jpg \(1920×2560\)](#)

Image 2: [Platypus-bill_ARI.jpg \(1816×2420\)](#)

Image 3: [Platypus-swimming-in-water_Peter-Menkorst-scaled.jpg \(2560×1707\)](#)

Image 4: [Platypus-head-out-of-water_Ian-Wilson.jpg \(1800×1200\)](#)

Campaign evaluation

We'd love to know about anything you get up to during Platypus Month. You can use this form <https://forms.office.com/r/KDG17GvYVj> to give feedback about the campaign, report your engagement with the campaign or to share work samples / photos. You can use the form to report the following things by the end of October:

- Number of activities delivered
- Total number of participants across all activities
- Brief description of activities delivered (optional)
- Evidence of changes in awareness or behaviour in your community as a result of the 'Take the Lead for Platypus' campaign (optional)
- Feedback

Alternatively, you can share your story or items via email riverdetectives@nccma.vic.gov.au

If you are sharing photos, work samples or flyers/posters you produce on a Facebook page, consider using the hashtags #TaketheLeadforPlatypus or #PlatypusMonth2026

Thank you for your support

Contributing organisations: Melbourne Water, North Central Catchment Management Authority, River Detectives, WaterWatch Victoria, Nillumbik Shire Council, Zoos Victoria, RMIT University, Werribee River Association, Bacchus Marsh Platypus Alliance, Merri Paddle & NatureWest.

If you'd like to know more about the River Detectives program head to our [website](http://www.riverdetectives.net.au) or watch our program [claymation](#).