

# Darwin's Fantastical Voyage

## Activity 4: Mapping out the animals

[www.darwinproject.ac.uk/learning/7-11/darwins-fantastical-voyage](http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/learning/7-11/darwins-fantastical-voyage)

### Suggested preparation

Presentation: Darwin's Fantastical Voyage

Ask the expert film: Darwin and the Beagle Voyage

Alison Pearn, Associate Director of the Darwin Correspondence Project, describes Darwin's amazing voyage

### How long will activity take?

- 45 – 50 minutes

### What do I need?

- The 4 group names
- Image of each specimen
- Maps of where each animal comes from
- Specimen descriptions
- 'Darwin on...' notes
- Beagle Voyage Route
- A large map of the world on the wall
- Pen and paper to write to Professor Henslow

During his voyage round the world Darwin came across many exciting animal specimens and remains. See if you can match the image of each specimen with the description, the quote and a map of where he found them.

### What do I do?

1. Divide the class into 4 groups and give each group a name card.
2. Mix up the images, descriptions, maps and quotes and distribute them around the classroom.
3. Each group must find the image, description, map and quote that corresponds to their group name.
4. See which group can collect all the information correctly first.
5. Discuss the finds with the class and look at the world map to see the route that Darwin would have taken.
6. Using the information gathered, each write a letter from the voyage to Professor Henslow back in Cambridge, describing the animal that you have found. You can sign it as Darwin or yourself.





# The Toxodons Montevideo



Patagonia  
The Rheas





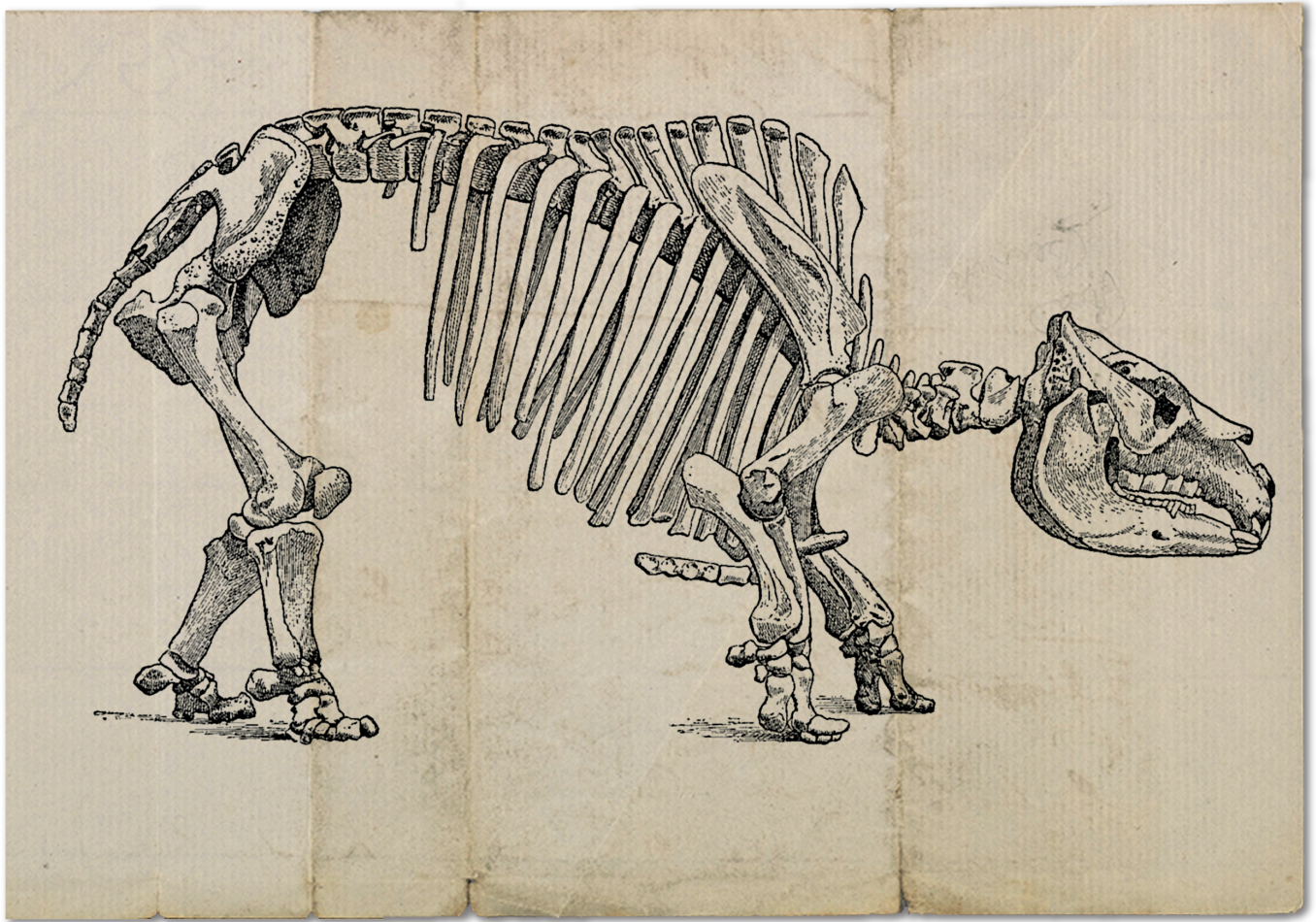


# The Tortoises Galapagos



# Australia The Platypuses





## Map of Uruguay showing Montevideo



## What is a ... *Toxodon*?

A *Toxodon* is an extinct mammal that was hunted by prehistoric man.

Darwin was one of the first people to collect its fossils.

It was about 2.7 m long and 1.5 m tall. It looked like a big, heavy rhinoceros.



## Darwin on ... the *Toxodon*

Darwin wrote in his diary on the Beagle voyage:

'November 26 1833

I set out on my return in a direct line for Monte Video. Having heard of some giant's bones at a neighbouring farm-house on the Sarandis, a small stream entering the Rio Negro, I rode there accompanied by my host, and purchased for the value of eighteen pence the head of the *Toxodon*.'

*Journal of Researches into the natural history and geology of the countries visited during the voyage of HMS Beagle round the world under the command of Capt. FitzRoy, RA, Charles Darwin, London 1845, p. 155.*





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## What is ... Darwin's rhea?

Darwin's rhea (*Rhea pennata*) is a large flightless bird similar to, but smaller than, an ostrich. It is found in Patagonia and parts of Peru, Bolivia and Argentina.

It has a small head but a large body and long neck and legs. It can run fast to escape predators, up to 37 miles per hour.

It eats grasses, shrubs, fruit, seeds and insects. The male rheas incubate and protect the eggs.



## Darwin on ... the rhea

When Darwin was in Patagonia during the voyage of the Beagle, he heard about a small rhea that was quite rare. He had no luck finding it but in January 1834, he was eating a meal consisting of a bird that had been shot by the ship's artist Conrad Martens. As he ate he realised that he was eating the rhea (*Rhea pennata*) that he had been looking for!

He saved parts of the bird that hadn't been eaten and cleaned off the bones of the rest of it and sent it back to England. Finding another species of rhea made him wonder about the environments that different animals lived in and how they seemed well suited.





Photograph by Vanessa Green, courtesy of the Galapagos Conservation Trust ([galapagosconservation.org.uk](http://galapagosconservation.org.uk))



## What are ... the Galápagos tortoises?

The Galápagos Islands were discovered in 1535 and the word Galápagos is Spanish for 'giant tortoises'. The species of tortoise vary on different islands; those that live on the larger, wetter islands tend to be species with domed shells. Those who live on drier islands are generally species with longer limbs and necks and a saddleback shell, to help them reach higher for food. This shows how, over time, the tortoises have adapted characteristics best suited to the environments that they live in and to the food available. They often live for over 100 years and are the world's largest tortoises.



## Darwin on ... the Galápagos tortoises

When Darwin arrived in 1835 there were 15 different species but in recent years there are only 11. He wrote in his diary on 9th October 1835:

'...The tortoise when it can procure it, drinks great quantities of water: Hence these animals swarm in the neighbourhood of the Springs. — The average size of the full-grown ones is nearly a yard long in its back shell: they are so strong as easily to carry me, & too heavy to lift from the ground. — In the pathway many are travelling to the water & others returning, having drunk their fill. — The effect is very comical in seeing these huge creatures with outstretched neck so deliberately pacing onwards. —...When they arrive at the Spring, they bury their heads above the eyes in the muddy water & greedily suck in great mouthfulls, quite regardless of lookers on. —'

*Charles Darwin's Beagle Diary*, edited by Richard Darwin Keynes, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 361.





Image from the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Digitised by Smithsonian Libraries. | [www.biodiversitylibrary.org](http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org)



## Map of Australia



Map vectors by Free Vector Maps



## What is a ... platypus?

A platypus is a semi-aquatic mammal, meaning that it lives partly on land and partly in water. It is one of the few mammals that lays eggs instead of giving birth.

It has a snout that looks like a duck's beak, a tail like a beaver and feet like an otter.

When it was first heard of in Europe, it was thought to be a fake animal, due to its unusual features.



## Darwin on ... the platypus

Sydney Cove, 19 January 1836. Darwin spent the day trying to catch a kangaroo, but was unsuccessful. He wrote:

'in the dusk of the evening I took a stroll along a chain of ponds ... and had the good fortune to see several of the famous *Ornithorhynchus paradoxus* [platypus]. They were diving and playing about the surface of the water, but showed so little of their bodies that they might easily have been mistaken for water rats. Mr. Browne shot one; certainly it is a most extraordinary animal; a stuffed specimen does not at all give a good idea of the head and beak when fresh; the latter becoming hard and contracted'

*Journal of Researches into the natural history and geology of the countries visited during the voyage of HMS Beagle round the world under the command of Capt. FitzRoy, RA, Charles Darwin, London 1845, pp 441 – 442.*

# The Beagle Voyage Route

