

cane toads

Rhinella marina

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

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.

Cane toad skin is dry and warty, rather than moist and slippery.

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



history

Cane toads (*Rhinella marina*) are native to South and Central America and were released in Queensland in 1935 in an ill-fated attempt to control beetles that were damaging sugar cane crops. Since their introduction, they have spread rapidly across northern Australia and become major pests in their own right. Cane toads now pose a serious threat to Western Australia's unique native species. Parks and Wildlife are investing in several programs to protect these animals.

Cane toads crossed the Western Australian border and entered the east Kimberley region during the 2008/2009 wet season. They will continue to spread west and become naturalised in the region over the coming years.

beware of hitchhikers

It is important that everyone can recognise these exotic pests to ensure that they are not transported inadvertently to areas ahead of the front line. Likely equipment that cane toads hide in includes camping gear, swags and bags that are left on the ground overnight. Cane toads look for cool damp places to hide in.

safety handling and euthanasia

Cane toads are poisonous at all stages of their life cycle, including as eggs and tadpoles. Juvenile and adult cane toads secrete venom that is poisonous to humans and most animals including dogs and cats. The venom is secreted or squirted from glands above the shoulders of the toad when a toad is handled roughly or feels threatened. To take effect, the venom needs to be swallowed or absorbed through mucous membranes such as those of the eye, nose or mouth.

Cane toads are potentially dangerous therefore it is recommended that gloves and eye protection are worn when handling them. It is also important that hands are washed thoroughly after handling cane toads.

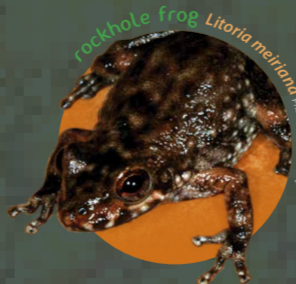
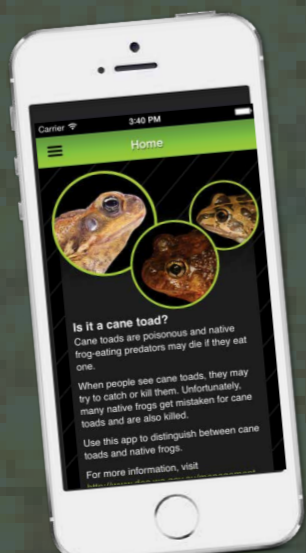
Even though cane toads are pests they are still animals and are required to be treated humanely. The recommended method of euthanasing a cane toad in the Kimberley is cooling followed by freezing. Alternatively in areas where cane toads are found, the Department has provided drop-off points for live cane toads



cane toad identification

For assistance with cane toad and native frog identification download the free cane toad App. *iOS only.

Be careful not to confuse native frogs for cane toads. Some of the commonly mistaken Kimberley frogs are shown here.



Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

