

recorded in any numbers. Despite my long interest in butterflies in Tasmania, these are the first ones I have seen in the State. The late Len Couchman who had a lifelong interest in butterflies and who had been actively collecting in Tasmania for more than 30 years when he wrote *Butterflies of Tasmania* (Couchman and Couchman 1977) had only seen one specimen on the wing during all that time. Couchman collected his specimen in 1968 at Bronte, and in searching various museum records was able to locate only one previous specimen taken at Zeehan in 1907. In March 1971 five butterflies were reported from Zeehan and in 1974 a keen collector observed three specimens in different parts of the State in January and February. In 1975, one was collected on Mt. Anne.

The five specimens observed in the far north-western corner of the state indicate that there was probably a considerable influx of this species into Tasmania, and it is likely that they would have radiated out into other parts of the State subsequent to the sightings reported here.

REFERENCES

- Couchman, L.E and Couchman, R. (1977) *The Butterflies of Tasmania*. pp. 66-96. In *The Tasmanian Yearbook* No. 11. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Hobart).

ESTUARINE PLATYPUS ACTIVITY

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Published records of platypus utilizing estuarine habitats are apparently lacking (Grant 1984). However, Tom Grant (pers. comm.), an expert on platypus, has received verbal reports of such events. The following observations of platypus utilizing estuarine habitats are apparently the most detailed available to date. The information was transmitted to the Mammal Survey Group of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club by observers who prefer to keep their identity and the details of the site confidential for fear of disturbance to the animals involved. I have spoken to the observers and believe that the information is reliable.

The observations reported here are from an estuary in south-eastern Tasmania. The estuary is fed by a substantial river, with the actual river mouth being more than three km upstream of the report site. The section of the estuary from where these sightings were made is about 600m wide, with the waterway gradually narrowing upstream to the river mouth. The salinity of the water concerned is

unknown but is expected to vary seasonally and with other weather and tidal events.

The first sighting, in July or August 1990, was of a young female (no spurs being apparent) some 300-400mm long. This animal initially investigated gumboots at a doorway to a dwelling, apparently as a potential nest site, before searching over a quite large land area and eventually returning to the water. Regular sightings, presumably of this same individual, then ensued, often in an area of sea-grass. In February 1991 a dead platypus was seen floating in the estuary. Coincidentally, on the same day an echidna, almost drowned, was rescued from a nearby part of the estuary.

No further sightings were made to my informant's knowledge until July 1991 when two platypus appeared at the site of the above individual's first landing. This pair have been seen regularly over the fourteen months to the date of this report. Although no burrow has been found, they have been observed regularly in two rest sites amongst the foreshore tussocks.

The area in which these observations were made is some four km seaward of a river-dwelling population of platypus. None of the individuals was seen significantly upstream of the general area of where these sightings were reported. It is of interest to note that the individuals reported here were all first observed soon after the first floods of the year.

REFERENCES

Grant, T.R. (1984) *The Platypus*. (New South Wales University Press, Sydney).

A SWIMMING ECHIDNA?

Editors Note: *The following item was extracted from the log book in the Lake Nicholls hut in Mt Field National Park. It was written on February 7 1992, and was penned by 'Anthony and Annette'. The observations of an "aquatic echidna" reported in the previous article lend further interest to this item.*

You're not gunna believe this but you see we were sitting at the lakeside when we saw a funny shaped thing bobbing up and down in the middle of the lake. We watched it for about two hours as it was swept towards us by the wind. It turned out to be an ECHIDNA!! When it reached the shoreline it became wedged between two rocks and couldn't escape. So I lifted one rock (bloody heavy one too) while Annette picked out the poor little echidna. We took him out to the back of the hut and gave him some salami, but all he wanted to do was rest and hide.