

# 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 John Cugley, Kimberley Toadbusters Administration Co-ordinator.



## KIMBERLEY TOAD BUSTERS NEWSLETTER No. 31



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

### Newsletter

This 31st 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](http://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!**

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### Toad Busting Around Matilda Creek

As many of our readers are aware Kimberley Toadbusters in conjunction with the DEC has been involved with the fight against the cane toad on the Eastern shore of Lake Argyle since February. Back then access involved taking a boat out from the boat ramp at Lake Argyle tourist village travelling at times a couple hours in order to make landfall on Argyle's Eastern edge. Great thanks has to go to both JJJ and Steve Sharpe for providing the necessary vessels for these undertakings particularly when the first two trips yielded a 'no toad' result. We were the first ones to ascertain toad movement down Matilda creek not to mention the first organisation to catch these wayward amphibians as they hopped towards what can only be deemed a toads 'promised' land.

Obviously, since February we have continued to have an active presence accessing this area from both Golden Gate, Matilda itself as well as monitoring the Hicks creek system for the first signs of toad habitation. Whilst a recent report stipulated a much larger area, toads have only been found in isolated numbers from the end of Golden Gate Rd where it meets Lake Argyle to roughly three kilometres to the North of the mouth of Hicks Creek. This is approximately a 16km area of foreshore.

Lake Argyle always has been an area K.T.B has dubbed an area of 'great concern' with efforts of many volunteers focusing along the many feeder systems running into its Eastern shore. These toadbusts yielding at times worrying results (the greatest number of toads taken in a single night out that way was 137 adults!) whilst on others like the trip Ben Scott-Virtue our Field coordinator ran on the 10th of this month, 29 adult toads were taken. Of these 22 were large gravid (egg bound) females.

Whilst access to the Eastern foreshore of Argyle will become increasingly difficult as the wet rolls in, K.T.B is very fortunate to have our environmental scientist, Ruth Duncan based there perched on a hilltop (She has one of the most amazing offices with horizon eating views!) As has been the case for most of this year, it means the data collected and informed academically backed information garnered will continue to be relevant for not just the community at large but academia too. As in all areas like this given the cane toads propensity for travel, it will continue to be closely monitored.

Last but not least, Rachira Somaweera, a student of renowned scientist professor Rick Shine will continue his ground breaking research in the habitats and life cycle of our fresh water crocodile (johnstoni crocodilus). This includes the impact of the cane toad on its population. His research is to be conducted over a three year period and will be the most informed to date. K.T.B has, and will continue to provide data on toad density in the Matilda area with the aim of gathering a greater understanding about the impact the cane toad continues to have on our native fauna.



Toad Buster Wal Bearsby with a catch from Matilda Creek  
(Photo by Ben Scott-Virtue)

There has been much biodiversity action since Newsletter 30, including two hardcore biodiversity surveys conducted by our Year 10 work experience students, SWEK school holiday program survey and play-doh cane toads, Clontarf Bushrangers and numerous biodiversity surveys from Knapp Springs to Lake Argyle Islands, please see the next newsletter for full reports. The most recent events have been two visits to Wyndham District High School to see all students from Pre-Primary to Year 7. Students were provided with education and activities on how to identify Cane Toads from our native frogs and impact Cane Toads will have on the food web in the Kimberley. The children at Wyndham were brilliant, the toads are in for some trouble. We look forward to seeing them on future toadbusts and results from their 'What's in your Backyard?' biodiversity surveys. Many thanks to Liz Cox for organising the Wyndham events.



**Photo.** Wyndham students made some highly realistic cane toads, sporting the key features of a bony ridge above the eye, large poison glands and bumpy warty skin.



**Photo:** SWEK School Holiday Program 'What's in your Backyard?' Biodiversity Survey found a beautifully kept bower of a Great Bower bird (*Chlamydera nuchalis*).

The 'What's in your Backyard?' Biodiversity Kits are flying off the shelf faster than they are being made! Jeanette Buckland and Norma Wainright have stepped in to help with making the species ID cards for the Kits. Absolute angels. Species ID cards are now complete for all frogs and reptiles, with fish, birds and mammals nearing completion. Please let us know if you are interested in having a Kit at home to help with your biodiversity surveys. If there is enough demand, the Kits will have to be professionally printed. Norma, Jeanette and myself will bail up eventually, 1 laminator has already!

#### Events coming up:

##### Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th November

Primary school children at Kununurra District High School have a chance to participate in a 'What's in your Backyard?' survey of their school grounds and find out more about Kimberley Biodiversity.

##### Afternoons of Thursday 26th and Friday 27th November

Kimberley Toad Busters display at the Coles shopping centre complex. Come down and find out how you can help record our current species before cane toads arrive in the wet. Kimberley Toad Busters stall will be at Coles every Saturday morning until Christmas.

##### Sunday 22nd November

SEEKS (Save Endangered East Kimberley Species) is hosting an education afternoon cruise on Lake Kununurra, one item for discussion is community biodiversity survey in the Kimberley. Tickets are \$15, call 0439 695 193.

'What's in your Backyard?' – surveys are being conducted every day!

It can be as easy as recording the number of Birds of Prey you see on your way to work or each time you see a Frill-Necked Lizard. Please do not hesitate to contact Ruth at [biodiversity@canetoads.com.au](mailto:biodiversity@canetoads.com.au) for any further information or educational material.

Kimberley Toadbusters is going to become a recognised part of the school curriculum for future years, we hope so.

#### What Has KTB Seen While Out Busting



Fruit Bats Hanging Around



Looking out for KTB



Time to head out of here



Running away from toads

Photos taken by John Cugley

### **KTB in the Media!**

**KTB has great media exposure over the past couple of months. The range from being on a toadbust at Newry Homestead with the team from SBS Living Black and 65 toadbusters, The West Australian Newspaper out on an evening bust. Ben Scott-Virtue having a chat on Waringarri Radio, John Cugley interviewed by WIN TV and several articles in the Kimberley Echo.**

**Along with several other articles and interviews from others, it keeps the topic of cane toads in front of the general community of Australia and the World.**



KTB out with Jessica and Sharon from The West Australian  
(Photo by John Cugley)

## A Trip Report

Toad Bust 31 October 2009

John , Tim, Karen, Scott ,Clare

The objectives of the trip were to go and visit Allison's Bore out on Newry Station.

We did the round trip via Mitchell's, Cave, Allison, Hungry and Carters. The track had dried out after the rain from earlier in the week when a trip run by Ben had to turn around due to the amount of water. The track around Cave Bore has changed due to new fences. We had a look around Allison Bore, which consists of a solar bore, tank and trough. No toads were located here.

We then head off to Hungry Bore and turkey nest, about 300metres from the dam we got a road toad. At the dam we meet up with some contractors building a yard. We had a bit of chat with them. They had been toad busting in a limited way around there camp. They participated in our toad bust were we got 142 toads. Several of the females were gravid. It was a good educational interaction with the contractors. This area will require a follow up bust. This turkey nest is full of weed. About half the toads were picked up away from the water, with several sitting on cow pats. Several toads were dissected. Stomachs had lots beetles. Several had lungworms

At Carters, we got 60 toads. This turkey nest is weed free and make for interesting busting as the toads swim out to the middle of the dam. Scott and Tim walked around the edge of the water, with John in the water collecting toads. No toads were located away from the water. A follow up bust is required before the start of the wet.



Toad Busters Clare, Scott and Tim  
(Photo by John Cugley)

## Out Toadbusting



Time to go busting



Another good haul



The camp set-up.



Dissection time



Gorgina wilson keeping a firm eye on the toad processing process

(Photos by Ben Scott-Virtue)

## And coming up...

*Arthur Bijl* will be arriving at KTB soon to continue the studies start by *Jordy Groffen*.

**Toad busting**, there are busting activities happening every second evening and every weekend. Whether you have a few hours to spare or you want to go on an overnighiter there is a busting activity for you, your family and friends. Just call or email John or Ben who are only be too willing to assist you.

**Saturday mornings** (till Christmas) out the front of Coles passing on information about Cane Toads to the community

19th to 21st March 2010 there will be a forum in Kununurra looking at cane toads and other issues facing the Kimberley. Contact Lee Scott-Virtue for more details

For more information on any of the articles contact:

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