

# Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE



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## Mystery Animal Riddle: What Am I?

I have a bill and webbed feet like a duck.



I lay eggs like a bird or a reptile.



Mothers of my breed feed our babies with milk like a mammal.



I have fur like other mammals and a flat tail like a beaver.



Circle every other letter to discover the mystery animal:

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PBJIMKLDE  
RDTPSLVABT  
WYCPHUJS

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**BILL:** A platypus is the only mammal with a bill. The bill is covered with skin that is hairless and moist. It has no teeth.

**FRONT FEET:** A platypus swims using its front feet, but not its back feet. When it gets out of the water, the platypus can roll back its webbed front feet and claws pop out to make it easier to walk on land.

**BACK FEET:** The male platypus is one of the world's few venomous mammals! He has sharp stingers on the heels of his hind feet. With these stingers, the male platypus can sting a foe with a strong venom that doesn't kill but does cause a lot of pain.

**TAIL:** The platypus uses its tail to steer through the water. It also stores fat for when food is scarce or when the water is very cold.

### Dinner Dive

Replace these missing words.

SWIMS NOSTRILS MINUTES  
SCOOPS BOTTOM POUCHES  
TEETH PONDS

A platypus is a \_\_\_\_\_ feeder. It \_\_\_\_\_ up insects, worms, and shellfish in its bill along with bits of gravel from the bottom of streams and \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ on its bill close underwater and the animal can stay under for up to two \_\_\_\_\_ as it searches for food.

The mix of gravel and underwater critters is stored in cheek \_\_\_\_\_. The platypus \_\_\_\_\_ to the surface and mashes the material in its pouches. It has no \_\_\_\_\_, so the bits of gravel help to "chew" their meal.

**Use the code to discover more platypus facts!**

● = wild ● = reptiles ● = puggle  
● = food ● = dinosaurs ● = paddle  
● = venom ● = Australia ● = Africa

The Commonwealth of Australia reverses this remarkable mammal so much that it honors the platypus with a place on its 20-cent coin.



A baby platypus is known as a \_\_\_\_\_ ●

A platypus spends 10 to 12 hours each night underwater looking for \_\_\_\_\_ ●

Platypuses can only be found in \_\_\_\_\_ ●

Platypuses are long-lived, surviving 20 years or more in captivity and up to 12 years in the \_\_\_\_\_ ●

A platypus spends most of its life alone. But a group of platypuses is called a \_\_\_\_\_ ●

Scientists have discovered evidence that shows that they first evolved more than 112 million years ago, long before the extinction of the \_\_\_\_\_ ●

**Extra! Extra!**

### Picture Riddles

Create "What Am I" riddles for pictures in the newspaper. Share your riddle with a pal and see if they can guess which photo you were describing. Take turns!

Standards Link: Write descriptively.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

**A mammal that hatches from eggs?**  
The platypus is one of two kinds of mammals that lay eggs. The other is the spiny anteater or echidna.

How many platypus eggs do you see here?

Mother platypus lays her eggs inside a chamber and curls up with her eggs for about 10 to 12 days. This is a time when she really needs that fat stored in her tail!

When the baby platypus hatches, it is about the size of a lima bean.

Baby platypuses stay in the nursery chamber for the first three or four months of life. Like other mammals they drink their mother's milk.

### Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

UNDERWATER  
VENOMOUS  
PLATYPUS  
POUCHES  
MAMMAL  
BILLED  
GRAVEL  
CLAWS  
BEAN  
DUCK  
WALK  
EGGS  
MEAL  
TAIL  
MILK

R E T A W R E D N U  
B B A B S G G E P V  
E C L A W S Y L O E  
A L T A I L A L U N  
N I E C M T M I C O  
K M A V Y M E B H M  
L C I P A L A L E O  
A D U L P R L M S U  
W S G D K G G L E S

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

**FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY**

### Newspaper Creatures

Look through the classified section of the newspaper for descriptions of houses for sale. Write a "House for Sale" ad that would appeal to a platypus and their family.

Standards Link: Write for a variety of audiences.

### What happens if you step on a platypus?

ANSWER: Flatpuss!

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