

# Have you seen this Alert Pest?

November 2010

## Cane Toad

*Bufo marinus*



### WHAT IS IT?

- One of the world's worst animal pests.
- An 'Alert Pest' in South Australia.
- An animal that produces a poison which kills many of our native animals and pets that try to eat it.

### WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

- Eggs, tadpoles, and both juvenile and adult toads are poisonous.
- Native predators that eat cane toad eggs, tadpoles or adults often die. Populations of predators such as goannas, crocodiles and quolls have crashed after the arrival of the toads.
- Adult toads are voracious feeders that consume a wide variety of insects and small animals, competing with native animals.
- Ingestion of toads by domestic dogs and cats can result in painful death.



Adult cane toad

Dept. of Agric. & Food WA



Native banjo frog

Steve Walker

### What are State Alert Pests?

These are invasive pests that are not known to be in South Australia, or if present, occur in low numbers or in a restricted locality. An Alert Pest would pose a serious threat to the State's primary industries, natural environments or human health if it became established here. All Alert Pests are declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*: this means that sale and transport is prohibited (Sect. 175 and 177); if found anywhere in this State their presence must be notified (Sect. 180) – refer overleaf, and animals must be destroyed (Sect. 182).



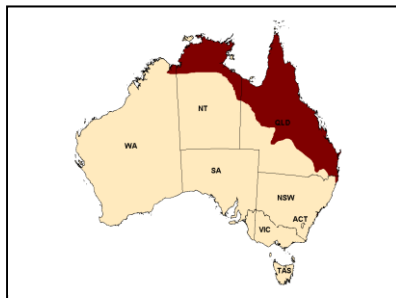
Native meowing frog Steve Walker



Cane toad eggs



Cane toad found in Adelaide



Current cane toad distribution

## DESCRIPTION

Large (up to 20 cm), heavily built, with shortish legs. They have rough, warty skin and are tan, dull green or brownish in colour.

They have a prominent sharp-edged ridge above the eye. An angular bony ridge extends from the eyes to the nose.

Cane toads have a large bulbous parotoid gland behind each eye.

Male mating call is a continuous purring trill - a little like a running motor.

## HOW IT SPREADS

Cane toads are sometimes accidentally introduced to South Australia from northern states in transport vehicles, often with supplies of farm produce. They are able to move across dry land between wetlands, but any spread into South Australia may be via large flood events.

## HABITAT

Prefers wet areas, such as wetlands and river banks. Toads tend to shelter under leaves or debris during the day and emerge at night to feed. Around houses they are often seen under lights where insects congregate.

## ORIGIN

The cane toad is native to tropical and seasonally arid parts of North, Central and South America.

## HOW IT GOT HERE

In 1935 cane toads were introduced from Hawaii to cane growing areas of Queensland to control cane beetles.

## CURRENT DISTRIBUTION

Today they occur over large areas of Queensland, north coastal New South Wales, and the Top End of the Northern Territory into Western Australia. They continue to aggressively expand their range (see map left).

## POTENTIAL DISTRIBUTION

Scientific opinion is divided on whether parts of South Australia are suitable for cane toads to establish permanent breeding populations. However long-term climatic change may further increase their chance of establishing populations in South Australia.

## What can you do?

Be on the alert for this animal using this Fact Sheet as a guide. If you see a suspicious animal that may be this State Alert Pest, please report it to your local Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board (contact details at [www.nrm.sa.gov.au](http://www.nrm.sa.gov.au)).

For more information on pests, including Alerts, contact your local NRM Board or visit either [www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity) (phone Freecall 1800 084 881 or 08-8303 9620) or [www.feral.org.au](http://www.feral.org.au).

