



THE GAP SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE INC.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION SEMINAR: 21 JUNE 2022 PLATYPUS AND THEIR HABITATS

The June seminar of The Gap Sustainability Initiative (TGSi) was held on Tuesday evening at Walkabout Creek Discovery Centre at the invitation of Queensland Parks and Wildlife. Lisa Owen, Masters in Wildlife Science and Ranger in Charge as well as Kristie DeJong Bachelor of Science in Ecology and Wildlife Supervising Ranger, gave a presentation on Platypus and answered our community questions.

Interesting facts about the Platypus you may not be aware of

Did you know that the Platypus is a good climber? They can fold back their webbing which helps them swim and can use its claws for climbing. One was even found up a tree.

Did you know that scientists are now investigating the milk of the Platypus as a potential new antibiotic? Several other research projects surrounding the Platypus and possible medical breakthroughs are also ongoing. This highlights further the importance of Platypus preservation.

Current state

We learned that while Platypus were certainly present in Enoggera and Fish Creeks as recent as 20 years ago, they have not been any recent sightings. Importantly, platypus still inhabit Gold Creek, which is only a short distance away. There are many reasons for the decline in Platypus numbers and most can be attributable to human influence on their habitat. Some of the more obvious impacts are water quality decline, riparian vegetation destruction, lack of suitable creekbanks for burrows, and harm from predators such as dogs, cats, and foxes. Rubbish, fishing nets and yabby traps are all quite deadly for the Platypus.

What we can do

The rangers identified **10 actions** each of us can undertake to improve the chances of Platypus surviving in our local environment including reducing our water consumption, picking up rubbish, rehabilitating banks, and being responsible pet owners as some of the most important. There was a lively discussion with many questions asked, and we look forward to a closer collaboration between our community and the QLD Parks and Wildlife as a result of this TGSi meeting.

Additional resources

At or after the event several additional resources were discovered by TGSi members: Alan discovered a [Platypus conservation plan by Ipswich Council](#), Peter found a paper by Tamielle Brunt in which she describes the habitat requirements of Platypus using Moggill Creek Catchment as a case study ([attached to this email](#)). Bank height, water depth and bank slope were identified as significantly associated with presence of Platypus. Water needs to be deeper than 1.1 meters, slope needs to be greater than 35 degrees and the bank needs to be higher than 0.95 meters. Interestingly sediment and clarity of the water were not significantly associated with Platypus sightings, but the authors mentioned that importance of those parameters was still debated by the scientists. We also were informed by Dr Gilad Bino, a Platypus researcher from the University of NSW about a new citizen scientist project aiming to collect Platypus sightings. If you see any Platypus, please share your knowledge on this site: [Platy Project](#).





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Fundraising update

On Saturday the 18th of June, volunteers Hans, Mark, John, Graeme, Alan and Nerida and committee members Craig, Monika and Michael ran the TGSi fundraising barbecue at Bunnings Keperra. It was a long day and rewarding to participate with others in order to generate funds that will go towards TGSi insurance costs. A big thank you to all these individuals for helping so readily.

Remembering Don Welch

It is with great sadness that we have to notify you of the passing of Don Welch. Don was a very active member and supporter of TGSi and was the person man who first suggested that TGSi should focus on The Platypus Project at our strategic meeting in march. Don passed away unexpectedly last week Wednesday. A [memorial service](#) is planned for the 3rd of July at Walkabout Creek. Its good to know that through The Platypus project he has created a lasting legacy.

Next meeting

Our **next project working group meeting will be on the 19th of July at The Gap State Primary School**. Please stay updated about our activities by visiting our website www.thegapsustainability.org and you can email us at thegapsustainability@gmail.com with any questions.

- **The subsequent seminar event** will be on the 16th of August at The Gap State Primary School, and the topic will be energy efficiency, with a presentation of a local case study.

MEMBERSHIP: Thank you to all those who have already initiated their membership, we continue our invitation to join. The membership fee is \$5 per annum to cover costs such as insurance, website hosting fee, room hire and facilitated meetings. Please use our Bank Account Name: The Gap Sustainability BSB124001 Account No: 23277186 and send us your name, DOB, and address to thegapsustainability@gmail.com for the membership registry.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Please stay updated about our activities by visiting our website www.thegapsustainability.org. We now also have an active presence on [Facebook](#).

Yours sincerely, The Gap Sustainability Initiative team

