

Cane toads

A heartfelt cry from the Kununurra Community to the Nation.

We will Stop the Cane Toads getting into WA!



The aim of this website is to document the Kimberley Toad Busters fight to stop the cane toad crossing into Western Australia and to provide the Western Australian Community some understanding of the enormous efforts (and contributions) that can be made by unpaid volunteers

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Caring for the Kimberley



We need to stop burning the Kimberley
We must stop the Cane Toad

2003 winner of the
Bird Caption
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2004 winner of the
Bird Caption
(National)
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Toad Busters Australia.



Queen MaryG KTB
Patron ORIC photo

KIMBERLEY TOAD BUSTERS NEWSLETTER No. 25

27/10/2008

By Lee Scott-Virtue President & founder of the KTBS & Sandy Boulter Vice President KTBS & coordinator & founder of Perth based Friends of Kimberly Toad Busters



The Cane Toad is a Key Threatening Process to the Australian Nation

Declared by the Federal Government 12 April 2005

WE NEED A NATIONAL CANE TOAD THREAT ABATEMENT PLAN!

KTBSs NEED RESEARCH SPONSORS!

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Friendsktb@westnet.com.au

Today's Quote

"If you are dreaming of experiencing the Kimberley one day, do not delay! Come now before the cane toads arrive because our Kimberley will be a very different place once the cane toads invade," Jeff Hayley of Triple J Tours Kununurra, longtime supporter of and donor to the KTBS and new KTB Board member.

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“TOAD IN THE HOLE” A Rhyming Report on Toadbusting by Helen Gilbey Kimberley Toad Buster Volunteer from Perth, September 2008.

So you really want to know what it is like to be a KTB volunteer toadbuster?

Bufo marinus is good at hiding but toadbusters know all their camouflage tricks

KTB Honour Box: Norma and Bob Wainwright



Norma and partner Bob have been tour operators and Kimberley residents for over 50 years. Bob is a long standing KTB toadbusting leader. So one could say that they know the Kimberley like the veritable backs of their well worn hands. You feel really safe out toadbusting with Norma and Bob. Bob who turns 80 this month, is celebrating his birthday this week on a Ministerial toadbus. Bob has been described as a Kimberley treasure and his store of knowledge is renown. Norma is newly elected to the Board of the KTBS and has taken on the challenging role of secretary. Norma writes KTB poetry and media reports. Bob and Norma's three sons and one of their grandchildren are toadbusters.

Previous KTB Honour Box Recipients:

Sharon McLachlan, Del Collins, Trevor Dutoit, Dean Goodgame

MARYANNE WINTON: Aboriginal Team Leader



KTBS welcome Gurandji Elder, MaryAnne Winton on board as our formal KTB coordinator of the aboriginal participation in Kimberley Toad Busting. KTBS have funds to support this position for only 4 months. MaryAnne has been toadbusting as a KTB volunteer for three years. KTBS look forward to the full time organisation of our junior aboriginal toadbusters so that we can increase the opportunities for our aboriginal toadbusters. MaryAnne will be able to facilitate the training, education and toadbusting request from Bayulu School in Fitzroy Crossing including 4 adults and 14 children. KTBS receive many such requests, which add pressure on the time of our volunteer army.

WHERE ARE THE CANE TOADS NOW?

It is hot and warm and cane toads are breeding. Waters will flood eggs and tadpoles forward into permanent billabongs where they will land, refuge, grow and wait for the next flood forwards. They do not always have to hop to move westwards up here, the floods given them a real ride.

The cane toads might reach the East Kimberley this wet season if we have a big wet season. Volunteer KTB toadbusters are all pulling together in last ditch big effort in October - even out during the week nights after work and school, as well as Saturday nights - in an effort to stem the toads in these corridors and keep them from crossing from the WA/NT border for another year.

If the toads do cross the border this wet season, they will do so through three of the six corridors KTB have identified and been tracking for over three years. Corridor One: (Legune Station/Keep River); Corridor Two: (Victoria Highway/Keep River); and Corridor Three: through the Stockade, Matilda and Hicks Creek systems into the Ord River and Lake Argyle – see KTB map.

The closest the cane toads have been found to the WA/NT border were 2 toads, a male and female 18 kms from the WA/NT border in September 2008. Toads have now moved onto Legune Homestead and south of Amanbidgi (old Kildurk Station) in the West Baines River area. Toads have also moved into upper reaches of the Wickham and Humber River systems. The present hard diligent toadbusting work will see whether or not the KTBS have stalled the front line for another season. Will not know this until after the upcoming wet season, the waters recede and we will see whether or not we have held the toads back from the Kimberley for another year.

KIMBERLEY TOAD BUSTER CANE TOAD RESEARCH

The Kimberley Toad Buster science research program supported by Kimberley Specialists in Research has a number of elements.

Can you sponsor, or do you know someone who would sponsor or do you have the time to find a sponsor for our KTB cane toad research projects?

Why Sponsor?

- High profile campaign to save the Kimberley biodiversity
- Your logo on www.canetoads.com.au (averages over 1,500 hits a day)
- Help community implement the only cane toad management plan in place to protect the Kimberley
- Support the volunteers, and the aboriginal children and communities trying to save their bushtucker.

A Synopsis of KSR/KTB Cane Toad Research Projects in Need of Sponsors:

1. Lungworm Parasite, *Rhabdias hylae*

The lungworm parasite infects cane toads and native frogs. See [newsletter No. 24](#) for the parasite story so far.

There is academic debate around whether the cane toad infected our native frogs or our native frogs infected the cane toad with this parasite. This parasite and its origins must be properly understood until use of the parasite as a control mechanism at the front lines can be contemplated. Parasite samples taken by the Mr Groffen, KSR and KTBS collected from native frogs and cane toads have been sent for genetic analysis to a frog parasite geneticist expert.

Research science post graduate student from Delft University, Holland, Jordy Groffen has just announced that he will be returning next year to further his studies into the lungworm in partnership with Kimberley Specialists in Research and Kimberley Toad Busters. Jordy is expected to return at the end of January 2008 for 4 months, again with the support of Delft University, Holland.

Sponsorship of this program is called for. It is estimated that the cost to the KTBS of sponsorship of this Project: \$30,000.

1. Cane Toad Calling Analysis

Male cane toads call. Female cane toads lay pheromone trails. That's how they find each other. KTBS field observations are that male cane toads have very different calls at different times. KTB volunteer toadbuster, David Kentish, also observed this and has put his IT and electronic skills together with his cane toad busting expertise to design research into identifying the different calls and what they mean. KSR, KTBS and volunteer researcher David Kentish believe strongly that understanding the male calling pattern will improve our field catching strategies and may lead to vastly improved catching techniques. This program commences 28 October 2008 and will include three months of field work.

Sponsorship of this program is called for. Estimated Infrastructure costs of Project: \$9,000 plus KTB sponsorship \$40,000 = total \$50,000.

1. Pygmy Crocodile

Cane toads in all stages of their life cycle are fatally toxic if eaten by the pygmy crocodile. There are few populations of the pygmy crocodile, and the cane toad is closing on the last populations not yet exposed to toads at Napp Springs on // in the Northern Territory. Bullo River Station owners have been working with crocodile researcher, Adam Britton to understand the genetics of the crocodile.

Aboriginal elders with memory of country and the KTBS undertaking toad reconnaissance ahead of the cane toad frontlines in the region of the Bullo River populations have worked together to find and identify any other pygmy crocodile populations as yet not impacted by cane toads. There is debate about whether or not the pygmy crocodile is genetically different from the commonly occurring freshwater crocodile, *Crocodylus johnstoni*. This lack of knowledge about the pygmy crocodile has been the stumbling block to listing of the pygmy crocodile as a rare and endangered species. Is it different or is it just a miniature version that has responded to its less nutritional environment high above the desert in remote permanent springs? It is arguable that the pygmy crocodile is important whether or not it is a different species.

Researcher Lyall Grieve, from MacQuarie University, Queensland is returning to work with KSR and KTBS to study the pygmy crocodile habitat, its origins, its habitat and its diet. His research project has been signed off by his supervisor, Dr Jim Kohen. It simply requires permits from the NT government.

KTBS are proud to announce sponsorship of this research program from Triple J Tours Kununurra. The estimated cost of project is \$ 10,000.

1. Cane Toad Impacts on Small Reptiles' Diet and Identifying Cane Toad Diet

Research scientist, Lyall Grieve has been undertaking a research project with KSR and KTBS. Results from this project are being prepared for publication: "THE IMPACT OF THE CANE TOAD (*BUFO MARINUS*) ON THE SMALL REPTILE FAUNA OF THE KIMBERLEY REGION" Lyall Grieve, Macquarie University.

Part 2 of this project: Lyall Grieve needs to undertake more sampling stomach samples from local reptiles and cane toads.

Sponsorship of the second part of this project is estimated to be \$5,000.

1. KTB invasive epidemiological study, and front line modelling

Lee Scott-Virtue through her company Kimberley Specialists in Research designed a toadbusting field study on the basis of papers delivered to the Kununurra Cane Toad Forum initiated, organised and fundraised for by KSR and the Kununurra community. Lee recognised the unique opportunity the proposed KSR/KTB toadbusting program offered to understand the colonising cane toad. Accordingly, although a little dubious about the extra workload this meant, KTBS have recorded the gender, weight and length of nearly all mature adult cane toads caught and disposed of in their weekly toadbusting since September 2008. KTBS have learned a lot about cane toads through this process and believe that the data shows a lot about how cane toads colonise and could lead to

informed predictive modeling that will be helpful in predicting the movement of male and female cane toads, and how they work to colonise an area. We need to sponsor a feral species epidemiologist to work with our data and undertake modeling from it.

Sponsorship for this program is called for. KTBs estimate the cost of Project as \$30,000.

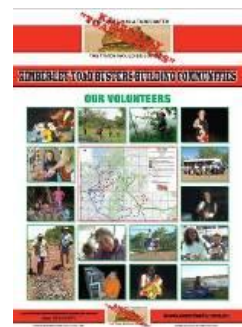
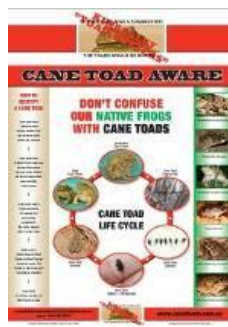
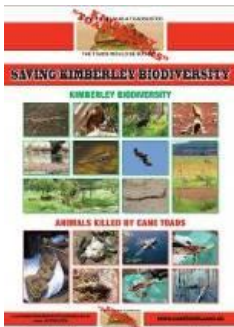
1. Cane Toad Trap Design

It was advocated by some in the early days of the Kimberley based cane toad campaign that trapping might be the control method of choice. There is no doubt, that with enough volunteers, hand catching cane toads is the most effective method of catching large numbers of cane toads. Cane toad traps are useful as an adjunct to hand catching, for reconnaissance, for finding and catching hitchhikers in high risk areas such as campgrounds and trucking depots, and leaving in place in the field when toadbusters cannot be there.

KTBs have been working with cane toad trap designs and are developing adaptations that improve their workability in the field and improve catching impacts.

TAFE WorkBase program and the Wyndham prisoners will make the traps for the KTBs. Sponsorship for trap making materials is called for. KTBs estimate that the cost for each trap with all components is \$300. KTBs need 500 traps = \$150,000.

KIMBERLEY TOAD BUSTER POSTERS



Designer, *Graphic Source*, and Printer, *PK Print* very kindly and generously donated their time, expertise and resources to design and print new KTB posters for the Perth Royal Show in a very great hurry.

Photos for the posters were donated by our KTB volunteers.

If you would like any of the posters in A3 size our new bumper sticker, "Come Bust With Us" please email us at fieldcoordinator@canetoads.com.au



Postage and handling costs will be applied.

PERTH ROYAL SHOW September – October 2008



Friends of the Kimberley Toad Busters talked long and loud at the cane toad display in East Kimberley Guest Pavilion at the Perth Royal Show between 26 September – 4 October 2008. Although setting up costs were quite high, interest in cane toads was extraordinary.

Thousands of people attended the display. Donations to the KTBs by the generous Royal Show patrons reached \$2,180. Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley also made a \$500 grant towards the costs of the display. The cane toads in formalin were a great draw card, as were the new KTB posters.



A big thank you to all our KTB volunteers who spent hours answering cane toad questions and telling the toadbusting story: Daniela Ciancio, Diane Veitch, Diane Davies, David and Barbara Kentish, Irene and Merv Williams, Sue Owen, Pamela Walter, Helen and Peter Chapman, Maureen Gardner, Trish Scott, Lara Oreskovich, Sandy Boulter, Emily Boulter,

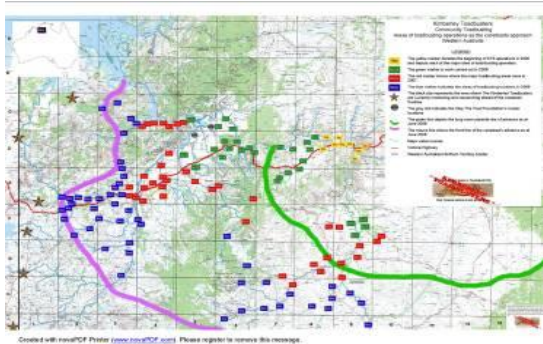


Sarah Boulter, Amy Boulter, John Boulter and Michael Boulter.

If you would like to be on the help list for Friends KTB in Perth, please email us at

friendsktb@westnet.com.au

KTB COMMUNITY TOADBUSTING MAP



KTB President, Lee Scott-Virtue and KTB toadusting volunteer, David Kentish have prepared a marvellous map showing KTB toadusting sites, at a glance. Thank you David and his support team, Barbara Kentish: for larger image [click here](#)

KTB CANE TOAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

KTBs released a Cane Toad Control and Eradication Management Plan for the Kimberley in April 2008. The adaptive plan has been amended and updated as at October 2008 and the updated version is on our website at www.canetoads.com.au

DONOR LOGOS

Have you donated services or goods to the Kimberley Toad Busters Cane Toad Campaign?

Have you sent us your logo for display on our website and in our newsletters?

If not, please email your logo to friendsktb@westnet.com.au



“TOAD IN THE HOLE”

A Rhyming Toadusting Report By

Helen Gilbey Kimberley Toad Buster Volunteer from Perth

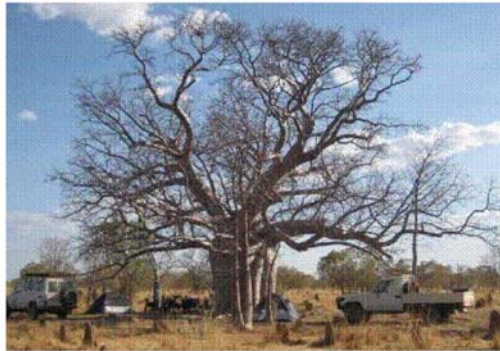
September 2008





On 27 September in the year of '08
 The Gilbeys' joined the Hays' as the cane toads were in spate;
 Just east of Kununurra, they came to do their bit,
 To help the KTB who are reticent to sit
 And let the toads come westwards and into W.A.,
 Though without more help and funding, the toads may win the day!

So the four intrepid 'busters' endured days of heat and flies,
 Camped beneath a Boab tree, under star filled inky skies.
 At sunset every evening, the truck they'd climb aboard,
 With safety vests and torch and nets and bags with yellow cord;
 And drive to their allotted sites of water holes and hollows,
 Where cane toads sit and congregate and in the water wallow.



But why the need to catch the toads? It's a sorry tale you see,
 They, like other feral species, run rampant when they're free.
 And kill the native wildlife and infest fresh water ways,
 No predator can kill them, only man can save the day.
 Toads' poisonous glands will kill a snake or crocodile and bird,
 And while there's been a cry for help, few governments have heard.
 From Venezuela the toads were brought in 1935,
 So Queensland's crop of sugar cane was able to survive
 The Cactoblastus moth that love to live and feed
 On juicy leaves high off the ground – a veritable pest indeed!
 But no one thought to check the toad to see if it could climb,
 Or jump to catch the pesky moth – the original design.

Toads, they just prefer to sit and little height can jump,
 So moths are safe high in the cane from this toxic toady lump.
 70,000 eggs a female lays – so now you can imagine,
 The 100 toads released back then in Queensland's watery heaven,
 Multiplied so fast and quick in ponds and heat and rain
 That Queensland soon was over run; to the Territory they came.
 With each and every passing year, they've continued south and west,
 So groups of "Toad Bust" volunteers come here to do their best
 To catch the toads and bury them, in a deep and well dug hole,

So the Kimberley can stay toad-free..... that's the hard fought goal!



The Hay and Gilbey party, caught a thousand in one week;
Around Police Hole and Shady Lane, the water they did creep;
Then through the mud and bushes where toads just love to hide,
Though with torch and Hawkeye Gilbey, they were quite easily spied.

Malcolm G and Malcolm H a splendid team did make,
With G on torch and H on net, huge numbers they did take.

The girls teamed up and caught their share that Rosemary lugged in bags;

Whilst Helen looked in nooks and crannies, on wire was often snagged.

Catching toads can be an art, though some just wait and sit

And let you walk right up to them and never move one bit;

But then there are the 'wily' toads – who've escaped the catchers' glove,

And recognize the 'busters' sounds, from behind and from above.

These are quick to jump away and disappear from sight

Or dive into a pool, and stay submerged till late at night.

But those that only swim away a little from the shore,

Or males that play the 'mating' game with females in their claw,

Are no match for Malcolm H, with arms' long reach and net,

Or Helen who spoils their toady fun - and 2 for 1 does get.



Each night when we returned to camp the toads soon met their fate,

When CO 2's pumped in the bag - to create a gaseous state,

That sends the toads so sound asleep, they never more will stray

Across Australia's continent and into W.A.

The final act on busting nights, once all the chores are done,

Is to enjoy the evening coolness and put the billy on

For a lingering cup of coffee and a chocolate square or two,

Then take old 'Jack' from out the back, to help improve the brew.

And so to bed under the stars, till 7 or just before

When cockatoos fly to our tree and raucously screech and caw!

With such a racket up above - we cannot sleep a wink

"Good morning all" says Malcolm H "a mug of tea to drink?"

The smell of sizzling bacon is MG's breakfast treat,

Though muesli, fruit and yoghurt, the Hays prefer to eat;

While Helen's happy with all above, she would prefer instead

Peanut butter thickly spread with banana on her bread.

After breakfast every day, our catch must be recorded,

So all dead toads from every hole were duly reported;

MH with ruler, MG with pen - in the shade of the four wheel drive;

"Female, gravid, 13.5" – while the flies kept buzzing by.



Once all the toads were measured and loaded on the truck,

They were driven to their toady grave, where another hole was dug;

The toads thrown in, then covered up, with heavy rocks and earth,

No words were said over the grave – we 'busters' showed no mirth!



Our final cane toad tally, on Friday, October 10,

Was fifteen hundred and fifty two – good effort from girls and men.

And so we left our Boab tree, and camp beneath the sky,

Did toads breathe a sigh of relief, the last time we drove by?



Just watch out all remaining toads, don't think you won't get caught,

Lee Scott will send the KTB and tadpoles will be sought.

The Hays' and Gilbeys' will be back - in future years to come

And continue with their competition: "Ladies: 3 and Gentlemen: 1".

