



The Amazing Platypus

by Warren Krug

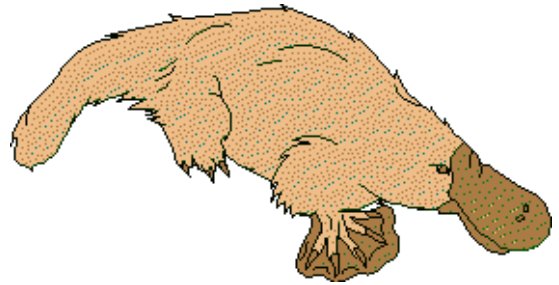
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It certainly is one of the most amazing animals God has placed on this planet - the platypus or duckbill. At first glance this Australian creature might look just like the type of animal evolutionists are searching for - a living animal in transition from one species to another.

WHAT IS IT?

The platypus is classified as a mammal because it has a thick covering of waterproof hair over its body - dark brown on its back and yellowish on its underside. The female, which is

much smaller than the male, provides milk for her young. The milk oozes out from large glands under her skin; since she has no real nipples, her young suck up the milk from off her fur. Also, like other mammals, the platypus is a warm-blooded animal.



But what about that ducklike bill? It is soft, flat and rubbery and sensitive to the touch. The platypus uses it to search for food and get around when it is under water. The blue-gray bill contains two nostrils which allow it to breathe when the rest of the animal is submerged. Another birdlike feature is the webbed feet - the front feet are formed like large paddles to help propel the platypus through the water while the webbed hind feet are used for steering or braking.

The female platypus lays eggs, usually two but sometimes up to four. These eggs though are soft and leathery, like those of a reptile. The mother incubates these eggs against her abdomen by clasping them with her tail.

Also, like some reptiles, the male platypus has a venom gland that produces a very strong toxin which he uses against predators. The gland is connected to a hollow, horny spur located inside the male's hind leg ankles. The toxin is strong enough to kill a dog or cause terrible pain in humans. Other reptilian features include the the cervical ribs and the opening the platypus uses for both reproduction and elimination of wastes.

IMPLICATIONS

So, what is the platypus? Is it a reptile evolving into a mammal or vice versa? Is it a bird evolving into a reptile or vice versa? Is it a mammal evolving into a bird or vice versa?

God may be using the platypus to show the evolutionists their folly. He seems to be telling them, "Look, here is a creature you've been looking for. But you decide which one of six directions you want to take this animal."

Actually, we are not aware of anyone actually trying to use the platypus as evidence of evolution although evolutionary paleontologists would probably have a field day with it were it found only in fossil form.

We can assume the platypus has always looked like a platypus - it just happens to have features that resemble those of three different classes. It shows that God is able to design creatures that don't have to fit neatly into any manmade system of classification.

MORE INTERESTING FACTS

The platypus is found only along the eastern coast of Australia, more common in the south than the north where crocodiles are a threat.

It belongs to the order Monotremata which has only two other members - the long-beaked echidna and the short-beaked echidna.

The platypus lives in burrows which can often become very complex. The entrances to the burrows are frequently underwater.

When the first platypus specimens arrived in England, scientists there thought they were an elaborate hoax.

The platypus is about half the size of a household cat, averaging about 20 inches in length (male) or 17 inches (female). The average weight is almost 4 pounds (males) and about 2 pounds (females).

An adult platypus has no teeth, but the young have poorly developed molars which come out as they mature.

Each day the platypus eats half its own weight in worms, insect larvae, crustaceans, vegetation, etc., all eaten underwater. *LSI*