



THE ODD PLATYPUS *

by Lanny and Marilyn Johnson

One of the strangest animals God created has got to be the platypus, or duckbill ... an animal so weird that when British scientists first saw a stuffed platypus in 1799, they thought it was a joke!

The platypus is strange, but it is not a joke. The duckbill platypus has a bill like a duck, a tail like a beaver, is covered with soft, heavy fur, and has webbed feet. The male platypus has poisonous spurs on its hind legs. The female lays eggs but feeds her babies with milk! The duckbill may seem odd, but it is a creature full of wonderful design.

This two-foot-long mammal (about the size of a house cat) lives in and around streams, rivers, and ponds in eastern Australia and Tasmania. God made its nostrils near the end of a soft, rubbery bill so that it could breathe while staying below the surface of the water with only the tip of the bill showing. To help it work underwater, the platypus has a fold of skin that closes over its eyes and one over its ears. Unlike other animals, its ears are inside its head. God also gave the platypus cheek pouches in which to store food while hunting underwater.

God created the platypus with two layers of fur. The first is short and thick and keeps the

duckbill's skin dry and warm. The second is a longer layer that protects it from water and outside conditions.

The feet of the duckbill are webbed for swimming. When it walks on land, the webs of the front feet fold under the foot and uncover the claws. The platypus uses these claws to dig a burrow (nest) deep in a mud bank. It has an unusual lizard-like walk because God made its legs stick out to the side of the body.

Amazingly, this odd little mammal hatches from an egg rather than being born alive like other mammals.

The world's only other egg-laying mammals (called monotremes) are echidnas or spiny anteaters. The mother platypus usually lays two eggs in a grass-lined nest in her burrow.

She incubates (keeps warm) the eggs in the fur between her belly and tail. After 10 to 12 days, the babies break out of the egg using an egg tooth. This later falls out as the baby grows up. The tiny baby platypus (called a puggle) laps up its mother's milk that oozes from tiny openings onto the hair on her belly.

The male platypus is the world's only poisonous furred creature. Near his thighs, he has poison glands (sacks). Long tubes go from these glands to a hollow spur (claw) on the back legs. The poison is very much like that of

a poisonous snake ... powerful enough to make people sick or kill a dog.

Some people say that God created the platypus to confuse people who believe in evolution. I don't know if that is the reason, but I do know that when I used to believe in evolution, the platypus sure puzzled me. What animal did he come from? No fossils show the platypus evolved from mammals, reptiles, or birds. Another thing that puzzled me was what kind of an animal he was changing into? Only a few platypus fossils have been found. They show that the platypus is the same today as it was in

the past. It seems that platypuses didn't come from any other animals ... they came from other platypuses that God created! *"And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."* Genesis 1:25



*Update of <https://www.discovercreation.org/documents/kids/JanandFeb2007KTB.pdf>

References for fact-checking:

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Platypus>

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/platypus/353640>

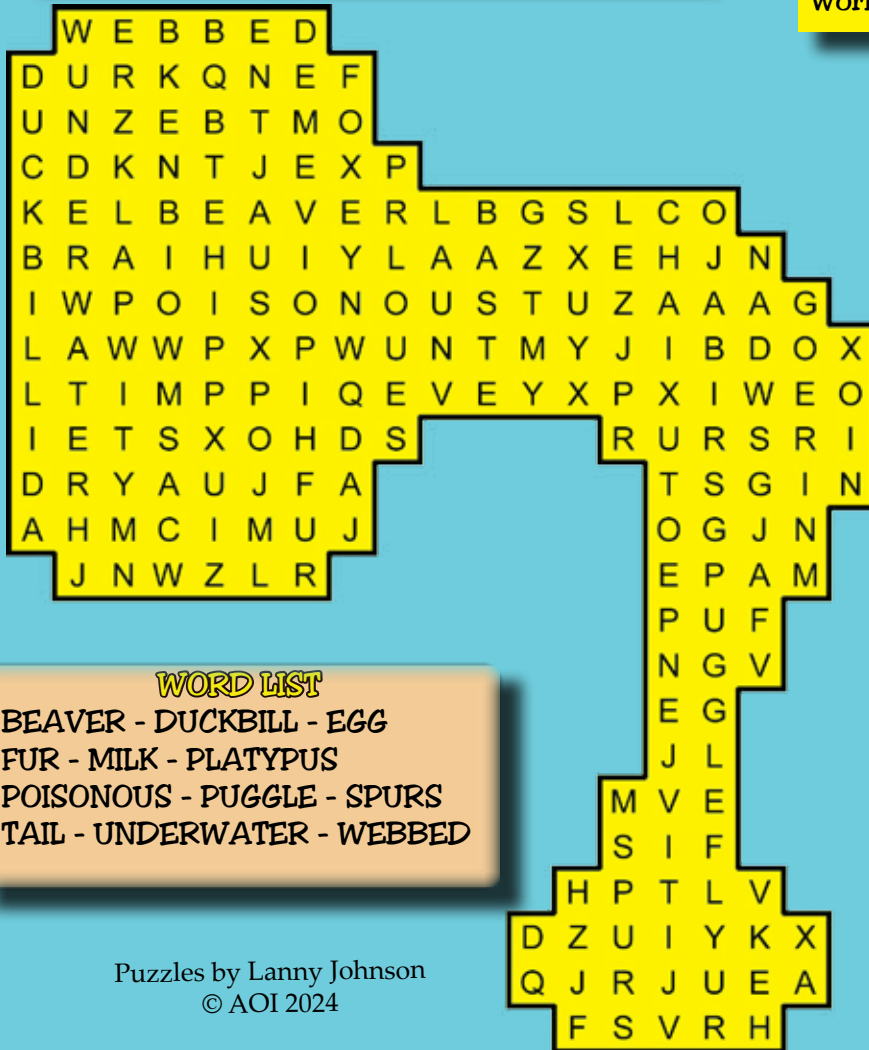
<https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/platypus.html>

<https://www.activewild.com/platypus-facts-for-kids/>

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WORD SEARCH

Look for words used in "THE ODD PLATYPUS" in the puzzle below from the WORD LIST below. The hidden word might be up, down, sideways, slanted, or backwards.



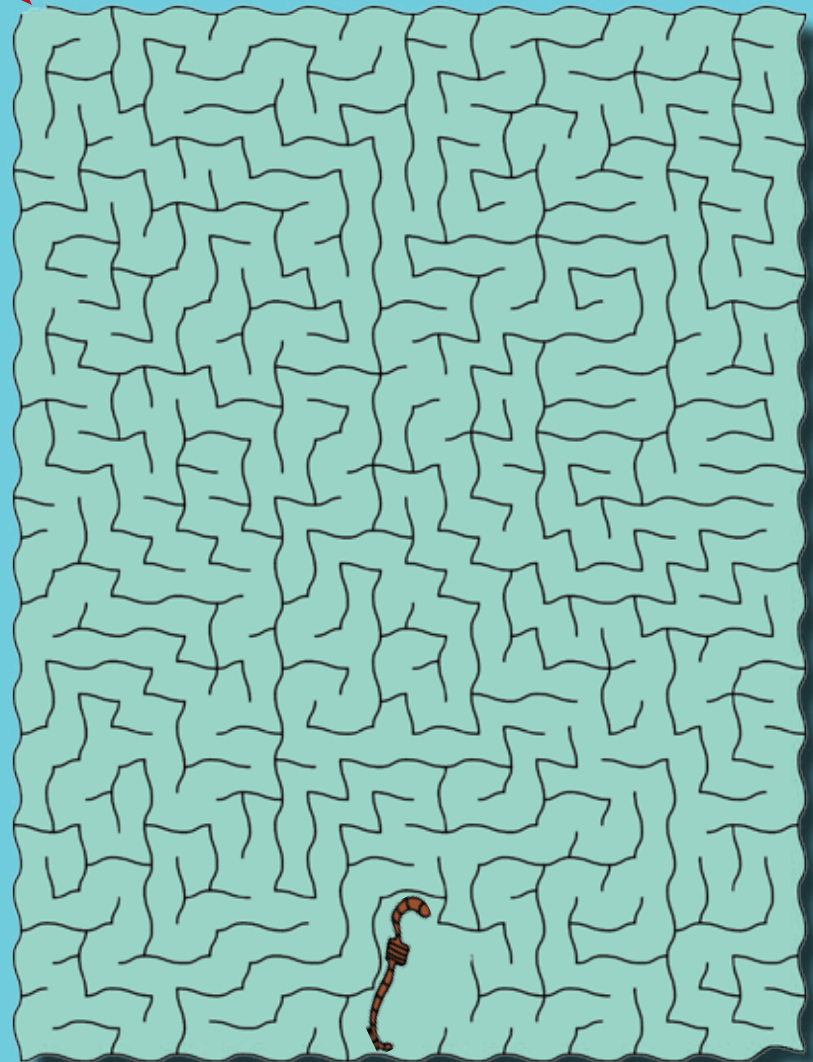
WORD LIST

BEAVER - DUCKBILL - EGG
 FUR - MILK - PLATYPUS
 POISONOUS - PUGGLE - SPURS
 TAIL - UNDERWATER - WEBBED

Puzzles by Lanny Johnson
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With its eyes covered by flaps when the platypus is underwater it can't see. So how does it find the creatures it feeds on? God created special sensors in the platypus' bill that can detect the tiny electrical fields made by the muscular contractions of its prey. By moving its head from side to side while hunting, the platypus can detect where the prey is hiding. Help the platypus through the maze to find its next meal, a worm, (or it could have been an insect, shellfish, fish, frog, mollusk, or tadpoles).



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www.discovercreation.org/kids/newsletteranswers.htm

Adapted from krazydad.com