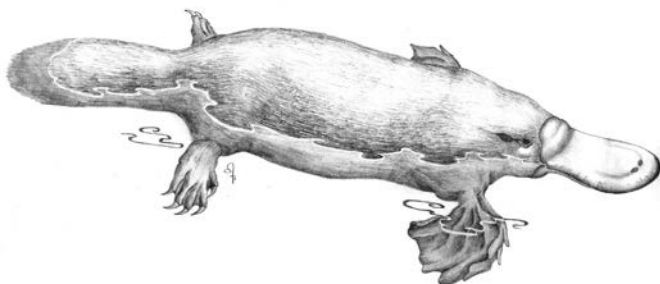


# 6

## ECOLOGY



*'Soon the river was before me, the banks of which were adorned by pendulous Acacias, which at this season of the year [September] were profusely covered with their rich golden and fragrant blossoms, while the lofty majestic Eucalypti or Gum-trees, many of which were young and gracefully pendent, together with the Swamp Oaks or Casuarinaea, resembling firs at a distance, added to the variety and natural beauty of the landscape'. ... 'The sun was now near its setting, when, at a more quiet part of the river (knowing, as I did, the crepuscular nature of the animals) I endeavoured to obtain a sight of the shy Ornithorhynchus paradoxus'. ... 'At a tranquil part of the river, called by the colonists a "pond", on the surface of which numerous aquatic plants were growing profusely, or in places of this description, the Water-Moles were most commonly seen, seeking their food among the plants, whilst the shaded banks afforded them the excellent situations for excavating their burrows'.*

GEORGE BENNETT (1860)

Describing a typical river on the southern tablelands of NSW in the 1830s

If George Bennett were to describe the same stream on the southern tablelands of New South Wales today, it would almost certainly be different. The wattles, with their 'rich golden and fragrant blossoms' and the 'majestic Eucalypti', would probably not feature in the description or