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AN OBSERVATION OF APPARENT PLATYPUS NESTING BEHAVIOUR

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A platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) was recently observed by the three authors carrying a swatch of grasses and sedges in its tail, a behaviour not known to us as having been recorded for this species in the wild. The platypus was initially spotted swimming on the surface in a small tarn, and its tail could be seen to be curled around something. After several minutes it emerged from the tarn carrying grasses etc. in its tail, and it crossed through open grassland to the bank of the Vale River, where it dived and was not seen again.

Captive animals have been observed to line their nesting burrows with leaves and grasses collected by the female in her bill from the water and carried to the burrow in the tail (Grant 1984). In Tasmania, platypus eggs are laid about September or October with young emerging about 4-5 months later (Green, 1973).

This observation took place mid-afternoon on 26 November 1991 in *Poa labillardieri* tussock grassland in karst at the Vale of Belvoir, approximately one kilometre north of the Cradle Mountain Link Road. It was an overcast and damp day. The platypus did not appear to notice us and we watched it from a distance of 3—5m for almost five minutes.

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