

Kimberley Toad Buster's

News Letters



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!



Prepared by Ruth Duncan, Kimberley Toad Busters Science and Education Program Co-ordinator.

KIMBERLEY SPECIALISTS Caring for the Kimberley



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

2003 winner of the
Bird Conservation
Regional
Achievement Award.

2003 recipient of
the Bronwyn Gold
Birth
award.

2004 Winner of the
Scientific
Research
Award of
the WA State
Tourism Awards.

KIMBERLEY TOAD BUSTERS NEWSLETTER No. 30



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

Declared by the Federal Government 12 April 2005

**AUSTRALIANS NEED A NATIONAL CANE TOAD THREAT ABATEMENT PLAN (TAP) NOW!
KTB CANE TOAD EDUCATION**

7th December 2009

Special Newsletter

This 30th Kimberley Toad Busters' Newsletter is produced by Kimberley Specialists In Research Inc in conjunction with Kimberley Toad Busters Inc. Kimberley Specialists, a founding member of the Kimberley Toad Busters, continues to support the campaign against the cane toad by supporting www.canetoads.com.au, raising funds and supporting cane toad scientific research. KTBs are a tax deductible entity. Please see our website for our direct donation facility or how to sponsor one of our research projects.

**IF EVERYONE WAS A TOADBUSTER,
THE TOADS WOULD BE BUSTED!**

kimberleytoadbusters@canetoads.com.au
www.kimberleyspecialists.com.au
kimberleyspecialists@westnet.com.au

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What's in Your Backyard? Biodiversity Kits are on their way

For over 20 years Kimberley Specialists in Research have identified species are under threat in the Kimberley and have wanted to initiate a Kimberley wide biodiversity monitoring program. With the approach of cane toads knowing which species we have and where they live becomes so much more important. We need to know this information if we have any hope of managing the impact of cane toads, for example, which areas are most important to protect? And how much impact cane toads have on different habitats?

This is a HUGE task, scientific survey is a long way from being complete in the Kimberley, new species are still regularly being found. Also, very few studies have looked at the impact of cane toads on biodiversity, none have looked at their impact at the ecosystem or habitat scale.


We are hoping everyone who spends anytime in the Kimberley comes on board and helps with 'What's in your Backyard?'

Launched in January 2009 'What's in your Backyard?' is easy. See the example form below.

1. Collect data forms from the Library, Shire or download from [KTB Biodiversity data sheet](#)
2. Look around your backyard, along your favorite walking track, fishing or camping spot or any other place in the Kimberley and jot down what you see. Complete as regularly as you like and keep an eye out for any new species. Return the forms to Kimberley Toadbusters.
3. Any species you are unsure of take some photos and send in to Kimberley Toadbusters photo@canetoads.com.au. If we cannot provide identification we have a network of scientists who can. Or you may have found a new species!

Also, for identification or just an idea of what you may find check out the species ID cards on the cane toads webpage (www.canetoads.com.au/bio). Kimberley frogs and reptiles are already loaded, with all the other species to come, complete with a distribution map of where the species can be found in Kimberley. For more information on different species check out the Kununurra Community Library, they have recently created an 'Ecology' section for flora and fauna with a number of resource books donated by Kimberley Toadbusters.

Begin your own 'What's in Your Backyard?' survey today, before the wet season.

Kimberley Biodiversity - "What's in Your Backyard?" Data Form					
Name of Observer/s Bayulu Rangers		Contact Information (phone/fax/email/postal address) Bayulu Community, 20 km from Fitzroy Crossing		Date: 19 th August 2009	Time: (am/pm) 8 - 11 pm
Habitat description (eg. bushy, hilltop, waterhole) Dry watercourses with small pools		Location (altitude, stream, etc) Amanbidji Community			
Common Name, Indigenous Name, Scientific Name (Genus, species) or 'New Discoveries'		Description Essential features (shape, size, colour, markings, etc) Type of animal (eg. frog, lizard, snake, snake, bird, etc)		How many?	Photo taken? (if so, photo number/location)
Green tree frog		Toilet Frog		8	N
Little Red Tree Frog		Head smaller than body, pale red in colour		1	N
Giant Burrowing Frog		Large frog, no bony eye ridges, sitting crouched on ground, not a cane toad		1	N
Juvenile Brim		Small, less than 5 cm, small pools, brown in colour		8	N
Striped Rocket frogs		Very fast, located very close to water, stripes		Many	N
Bumpy Rocket frogs		Very fast, located very close to water, dark brown, no stripes		Many	N
Send forms and photos off to: KUNUNURRA: Coles, Veterans Centre, Library, Shire WARRHAM: Shire, Leveah Ngard MILES CROSSING: Language Centre, Shire		Or post forms and photos to: Kimberley Toadbusters, PO Box 1188 Kununurra NT 08		Or you can send your pictures electronically to: photo@canetoads.com.au Or enter data into forms online at www.canetoads.com.au	
Kimberley Toad Busters					
Website: canetoads.com.au Email: kimberleytoadbusters@canetoads.com.au Phone: 08 9168 2576					

More on the Species ID cards and Biodiversity Kits

We are in the midst of creating species ID cards for all species of the Kimberley, great and small. These ID cards will be distributed as a Kimberley Toadbusters Biodiversity Kit to everyone in the community participating in the What's in your Backyard? Program. For a sneak peek please have a look on the website, species ID cards have recently been loaded for frogs, cane toads and reptiles, including blind snakes and dragon lizards. As an example of the ID cards check out the Knob tailed Gecko below.

<p>COMMUNITY PHOTO! GECKO 14 Northern Knob-tailed Gecko</p>  <p>© Dean Goodgame - East Kimberley</p> <p>"WHAT'S IN YOUR BACKYARD?"</p>	<p>Kimberley Toad Busters</p>  <p>Northern Knob-tailed Gecko <i>Nephurus shaei</i> Snout Vent Length: Up to 12 cm Distinguishing features: Tail Extremely short (knob). Body and Limbs covered with raised bumps of different colour. Brown with paler spots. Digits are banded. Habitat: Escarpments and rocky ranges Diet: Invertebrates Distribution: Kimberley to Arnhem Land Ref: Wilson S. & Swan G. "A complete guide to Reptiles of Australia" www.canetoads.com.au</p>
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The species ID cards and Biodiversity Kits are being prepared as quickly as possible as there is an urgent need to begin your own 'What's in Your Backyard?' surveys NOW, well before the wet begins and cane toads arrive. If you find any mistakes, or can suggest any changes please contact Ruth Duncan at biodiversity@canetoads.com.au or via Kimberley Toadbusters, any suggestions to improve the species ID cards are welcomed. Improvements include photographs. We would love to use photos taken by the local Kimberley community for all species. Local photos are urgently needed for all bird and mammal species. Then land snails, insects, spiders... the list at the moment is endless! Copyright of all photos is respected and clearly displayed.

Candlebark School in Victoria unites with Kimberley Toadbusters on 'What's in your Backyard?'

Tucked away in hills around Romsey, in Central Victoria, is a school (Prep to Yr 9) that has been founded by well know Australian author John Marsden. As a final challenge before finishing at Candlebark School, eight Yr 9 students embarked on a 6 week adventure between Broome and Darwin with teachers Wendy and Sam. After tackling the Gibb River Road the kids were mad keen on finding out just what Kimberley Toad Busters and their programme 'What's in Your Backyard?' was all about. While conducting toad busts at Police Hole and Snake Creek on Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th of August, the Candlebark group completed two 'What's in your Backyard?' biodiversity surveys. At Police Hole this was a huge achievement, while pulling out in excess of 3,200 toads. The scene was incredible, the ground covered in a moving carpet of cane toads. Green tree frogs could still be found clinging to the tank stand. With each sweep more native frogs could be found. The Tally for the evening: numerous (40+) Striped Rocket frogs, 5 Green Tree Frogs, 1 Pale Rocket Frog, 1 unconfirmed freshwater crocodile, 1 feral cat and 3208 Cane Toads. A HUGE effort.

The second survey was completed along Snake Creek, eastern edge of Lake Argyle, the following evening. Unfortunately a surprising number of toads were present keeping everyone busy. The tally for the evening: 1 Tawney Frogmouth, 1 Large Egret, 1 Little Red Tree Frog, 4 Green Tree Frogs, numerous Rocket frogs (Striped and Bumped), 10 Freshwater Crocodiles and 106 Cane Toads. After the previous night I had expected the group to be a little less enthusiastic, if anything they had greater resolve than the previous night! Well done for all efforts, especially Katelin, often found tailing the group looking for native species.

The Candlebark group were invited to explore Lake Argyle by a generous Kimberley local. The group conducted 'What's in your Backyard?' surveys for one island, one waterfall with pool and two wetlands. The trip was a biodiversity smorgasbord, with the kids into everything from rock wallabies, spiders, dragons, skinks, monitors, water birds, fish, turtles not to mention a beautiful female crocodile laying her eggs and others actively digging holes. The only disappointment was the fishing, with only one Silver Cobbler, however there is always the story of the one that got away from Finn. The trip was a great example of how well 'What's in your Backyard?' fits into any camping trip. Everyone in the Kimberley should be giving it a go!

The Candlebark School has identified their Backyard, a catch of virgin bush in Victoria, as perfect for the 'What's in your Backyard?' package and have taken the ideas home with them. On return to school the group have re-enacted as a skit of their experiences with Kimberley Toad Busters to spread the message to their school. The trip was a real success, with schoolteacher Sam threatening that the Kimberley Toad Buster experience is going to become a recognised part of the school curriculum for future years. We hope so.

What's in Amanbidji's Backyard? With the Bayulu Rangers

During September Kimberley Toad Busters enjoyed the company of the Bayulu Ranger Group. The Bayulu Rangers travelled to Kununurra from Fitzroy Crossing (1600 km return) to help with toad busting and the programme 'What's in your Backyard?' Biodiversity surveys.

The Rangers were stationed out at Amanbidji community, approximately 100 km from the WA/NT border. Here the Ranger group met with the community and heard stories firsthand about the loss of bush tucker and impact the toads have had on the community.

Ruth Duncan visited Amanbidji to provide training in how to identify cane toads and difference between native frog species, dissection of cane toads for research, importance of biodiversity and the 'What's in your Backyard?' program. The Rangers then conducted a 'What's in your Backyard?' biodiversity survey during the evening toad bust. While it can be difficult to keep track of species seen during a bust Adrian, Morris and Roneil kept a close record. The list even included a Giant Burrowing Frog, one of the native species most easily mistaken for a cane toad. Congratulations Rangers on a correct and very important identification! The Rangers were brilliant Kimberley Toad busters catching just under 1000 cane toads over two nights work.

The start of a 'What's in your Backyard?' kit including frog, cane toad and gecko identification cards was sent back with the group to Bayulu. This will allow the Rangers to educate their own community on protecting species and collect fauna data on different habitats including their favorite places before the cane toads arrive. The Rangers will be sent regular updates for their 'What's in your Backyard?' Biodiversity kit as more species ID cards are completed.

The Bayulu Rangers were a fantastic group to work with. The Rangers identified they would like to work regularly from the KTB southern base, Nicholson Station. This is one of the key paths the toads may follow into the Fitzroy catchment. KTB Field Coordinator, Ben Scott Virtue, Team supervisor, Gorgenia Wilson and Ruth Duncan provided the group with a letter of support

for future funding proposals. We hope the group is successful in obtaining a grant to buy a vehicle to enable them to run their own toad busts with Kimberley Toad Busters.

We all look forward to working with the Bayulu Rangers again soon.

Many thanks to Melanie Smith, Maryanne Winton, Georgenia Wilson, Rowdy Wilson, Lee Scott Virtue and Ben Scott Virtue for all assistance in organizing the trip. Many thanks also to Dennis Peat for coming to the rescue after the 7th tyre on the KTB bus blew!



Photo: The Bayulu Rangers in at the Kimberley Toadbusters depot



Photo: A random sample of toads were selected for dissection to look at stomach contents, stage of egg development in females and presence of the lung worm parasite. This data is all recoded in the KTB database for research.

Evening with Author Sandra Kendell, some wine and cheese!

During Book Week, 25th to 30th of August, Kununurra and Wyndham schools were visited by Sandra Kendell, an illustrator and children's book author. Sandra had witnessed for herself the loss of native wildlife as the cane toads moved through her favorite camp sites near Darwin. This loss and the story of the Island Ark program inspired her brilliant artwork and story for the children's book Quoll.

Quolls are highly susceptible to cane toad toxin, mainland extinction is the likely outcome. The Island Ark program is the capture of Quolls from the mainland and release on large Islands off the NT coast. These Islands will hopefully remain free of cane toads. The program to date has been successful with the quoll numbers increasing in their new home.

Quoll, the story, can be borrowed from Kununurra Community Library or purchased online at www.quollstory.com.au

Kimberley Toadbusters Environmental Scientist Ruth Duncan joined Sandra in two joint presentations to classes at Kununurra District High School and a wine and cheese evening held at Kununurra Community Library. Ben Scott Virtue, Kimberley Toad Busters Field Coordinator joined the wine and cheese evening to provide the latest update on location of toads and busting activities. Once a 'weekend' activity Toadbusting is now happening every day of the week. Latest data suggests the toad frontline is slowing in pace, with the dedication displayed by volunteers it is no wonder.

We would like to thank Kununurra Community Library for hosting the event and inviting Kimberley Toadbusters. It was a pleasure to work with Sandra Kendell and from the response of the children the presentations were greatly enjoyed! Thank you.

Events coming up...

Kimberley Toadbusters in conjunction with the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley is running three activities as part of the upcoming school holiday program. All events are supervised by adults. Please contact **Kimberley Toadbusters** on 08 9168 2576 or admin@canetoads.com.au for enquiries or bookings.

Activity 1: **TOADBUSTING**

Cane toads are expected to arrive in Kununurra this Wet. Help Kimberley Toad Busters 'bust' and reduce the toad numbers before the Wet begins. If you have ever thought about joining a toad bust with KTB, NOW is the time!

WHEN: Friday 2nd October, from 4 pm to 11 pm. Bus leaves from Kununurra Leisure Centre

WHERE: Newry Station
AGE: All welcome!

If you miss this event, there are busts leaving most nights from Kununurra!

Activity 2: WHAT'S IN YOUR BACKYARD? At Thompson Springs

The catchment of Thompson Springs is one of the special places of the Kimberley. Come along to help us find the animals that call Thompson Springs their home before the cane toads arrive. Bring your swimmers!

WHEN: Monday 5th October. Bus leaves Kununurra Leisure Centre at 1 pm and returns at 5.30 pm.
WHERE: Thompson Springs
AGE: All welcome!

Activity 3: HOW TO IDENTIFY CANE TOADS and our native frogs around Kununurra?

Back via popular demand the program run by Kimberley Toad Busters at the last school holiday program. An enormous amount of fun. Make your own play-doh cane toad or use finger-paint for a mural of Kimberley Wildlife. The last program was such a success after the session one highly trained individual correctly destroyed all the playdoh cane toads in a simulated toad bust. There were no survivors. We will try and make sure the play-doh toads survive this time!

WHEN: Thursday 9th October from 2 – 4 pm
WHERE: Kununurra Youth Centre
AGE: All welcome!

For more information on any of the articles contact:

Ruth Duncan: KTB Environmental Scientist 0400 767 650 / 08 9168 2576 biodiversity@canetoads.com.au
Lee Scott Virtue: KTB Co Founder & President 08 9168 7080 kimberleytoadbusters@canetoads.com.au
Ben Scott Virtue: KTB Field Co ordinator 08 9168 2576 admin@canetoads.com.au
Mary Anne Winton: KTB Indigenous Coordinator 0488 693 642

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