



We usually have a clear idea of what makes an animal a mammal. We know mammals are warm-blooded and have hair or fur. We also know that mammal mothers feed their babies with milk. Perhaps the most common rule is that mammals give birth to live babies, not eggs. We often think this is true for every mammal.

5 However, nature has a surprising exception to this rule.

The *platypus is definitely a mammal, but the female platypus actually lays eggs. Once the babies *hatch, they drink their mother's milk. Surprisingly, the female platypus does not have *teats. Instead, the milk simply comes out through the skin on its *belly. The babies then drink the milk directly from the mother's body.

10 The platypus has other remarkable abilities that are very rare for a mammal. When it dives underwater to hunt, it closes its eyes, ears, and nose holes. How does it find food in the dark? It uses a "sixth sense" called electroreception. Its duck-like bill can find the tiny electrical signals that come from its prey. The male platypus even has sharp spikes on its back legs to protect itself. These spikes can put a type
15 of poison into a target. These strange features make the animal seem like a creature from a science fiction movie.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the platypus is that its physical form has changed very little since ancient times. It still looks much like its ancestors from the distant past. Charles Darwin even referred to the platypus as a "living fossil" in his

20 famous book, *On the Origin of Species*.

① What is the difference between the platypus and most mammals?

- ア How their babies are born
- イ Their body temperature
- ウ Their hair or fur
- エ Whether they produce milk

② How does a platypus find food underwater?

- ア It listens for sounds made by other animals.
- イ It senses electricity in the water.
- ウ It smells food with its nose while diving.
- エ It uses its eyes to see in the dark.

③ What do the spikes on the back legs of the male platypus do?

- ア They allow the platypus to defend itself.
- イ They help the platypus carry eggs to safety.
- ウ They help the platypus swim very fast.
- エ They protect the platypus from other animals' poison.

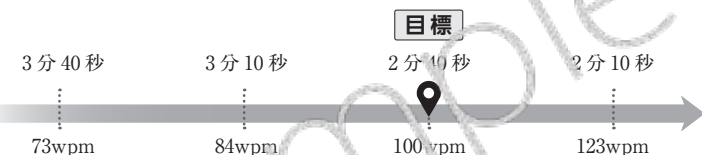
④ What is the main message about the platypus?

- ア Scientists should change the rules for all mammals.
- イ The platypus is a mammal that can live in water.
- ウ The platypus is a mammal with very rare features.
- エ The platypus is one of the oldest animals.

platypus「カモノハシ」 hatch「(卵から)かえる」 teat「(メスの哺乳類の)乳頭」 belly「腹部」

英文を読むのにかった時間

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