

PLATYPUS MONTH AUGUST 2026



Photo: Bush Heritage Australia



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Platypus Month surveys are conducted on Ngunnawal and Ngarigo country. Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch acknowledges the continued connection that the Traditional Owners have to these lands and waterways.

Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch is celebrating the completion of another huge and hugely successful Platypus Month! August 2026 saw more than 1000 participants across events from **group surveys** to **platypus walks**, **film screenings**, and of course the **Platypus Month launch party** at Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

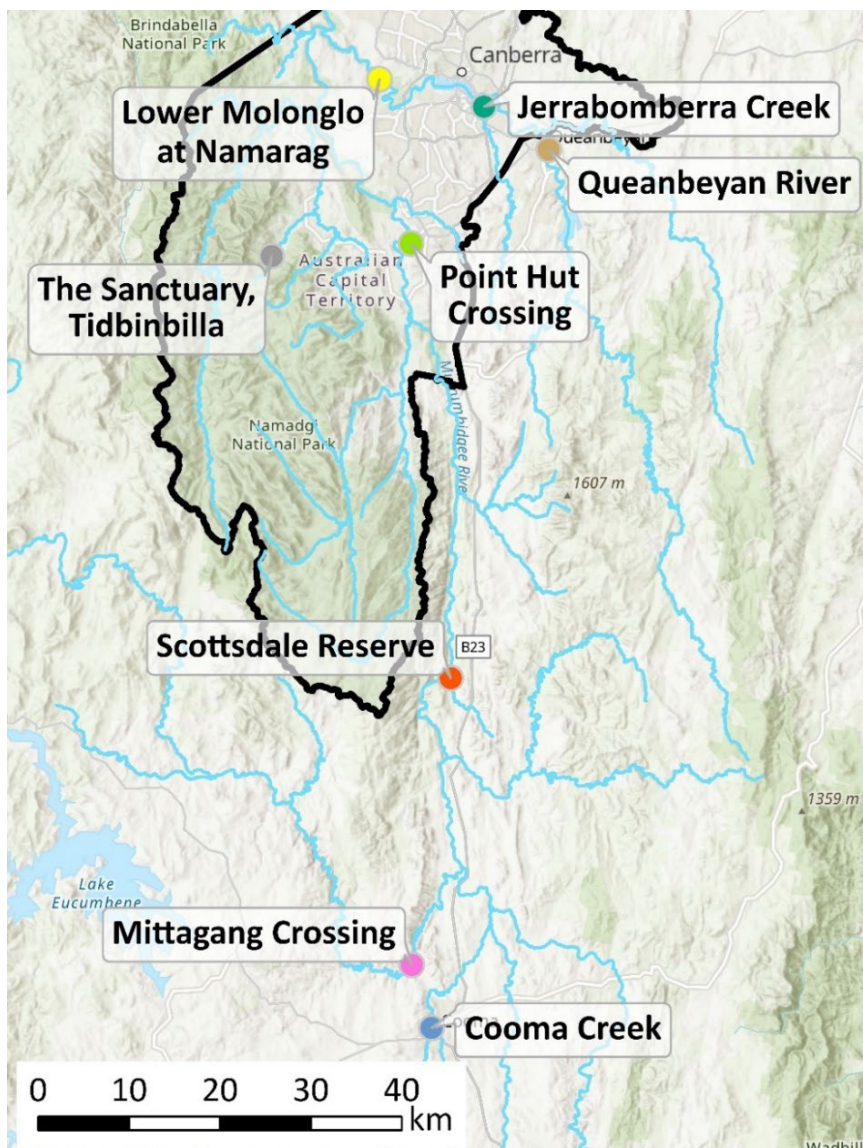


Supported by [National Science Week](https://www.scienceweek.net.au), the screening of the beautiful film [The Platypus Guardian](#) at the National Film and Sound Archive was a great way to see platypus in intimate detail! Along with a fascinating talk from local researcher Luisa Williams on extinct platypus relatives, and a Q&A with the filmmaker Pete Walsh, the evening got everyone passionate and fired up about protecting this unique monotreme icon and its habitat in our shared backyard.



Filmmaker Pete Walsh, researcher Luisa Williams and Waterwatch Facilitator Dan Harris-Pascal at the screening of *The Platypus Guardian* (Photos: Cooma Waterwatch)

Throughout the month, over 200 enthusiastic volunteers helped to carry out our full complement of **34 group surveys** (17 at dawn and 17 at dusk) at 8 sites across the region (Map 1). With mostly dry, calm,



and mild weather, conditions were ideal for spotting platypus and rakali in our local waterways. Continuing to run surveys of this scale and effort, consistently over many years, is the best way to collect robust and reliable data and build up a picture of platypus and rakali population patterns in our region.

Thanks to staff at Scottsdale Bush Heritage Reserve and at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve who collaborated with Waterwatch to conduct 10 of the group surveys. This adds valuable data to the mix that Waterwatch would not otherwise have the capacity to collect.

Map 1: 34 group surveys were conducted at eight sites across the ACT region in August 2026.

A total of 37 individual platypus were detected across all survey sites this year (Table 1). This massive result was largely driven by the high numbers at Tidbinbilla, where 15 individuals were sighted. Point Hut Crossing also had an excellent result, recording 6 platypus, and Scottsdale Reserve saw 5 individuals. In encouraging news, two platypus were detected at Cooma Creek during surveys this year, after none were seen during the surveys in 2025. This year's surveys were moved a short way



A Point Hut Crossing platypus (Photo: M. Chalk)

upstream to avoid erosion stabilisation works, which should help to improve the habitat condition and reduce bank erosion and the build-up of sediment in the creek. It seems like the platypus and rakali have been avoiding these poor conditions – hopefully the creek bank restoration will bring them back through their former range.

Platypus numbers in the Lower Molonglo and Jerrabomberra Wetlands remained steady compared to 2025, while Queanbeyan dropped from 5 individuals detected last year, to 4 this year. Mittagang Crossing also recorded a slight decline, with 2 platypus spotted, down from 4 in 2025.

There were 11 rakali detected in our surveys this year (Table 1). This is a further drop from 13 last year, and 19 in 2024. While Point Hut Crossing recorded 2 rakali, up from one seen there in 2025, and the Lower Molonglo held steady with 2 individuals detected, most sites had one or two fewer individuals seen this year compared to last year. Even Jerrabomberra Creek, normally a rakali hotspot, recorded just 3 individuals during group surveys. Queanbeyan River surveys detected one rakali, and no rakali were recorded during surveys at Tidbinbilla this year. Still, citizen scientists from across the region continued to submit rakali sightings to the [Platy and Ratty Portal](#) during August.



Platypus and Rakali spotted during Cooma Creek surveys this year (Photos: John Laurie)

A more detailed breakdown of the numbers from this year, along with comparisons to previous years' surveys, is available online at the [Platypus Month Data Dashboard](#). And remember you can record any platypus or rakali sightings in the ACT region on the [Platy and Ratty Portal](#), year round.

Table 1: Number of Rakali and Platypus detected during surveys in 2026 (2025 numbers in brackets)

River	Surveys	Survey site	Platypus		Rakali	
Lower Molonglo River	4	Namarag Nature Reserve	2	○ (2)	2	○ (2)
Jerrabomberra Creek	4	Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve	1	○ (1)	3	↓ (5)
The Sanctuary Ponds	4	Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve	15	↑ (11)	0	↓ (1)
Queanbeyan River	4	Queanbeyan town centre	4	↓ (5)	1	↓ (3)
Murrumbidgee River	4	Point Hut Crossing	6	↑ (5)	2	↑ (1)
Murrumbidgee River	6	Scottsdale Bush Heritage Reserve	5	↑ (2)	1	↑ (0)
Murrumbidgee River	4	Mittagang Crossing	2	↓ (4)	1	○ (1)
Cooma Creek	4	Cooma	2	↑ (0)	1	↑ (0)
Total	34		37	↑ (30)	11	↓ (13)

↑ increase from last year

↓ decrease from last year

○ no change from last year



Participants got a bonus sighting of a handsome wombat during a survey on the Lower Molonglo at Namarag (Photo: Ginninderra Waterwatch)



PLATYPUS POETRY

*The sun slowly sinks
I stand alone and watch
Alas, nothing seen*

*- Andria M,
Jerrabomberra Creek*

Surveying on the Murrumbidgee River at Mittagang Crossing (Photo: Cooma Waterwatch)



Waiting for platypus at Point Hut Crossing (Photos: Southern ACT Waterwatch)

If you are keen to do even more platypus data collecting between now and next August, we have set up some sites on the Australian Platypus Conservancy's (APC) [Australian Platypus Monitoring Network](#) page (go to 'View Findings' to see the sites). The sites overlap with our survey areas and are aimed at gaining a better understanding of platypus numbers over the course of the year. This activity suits people who would regularly visit these areas, and can look for platypus there once or twice a week for around ten minutes at a time. The more people that sign up to a site the better, as this will increase the number of data points for that site and improve confidence in the data. Get in touch with us at [Waterwatch](#) if you think you may be interested, and we will be happy to talk through what is involved.

Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch receives funding from the ACT Government, and from Icon Water who support the implementation of the program in the Cooma-Monaro region. Many thanks to both these funding sources that enable Waterwatch to monitor platypus on a broad, catchment scale. And as always, a huge thank you to the volunteers – we hope to see you again in 2027!



A dramatic sunrise during a platypus survey at Scottsdale Reserve (Photo: Bush Heritage Australia)