



Cane Toad

At a glance

Features: Bony ridges over eyes, distinctive large poison gland behind their head, adults 10-15cm long with dry warty skin

Origin: USA and tropical South America. Introduced to Australia as part of a biological control program for beetle pests of sugar cane.

Pathways: Often hitch-hike in luggage, freight, vehicles, gardening materials and fodder

At risk: Threatens our native species with extinction – poisonous to pets and native predators



How can you spot it?

Description

- Adults are 10-15cm long with dry, warty skin
- Bony ridges over eyes that meet at the nose
- Distinctive large poison (paratoid) gland behind their head
- Can be grey, yellowish, olive-brown or reddish brown
- Underside is pale with dark mottling
- No wide pads on end of fingers
- Partially webbed back feet and unwebbed hands
- Young toads have a smooth dark skin with darker blotches and bars, and lack conspicuous parotoid glands

Tadpoles

- Small and jet black
- School together in large groups, unlike most native tadpoles
- Can be difficult to distinguish from native frog tadpoles

Eggs

- Laid in long strings of transparent jelly enclosing double rows of black eggs, unlike any native frog
- Often laid in shallow water wound through vegetation
- Hatch within 24-27 hours.

Why is it a concern?

Cane toads are a serious introduced invasive pest that can devastate our native wildlife and ecosystems. They are found throughout northern Australia and in north-east NSW and can spread and become established in other parts of the state.

The cane toad is tough and adaptable. It has few predators in Australia, which is bad news for competing native amphibians, and because it is poisonous throughout its life cycle it may be responsible for the population decline of snakes and other species that prey on it.

Cane toads are considered a pest in Australia because they:

- poison pets and injure humans with their toxins
- poison many native animals whose diet includes frogs, tadpoles and frogs' eggs
- eat large numbers of honey bees, creating a management problem for bee-keepers
- prey on native fauna
- compete for food with vertebrate insectivores such as small skinks
- may carry diseases that can be transmitted to native frogs and fishes.

Cane toads can be accidentally transported to new locations, for example in pot plants or loads of timber.

Report it!



If you see a toad, it is important NOT to kill it as it may be a native toad or frog. Take a photo (if you can) and report it through the FREE Feralscan app <https://www.feralscan.org.au/>. Select TOAD and record your sighting.

Or call the Invasive Species Unit on 02 6391 3525 or email invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au