



Important Events in the History of Discovery of the Platypus

1798	Governor Hunter (Sydney) sends a platypus skin to Banks who sends it to Shaw.
1799	Shaw (British Museum) describes and names platypus <i>Platypus anatinus</i>
1800	Blumenbach names the animal <i>Ornithorhynchus paradoxus</i>
1802	Home - detailed anatomy study - finds no common uterus, no mammary gland and no nipples but a cloaca (common opening for reproductive and waste products).
1803	Geoffroy-St-Hilaire names group Monotremes (platypus and echidnas)
1818	Jamieson (Sydney) claims platypus is oviparous but provides no proof
1824	Meckel discovers mammary glands in monotremes
1832	Maule and Bennett 1833, 1835 - first account of burrow and production of milk
1859	Darwin includes platypus as a key example of evolution in "Origin of Species"
1884	Caldwell - "Monotremes oviparous, ovum meroblastic" – the famous telegram to the British Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Montreal
1885	Semon describes early development
1908	Wilson and Hill show development in the egg before hatching
1927	Burrell establishes captive platypuses, publishes <i>The Platypus</i> , suggests a 6th sense
1943/44	Fleay reports first platypus - "Corrie" - bred in captivity
1974	Function of the venom system explained (with evidence)
1978	Griffiths publishes "The Biology of Monotremes" - only thorough review of this group
1985	Scheich discovers the 6th sense – electroreception
1997/98	Platypus bred in captivity for 2nd time (Healesville Sanctuary)
2004	Sex chromosomes explained
2007	Platypus genome sequenced