

# 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!

[PREVIOUS](#)

[HOME](#)

[NEWS LETTER  
INDEX](#)

[NEXT](#)

Prepared by Lee Scott-Virtue, President & Founder of KTB Kimberley Toad Busters.



## KIMBERLEY TOAD BUSTERS NEWSLETTER No. 37

September 21/12/2010

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

Declared by the Federal Government 12 April 2005

KTB Newsletter 37: 21/12/2010

### KTB Newsletter

This 37th 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.

Prepared by Lee Scott-Virtue, President & founder; Dean Goodgame, co-founder and KTB Technical Officer; Ben Scott-Virtue, Field Coordinator; John Cugley; Administration Coordinator.

*KTBs are a tax deductible entity. Please see our website for our direct donation facility or how to sponsor toad busting or one of our research or educational projects.*

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

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### Contents:

1. From the President & Founder Lee Scott-Virtue
2. Overview of KTB Achievements for 2010
3. "Christmas preamble", by Field Coordinator Ben Scott-Virtue.

4. How far west have toads moved in WA?
5. Prediction of toad movement during the wet season!
6. A Quick word from John Cugley, KTB Administration Coordinator.
7. KTB 2011 Internet Auction

## From the President & Founder Lee Scott-Virtue

KTB would like to wish all our supporters a wonderful Christmas and the very best for 2011. Without the wonderful support of our volunteer's family and friends the continuing battle to mitigate the impact of the cane toad on our Kimberley biodiversity would be much more difficult than it is.

"KTB wish that they could deliver a Newsletter full of good toad cheer and with the news that the cane toad invasion into WA has been stopped and that the on-going bureaucratic 'red tape' had been resolved! Unfortunately this is not the case. Cane toads are now very much a reality in WA and KTB continue to face bureaucratic stumbling blocks.

Despite these issues KTB can unequivocally confirm that where KTB community efforts have been focussed toad movement has been slowed down and that cane toad impact on native biodiversity has been minimal in areas where toad population numbers have been kept under control.

The KTB driven campaign "Adopt a street and keep it cane toad free" has been very successful, resulting in consistently low toad population numbers and little evidence of breeding.

The KTB driven biodiversity program "What's in your backyard?" and its "Iconic Species" monitoring program continues to grow with a number of Kimberley schools having already introduced the program into their school curriculum. The Kimberley community in general is now monitoring and recording biodiversity in their own backyards. This invaluable data will provide pre-toad and post-toad records of our native biodiversity with the first of the data uploaded and available on both the Kimberley Specialists in Research and Kimberley Toad Busters websites by January 31st 2011.

2010 has been a huge year for Kimberley Toad Busters and the following is just a brief outline of some of our achievements.

## Overview of KTB Achievements for 2010

Kimberley Toad Busters, as a community driven volunteer group has continued to grow and achieve the goals set for each year. The outcomes for 2010 are as follows.

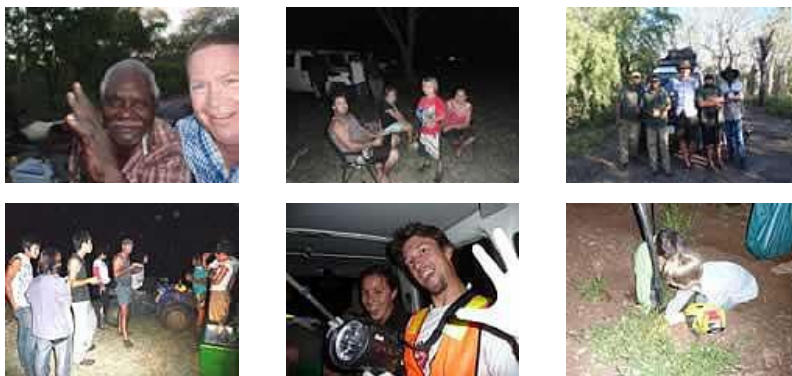
- KTB won the 2010 International United Nations award for their community work.
- KTB was a finalist the 2010 Banksia award for their work in the area of native biodiversity
- KTB were semi-finalists in the Regional Achievers Award
- KTB were the only Australian volunteer organisation to make the United Nations 2010 International year of Biodiversity Calendar
- KTB organised and hosted a 3 day cane toad environmental forum in March 2010. 59 speakers presented papers on issues to do with the cane toad, fire and other environmental issues in the Kimberley and the north of Australia.
- Produced a DVD of the three day Forum and now available on request.
- Up-loaded some of the papers presented at the Forum onto the Kimberley Specialists and Kimberley Toad Busters websites.
- KTB attended the Royal Show in partnership with FOTE.
- Established working partnerships with several major Indigenous organisations in the Kimberley in the fight against the cane toad.
- Published and printed 10,000 new cane toad educational brochure's, bumper stickers and posters.
- Produced a range of caps, BBQ aprons, t-shirts, singlets and dress shirts to promote the KTB educational cane toad program.
- Membership has grown to well over 6,000 members.
- Toad busting volunteer days moved to an average of 5 nights per week with up to two teams heading into the field at a time.

- Over 1.3 million large mature cane toads have now been removed and countless eggs, tadpoles and metamorphs
- Over two million hours of volunteer labour has now gone into the fight to slow down and mitigate the impact of the cane toad as well as recording and monitoring wildlife before and after cane toads arrive.
- KTB currently putting up new cane toad educational displays throughout the Kimberley.



New KTB cane toad educational displays

- The KTB educational biodiversity program “What’s in your Backyard?” and their “Iconic” species recording and monitoring program is now being used by Schools throughout the Kimberley, Indigenous communities, mining companies, families and individuals. This program has empowered ordinary people to begin recording and monitoring native wildlife prior to and after cane toads arrive enabling a comprehensive record of information.
- Indigenous partnerships have been formed with groups from all over the Kimberley with toad busting and the “What’s in your backyard?” program empowering communities to become involved in looking after their environment
- KTB have continued to sponsor and facilitate research projects looking at biological and mechanical methods of cane toad control as well as research projects that help to understand the full impact of the cane toad. These reports are available on the Kimberley Specialists and Kimberley Toad Busters websites.
- KTB has now published 37 Newsletters and 44 Media Releases
- KTB undertook field tests, produced a DVD and wrote a research paper on the use of CO2 as a method for cane toad euthanasia



KTB volunteers in the field!

“Christmas preamble” by Field Coordinator Ben Scott-Virtue.





Christmas is with us once again and whilst the hope was that it might have been toad free, it does appear that Santa Claus either didn't receive my letter or that removing toads from the Kimberley was just something Santa couldn't grant. Perhaps he saw Kimberley Toadbusters and thought we already had our own helper elves? Perhaps Santa, like many Politicians was just as obsessed with 'saving the children' and has just over looked the equally perilous situation much of our native fauna finds itself in? Regardless, as we approach Christmas day I still have my stocking nailed to the

eucalypt, have the Brandy and obligatory Cookie waiting and a bottle of CO2 ready should he choose to fill that stocking with 'toads'. Quite happy to feed Prancer, Dancer and Rudolf too, what-ever it takes. Santa?

Whilst the above is happy banter, it does mask a much more serious problem that every resident of Kununurra does face this Christmas. The march forward of the toad. As most of the agriculturalists will testify, the toad is here. Still in small numbers, but none the less a change can now be heard in the sounds of the bush at night. There is a new kid on the block and the gravelly staccato is building with devastating consequences for our wildlife. Noel, the manager of Paul Mocks Sandalwood farm has recorded the deaths of seven monitors and goannas in the last few months alone. In his words,

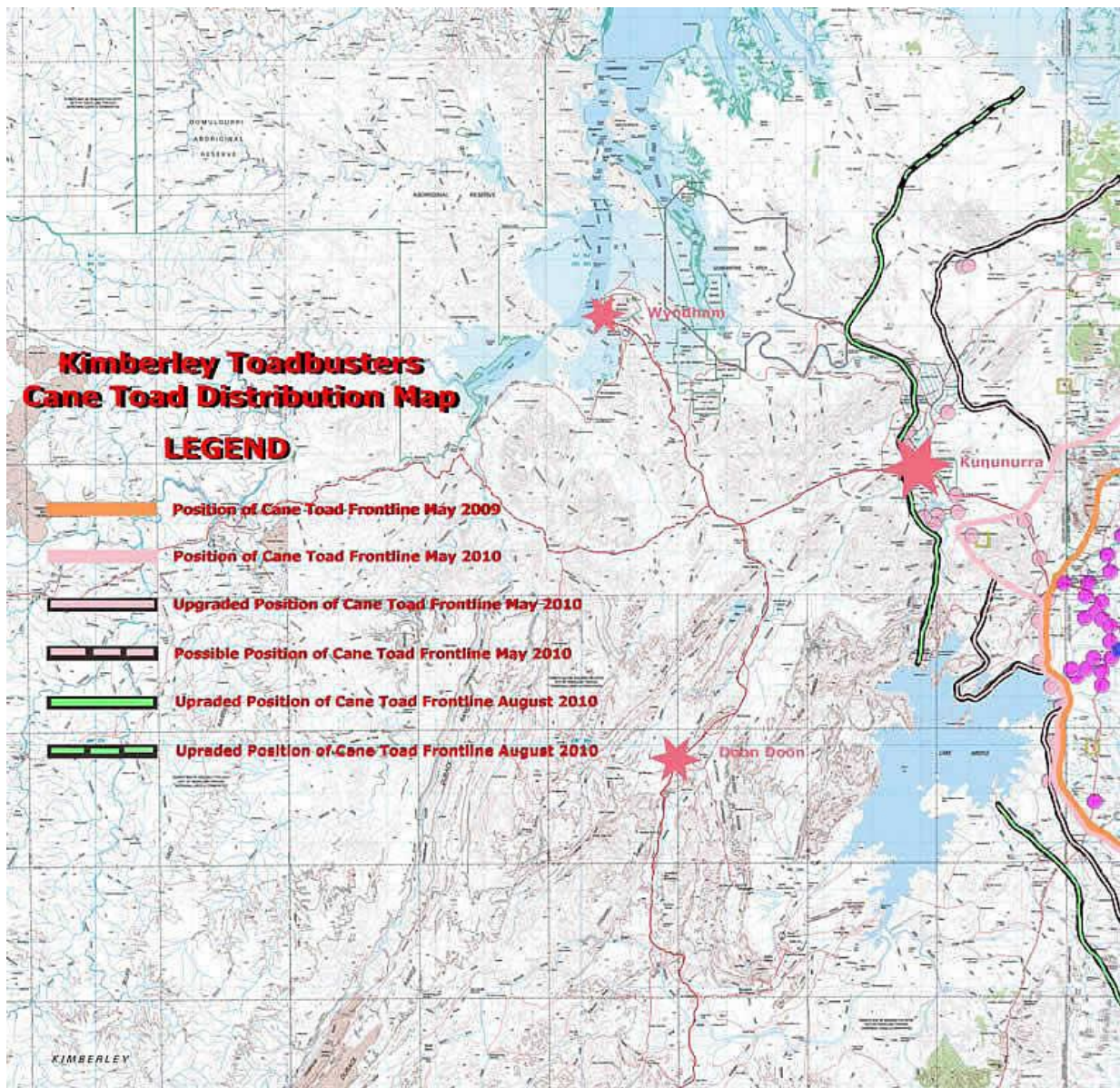
"I have worked here now for a number of years and I have never prior to the arrival of the toad seen such a loss of reptile life happen so quickly. I know you read about it, but seeing it for yourself highlights the toxicity and vulnerability that the toad poses to our wildlife. I'm out at night now, bagging and tagging the little b's with the hope that it'll mitigate further impacts"



Noel's words are being echoed by a number of residents working on the land who have also begun to see changes and like Noel, rather than be apathetic are prepared to put in their own time to do something about it. This resounding show of solidarity is evident throughout the community, the mantra of 'the only good toad is a dead toad' practiced with both 'tried and true' euthanizing tools as well as some of the more creative methods. Personally, it would be interesting to know if Kununurra's golf club round averages fall or for that matter whether Nial's chiropractic clinic see an increase in

shoulder complaints. All jokes aside, a toad with a nasty head-ache just doesn't 'cut it'. Should people want to exercise the darker more primitive sides of their nature this Christmas one only needs to look some of the DEC's approved if not a little bloody at times toad eradication methods.

Personally I would like to thank the whole community and wish them a 'Toadally Awesome' Christmas.



KTB Cane Toad Map

## How far west have toads moved in WA?

Cane Toads first crossed into WA on the Kimberley border in February 2009. Ironically enough this first invasion of toads into the Kimberley was a single male toad caught trying to cross the border near the Quarantine station. Cane toads are now well established throughout Kununurra but thanks to community efforts and KTB working on removing any new evidence of breeding, toad numbers are still minimal and native wildlife loss reduced, although tragically still far too high. Cane toads are now well into the Ningbingis to the north of Kununurra and this corridor is still moving at around 70 to 80 kilometres per year. Toads are well established along the southern shores of Lake Argyle and have made it as far as Argyle Station Homestead.

KTB will continue to try and reach these areas by boat during the wet season but it is expected that numbers will escalate during this wet. Toads are now also in the Spillway and the Long Michael Plain area and have reached Lake Argyle village. Again community action is helping to keep numbers under control.

## Prediction of toad movement during the wet season!

Extrapolated on the KTB field reconnaissance results so far KTB expect toads to reach areas such as the Mantinea and Parry Lagoons systems and El Questro by the end of this wet season. Toads are expected to reach Wuggubun and Doon Doon Aboriginal communities and also well west of Lake Argyle and up into the upper reaches of the Ord River sometime this wet. This will also potentially bring the toads into the Argyle Diamond Mine area sometime in 2011. Toads are also expected to invade the Negri and Forrest River systems during the wet and potentially cross into WA in these areas sometime in 2011. KTB are monitoring these areas from their Nicholson Station base. Toads are also



expected to become well established throughout the Ningbingis to the north of Kununurra and complete their invasion of this area by the end of the wet season. The corridors feeding into this area have continued to move around 80 kilometres a year.

### KTB 2011 Internet Auction

A number of items have recently been donated to KTB and Kimberley Specialists to raise funds for our on-going research projects. The following items will be auctioned on our website towards the end of January.

A beautiful hand-crafted knife.

From the hammer of Thomas Gerner

A Master Bladesmith.



Thomas Gerner has donated a handcrafted L6 steel differentially heat treated utility knife. The handle of this beautiful knife is made from She-Oak and Massi with brass fittings. This knife will be auctioned on the KTB website after New Year. Funds made from the wonderful donation will go towards one of our Research projects looking for a biological solution to the cane toad problem.



Kirstie Linklater Gallery Director and owner of Artlandish Aboriginal Art Gallery in Kununurra has donated three magnificent pieces of art from well known Aboriginal artists to raise funds for our cane toad campaign. Funds raised will go towards some of our research projects.



Bill Harney  
Didgeridoo  
118cm, Bell 9cm



Churchill Cann  
Gudbarrdiya  
Ochre on Canvas  
90cm x 120cm



Bevan Tjampitjinpa  
Bush Tucker Gathering  
Acrylic on Canvas  
120cm x 40cm

### A Quick word from John Cugley KTB Admin Coordinator.

Happy Christmas to all our volunteers and supporters and thank you for all your efforts in helping to mitigate the impact of the cane toad. We end the year with the news that KTB have been successful in getting a \$20 000 grant from the Federal Government's Caring for Country for our educational program. We also have several more funding applications in the pipeline.

Once again a very big Thank You to all our volunteers for all their time and effort over the year and look forward to a fun filled cane toad action packed 2011.

If you find a cane toad, or want to join the KTB “What’s in your backyard?” and “Iconic Species” recording and monitoring program, or just want to simply go out ‘toad busting’ please contact Ben or John on 08 91682576



**Kimberley Toad Busters awards!**

For more information on any of the articles contact:

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**All donations are tax deductible.**