



PLATYPUS NUMBERS ARE HEADING DOWNSTREAM

Platypus DNA is not being detected in rivers and streams around Brisbane and experts fear the animal may disappear. Picture: Tara Croser

NATHAN EDWARDS

PLATYPUS numbers are dwindling in Brisbane, "concerning" new research has revealed.

The University of Queensland and The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland study has revealed a major decline in platypus DNA in the region's rivers.

Researchers studied over 145 sites across 54 individual waterways in the Brisbane region, ranging from the Elimbah River north of Caboolture all the way down to the Albert River near Mount Tamborine.

Results showed 66 per cent of sites tested negative for platypus DNA, including areas of concern in the mid to

upper Bremer River, west of Brisbane, Scrubby and Slacks Creeks, south of Brisbane, and Enoggera Creek and Kedron Brook, in Brisbane's north - all of which had previously tested positive to DNA but have now tested negative.

Researcher and UQ PhD student Tamielle Brunt called the results "concerning" in

terms of the continued survival of the platypus in the Brisbane region and said continued urbanisation and "unfavourable, dryer conditions" along the creeks has led to more limited movement of the mobile mammal.

"The platypus can tolerate a high degree of disturbance within its environment, but even that tolerance still has a

threshold," Ms Brunt said. "A lot of the general public don't even know that platypuses are in and around Brisbane, and that lack of awareness has made it hard for them with more urbanisation and barriers being put up along waterways. It would be catastrophic to see our iconic animals eventually disappear," Ms Blunt said.