

Moggill Creek Catchment Group 2018 Annual Platypus Snapshot

It was a damp and misty pre-dawn morning on 9th September when 47 volunteers looked for the elusive platypus at their assigned sites.

Each year the same observation points are monitored, incorporating Gold Creek and Moggill Creek (upper and lower). The annual MCCG platypus survey has now been running for 13 years and we have never *not* seen a platypus! The numbers have ranged from <10 to >20 platypus observed. As in all years, the 2018 survey results are likely to be conservative.

This year, seven platypus were seen. This is not bad news because:

- The seven sightings spanned the catchment, from upper Gold Creek (just below the dam) to Upper Brookfield and downstream to lower Brookfield/Kenmore, indicating that platypus are persisting across the catchment and their overall range is not contracting
- At two sites, there was a strong suspicion that two platypus, not one, were seen
- At three further sites, the observers strongly suspected they saw a platypus but were not confident to report the sighting as a positive
- At numerous sites that yielded a negative result for this year's survey, platypus have recently been seen by local residents

In addition to being an educational and enjoyable annual activity for the local community, the MCCG snapshot survey results feed into Wildlife Queensland's PlatypusWatch program <http://wildlife.org.au/platypuswatch/>. They are also currently informing a University of Queensland platypus PhD project.

The take-home messages remain the same for the catchment's platypus if we want to protect this shy and unique animal from the key threats to its survival which are:

- **Pollution** into creeks from chemical runoff, horses and cattle
- **Water extraction** from creeks via pumping
- **Yabby traps** set in creeks
- **Loss of habitat** such as creekside vegetation clearing
- **Erosion** caused by bare creek banks
- **Disturbance** in creeks from human/pet recreational activities

Thank you survey leaders Tamielle, Judy, Leonie and Damien for again doing an excellent job leading volunteers to their sites in the dark. Thanks also to volunteer cooks Jimmy, Alan and Sonja for a delicious post-survey breakfast, and to the Brookfield Pony Club for kindly providing their kitchen facilities. Finally, thanks to the platypus observers, without whom the survey would not have been possible!

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