



Eggs

The egg masses (spawn) of cane toads are unlike those of most native frogs. Toads produce chains of black eggs about one millimetre in diameter enclosed in a thick, transparent, gelatinous cover forming long strands about three millimetres thick.



Cane toad eggs.



Native frog species eggs.

Tadpoles

Cane toad tadpoles are different from native species; toad tadpoles are jet black and reach a maximum of about 30 millimetres long from head to tail. They have non-transparent abdomen skin, and their tails are nearly the same length as their bodies. The tail has a jet black central muscle with totally transparent fins with no spots or pigment. The tadpoles of native frogs can be very dark (but not jet black) with lighter or transparent abdomen skin and longer tails.



Toad tadpoles form large, slow-moving groups that do not rise to the surface to 'breathe'. In contrast, tadpoles of native frogs do rise to the surface, having developed lungs earlier.

Juvenile toads

Newly formed toads (metamorphs) are small in size (nine to 11 millimetres) compared to adults, and can be identified by their large numbers and daytime activity near water breeding sites.

For native frog identification download the *Cane toad* app through iTunes.

For more information and assistance contact:

For Kimberley residents and visitors please call the Department of Parks and Wildlife's Kununurra office on (08) 9168 4200

For all other areas of WA please call 1800 44 WILD (9453)

Poisons Information Line: 13 11 26

www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/canetoads

Information current at July 2013.

This publication is available in alternative formats on request.

Is it a cane toad?

Up to two-thirds of suspected toads turn out to be harmless native frogs, so it is important to correctly identify them.

Cane toad skin is dry and warty, rather than moist and slippery like the skin of many native frogs. It is usually a dull, brownish colour.

The big glands on the cane toad's shoulder release a poisonous milky substance when the toad feels threatened.

Cane toads have a very distinctive bony 'm'-shaped ridge over their nose. These ridges meet in the middle.



Adult cane toads are heavily built, and average between 100mm and 150mm in length.

Cane toad feet don't have suckers on the end of the toes.

The call of a male toad is a guttural trill.

Native Kimberley frogs



Platyplectrum ornatum - ornate burrowing frog

Native Kimberley frogs



Pseudophryne guentheri - crawling toadlet

For more information about identifying native frogs visit www.museum.wa.gov.au/frogwatch



Department of Parks and Wildlife



Here are some tell-tale features:

Cane toads are the only true toads present in Australia. They are heavily built and typically 10 to 15 centimetres in length. They are able to grow to more than 23 centimetres and can weigh more than one kilogram. However, in areas with high toad densities, individuals rarely exceed 10 centimetres in length.

Appearance

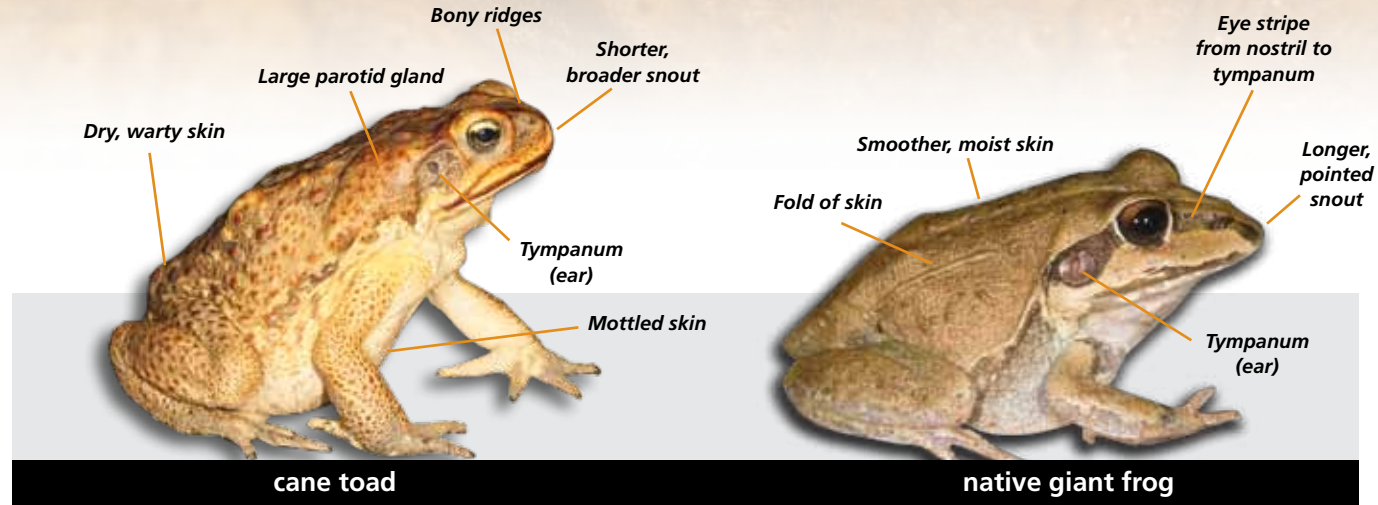
The skin of a cane toad is dry and rough, rather than moist and slippery like the skin of many native frog species. The backs of male toads have raised warty lumps that feel like sandpaper when they are rubbed, while females have slightly smoother skin with less prominent lumps. The colour on top of an adult cane toad body ranges from dull brown to yellowish or blackish (never bright green, though juveniles have a brighter camouflage pattern that dims with age). The under parts are usually a dirty cream colour and juvenile toads have a grey and cream mottled pattern that may fade with age.



Skin of a cane toad.



Glands of a cane toad.



The large glands on the shoulder can sometimes exude a poisonous milky substance when the toads feel threatened. Other distinctive features include a mango-shaped eye and an 'm'-shaped bony ridge on the head. These features separate them from some native species that are commonly confused with cane toads, such as the ornate burrowing frog and the giant frog. The lack of suckers (enlarged toe pads) on the digits separates the cane toad from the tree frog.

Behavioural characteristics

The call of the male is a guttural trill sustained for about 30 seconds. It is very different to most native frog calls.

Like many native frogs, adult cane toads are most active at night in open areas such as roads and lawns. Sometimes they congregate beneath street lamps and other outdoor lights to catch insects.

On land, toads walk and bound short distances. They are not capable of climbing smooth surfaces. Cane toads typically sit more upright than native frogs.



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