

# Cane Toad Control

Working together to protect the Tweed's native species

## Controlling toads in the Tweed Shire

Many Tweed residents are helping by removing areas where cane toads can hide and breed and by assisting Council to catch and humanely euthanase toads.

- Community Toad Musters are being held to increase community awareness about cane toads and provide equipment and training. Toads are collected and humanely euthanased.
- Toad proofing (fencing) ponds around water bodies stops access to known breeding sites.
- Growing longer lawns and planting native plant species - toads prefer short lawns where they can move and hunt easily

## How can you help control cane toads?

- Notify council if you see cane toad tadpoles or toad eggs on public sites.
- Learn how to identify toads correctly and then catch toads and collect toad eggs on your own property.
- Join in a toad muster.
- Keep pet food and water out of reach of cane toads (at least at least 60cm high).
- Keep compost and food scraps out of reach of cane toads.
- Plant native gardens rather than short mown lawns, as toads prefer short grass.
- Turn off outside lights when not in use as toads gather under lamps to eat insects attracted to the light.
- Exclude cane toads from breeding in dams or ponds with toad proof fencing.
- Map cane toads sightings on Toadscan.  
<http://www.feralscan.org.au/toadscan/>

## Further information

For more information, visit Council's website at [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/PestManagement](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/PestManagement)  
Further information is also available by contacting Council's Invasive Species Officer, Pamela Gray, on (02) 6670 2778 or [pgray@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pgray@tweed.nsw.gov.au)

## Useful links:

More information is available at:

- <http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/Item/1411>
- <http://www.byron.nsw.gov.au/cane-toads>
- <http://www.invasiveanimals.com/>
- [http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/pestsweeds/cane\\_toad\\_infosheet.pdf](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/pestsweeds/cane_toad_infosheet.pdf)
- <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/>
- <http://www.environment.gov.au/node/13931>
- <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/determinations/Bufomarinusktp.htm>

**Tweed residents are playing an important role in controlling cane toad numbers in the area.**



## Where did they come from?

Cane toads were introduced to Australia from South America in 1935 to control beetle pests in Queensland cane fields. 101 cane toads were released from Gordonvale in Queensland. They were introduced to Northern Rivers cane fields in the 1960s after they proved to have high survival rates however they were unsuccessful in controlling the cane beetles. Recent studies show that the cane toad invasion front is accelerating – from 10 km per year in the early years, through to 50 km per year today. They are now prolific throughout the Northern Rivers.

## What's the problem?

- Toads eat large numbers of native animals, especially insects and occasionally frogs, small birds and mammals.
- Toads are prolific breeders - each female can lay more than 30,000 eggs at a time - two times a year, Tadpoles hatch within 24-72hours and live for about five years.
- Toads out-compete native species for homes and food resources - Native skinks and frogs just can't compete with cane toads.
- Cane toads are poisonous at all stages of their life cycle. They are poisonous to pets, humans and native animals including goannas, snakes and quolls. Toxin is produced in their shoulder glands and is present in the skin of the back.

- They may transmit diseases to native snakes, frogs and fishes
- They have no specific predators and can increase rapidly and move into new areas quickly.

## How can we stop them?

The CSIRO have researched many ways to stop the cane toad but have been unsuccessful so far. Due to the vast scale of the cane toad infestation and there not being a broad-scale biological solution, total eradication is not practicable. The best solutions to date are local cane toad control programs to decrease the impact of toads and stop their spread.

## What is Council doing?

Council has received financial support from the NSW Environment Trust to coordinate a cane toad control program which includes: cane toad musters, restoring natural habitats and toad proofing or excluding toads from some breeding sites. This work will help native species return to these sites.

This program is driven by Council's Pest Management Program Area who are bringing together government bodies, the community and other organisations to tackle the most invasive pests in the region.

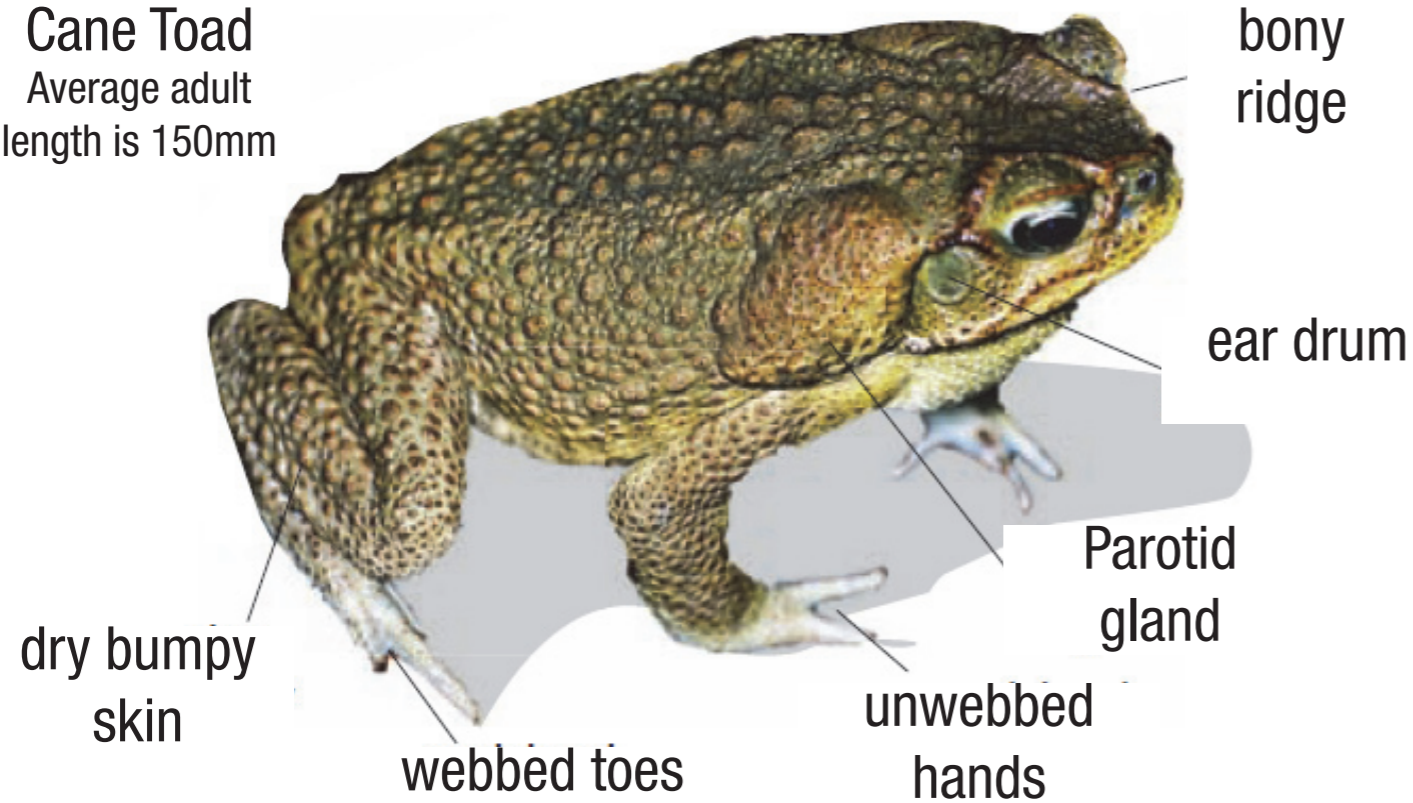
The more people who take action, the fewer toads there will be in Tweed.



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**Cane Toad**  
Average adult length is 150mm



## Is it a Frog or is it a Toad?

It is important to know the difference between native frogs and cane toads, including their tadpoles, eggs and their habitat. Otherwise we can actually be hurting the native species we are trying to protect! You have to be 100% sure before you kill a cane toad that it is not one of our native frog species.

Cane toads look like some native frog species except for a few tell tale features:

- Cane toads sit upright, take short hops when moving and the average size of adult cane toads is 9-15cm;
- skin colour varies between grey, yellowish, olive, reddish brown, and
- pale skin on their belly, with dark mottling.

If you are still unsure, take live specimens under 4cm to Council's offices in Murwillumbah or a National Parks and Wildlife office for identification. All live frogs and toads should be kept cool, and transported in a container with airholes, with some wet leaves.

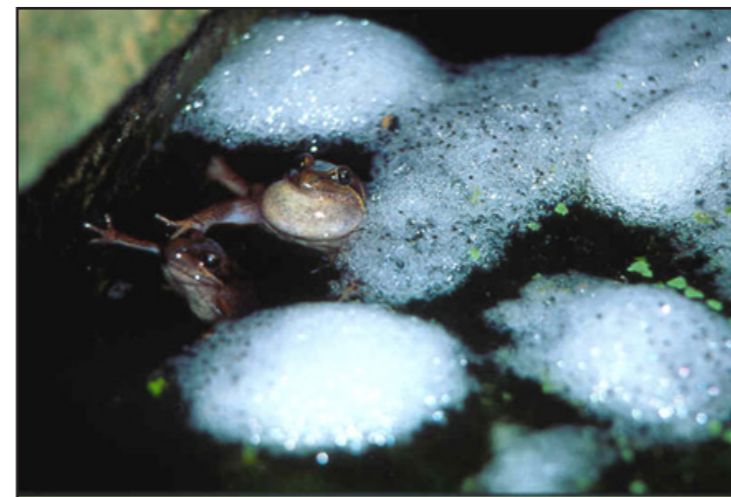
**Take Care!**

**If handling cane toads, take care not to come in contact with the poison. Venom exudes from the parotoid glands above the shoulders and toads have been reported to spray venom a short distance. Always use rubber gloves. Always take care when handling native frogs. Some native frogs also produce toxins and chemicals on your skin such as insecticides can rapidly kill frogs through their skin.**

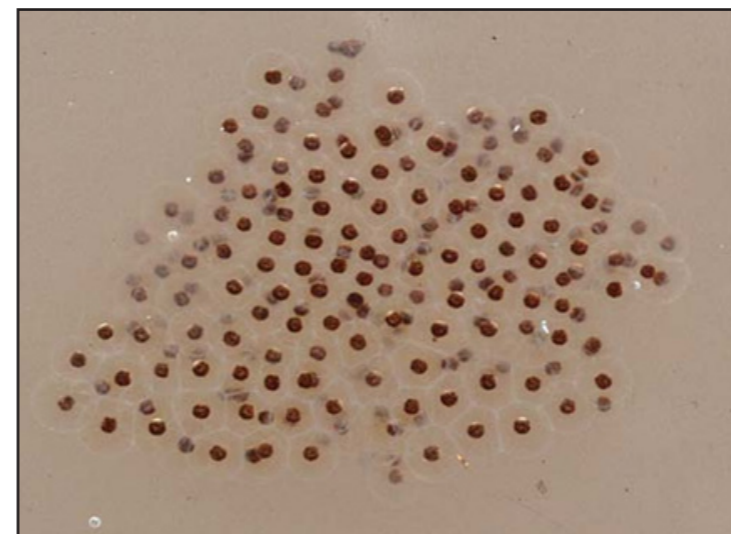


## Eggs and tadpoles

Native frog eggs look very different to cane toad eggs. The most commonly seen native frog egg masses are foamy clumps among plants in ponds and creek pools. The white foam is a mixture of bubbles and clear jelly, like beaten egg whites.

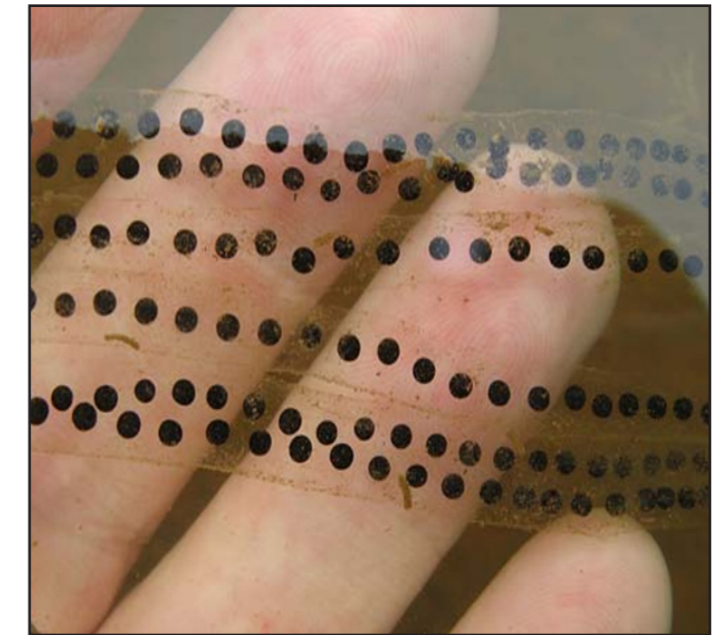


The other commonly seen type of egg mass is a non-foamy, oval shaped clump three to five centimetres in diameter, in which the jelly capsules around each egg stick together. Both the foamy and non-foamy clumps float on the surface on the water.

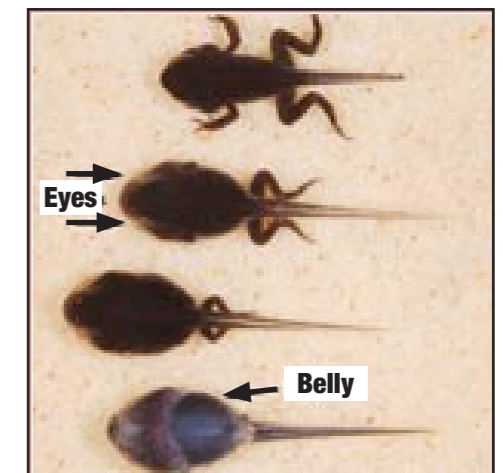


The image above is an egg mass laid by the rocket frog, or *Litoria nasuta*.

Cane toad eggs (pictured below) are laid in a very large tangled mass of long strands, or ropes, of eggs in thick jelly.



Each female toad can lay more than 30,000 eggs at a time, so their sheer number is often a clear indication they are cane toad eggs. Each cane toad egg is enclosed within a clear jelly capsule (often arranged in pairs).



- Cane toad tadpoles are small, black and have:
- eyes in from the side of their head;
  - a dark bluish-black belly;
  - a short tail, not much longer than their body;
  - a black tail muscle Tail muscle black, and
  - clear fins clear and a rounded tail tip

Cane toad tadpoles are often seen swimming in very large swarms.