



The Cane Toad is a *Key Threatening Process* to the Australian Nation  
Declared by the Federal Government 12 April 2005.



## KTB Newsletter 38: 03/03/2011

This 38<sup>th</sup> 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; and Dean Goodgame, KTB's co-founding member and volunteer electronic expert.

**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!**

[www.canetoads.com.au](http://www.canetoads.com.au)

[kimberleytoadbusters@canetoads.com.au](mailto:kimberleytoadbusters@canetoads.com.au)

[www.kimberleyspecialists.com.au](http://www.kimberleyspecialists.com.au)

[kimberleyspecialists@westnet.com.au](mailto:kimberleyspecialists@westnet.com.au)

### Contents:

1. [KTB 2011 Field Up date!](#)
2. [The West Kimberley prepares itself for the arrival of the cane toad!](#)
3. [KTB Google map and community working together!](#)
4. [KTB Website up-date!](#)
5. [The toad battle at Long Michael Plain. A mighty cane toad warrior!](#)
6. [KTB March 2011 Educational Field trip!](#)
7. [Fencing, air rifles, traps and people busting!](#)

## 1: KTB Field Up date.

### Lake Argyle

This massive body of water has continued to show a steady increase in toad numbers with breeding incursions now being reported by fisherman and other residents from the area. The number of recorded dead freshwater crocodiles has also increased with confirmation that the steady increase in crocodile deaths seem to be related to the sharp rise in toad numbers in the lake.

Wet season rains, inaccessible terrain and difficult weather have made access to the area to toad bust almost impossible. With toads now evident near the mouth of the Ord and no way to access this area until the wet seasons ends means that toad numbers and breeding will explode.



Massive impact on native biodiversity is expected with toads now set to invade the Roe River and further upstream of the Ord River before Kimberley Toad Buster volunteers will be able to make it into these areas.

KTB are hoping to acquire a couple of amphibian vehicles which will make access to difficult aquatic systems like Lake Argyle much easier in the future. KTB will be focussing on removing mature toads and breeding from the

Lake Argyle and upper reaches of the Ord and Roe Rivers over the 2011 dry season.

### Kununurra.

Toad numbers in the general Kununurra area continue to remain in relatively low numbers. This is a direct result of the incredible toad busting efforts being made by community members. Native biodiversity loss is being recorded but is still minimal due to the community efforts in trying to keep toad numbers and breeding under control. The front line colonising front does not appear to have moved much further than 10 kilometres west of Kununurra with an isolated pocket picked up at

Kingston's Rest station. These toads appear to have made their way upstream along the Duncan River system although until KTB volunteers can access some of this flooded area this assessment is not certain. Toads are still confined to isolated pockets along the lower Ord and do not appear to have made it to the Parry Lagoon system in Wyndham. KTB volunteers will continue to focus their efforts on reducing and slowing down the forward movement towards Wyndham and El Questro.

Toads have now invaded most of Carlton station and the Ningbing Ranges. The difficult wet season has meant access to this area has been very restricted and KTB will not be able to assess the full extent of the toad movement until the end of the wet.

[top](#)

## **2: The West Kimberley prepares itself for the arrival of the cane toad!**



Once again rangers from Derby and outlying Aboriginal communities will join Kimberley Toad Busters in the fight to slow the movement of toads towards their country.

Travelling all the way from the West Kimberley Wungurr, Dambi, Nyul Nyul, Nykina Mangala and Ngurrara Rangers comprising around 30 people will be joining Kimberley Toad Busters in the field on the 7<sup>th</sup> March for 3 days.



As well as toad busting the Ranger's will participate in the KTB "What's in your backyard?' biodiversity recording and "Iconic species" monitoring programs. For many of these rangers this will be their third trip toad to Kununurra to join with Kimberley Toad Busters in Kununurra.

[top](#)

### **3: KTB Google map and community working together .**

<http://www.canetoads.com.au/googmap.htm>

KTB have recently established a Google map to show the day to day 'battle' by people in Kununurra against the cane toad. Updated regularly this map provides an insight into the enormous area being covered by volunteers, the number of toads being picked up and any outbreaks of breeding that has been located and dealt with.

[top](#)

### **4: KTB Website up-date**

Volunteer website 'guru' Dean Goodgame has spent the last several weeks up-dating the KTB website. Several new buttons have been added including the Google map. Further Google maps are planned. These will show KTBs Educational Program locations and details and the "What's in your backyard?" and "Iconic" species recording and monitoring program locations. It is also hoped to produce a Google map that clearly shows the history and details of where KTB have toad busted for the past 6 years.

[top](#)

### **5: The toad battle at Long Michael Plain. A mighty cane Toad warrior!**

Barbara Walker, KTB volunteer and owner of a stretch of land on Spillway Creek up near Lake Argyle has singularly 'busted' every adult toad that has arrived on her property. Barbara also spends countless days on a quad bike, in the most appalling wet conditions, searching for any evidence of breeding along her stretch of Spillway Creek. Spillway Creek runs into the Ord River. It is the outstanding efforts by people like Barbara that have made all the difference to the numbers of toads getting through to Kununurra along the Ord River.

[top](#)

### **6: KTB March 2011 Educational Field trip**

In line with Kimberley Toadbusters cane toad education program the following places are to be visited in the month of March 2011.

1. **Derby High.** KTB ran a toad awareness educational for each class of Derby primary and high school in 2010 and has been asked to follow up with a further educational so the school can upgrade the 'iconic species' monitoring survey' program and the

'what's in your backyard?' biodiversity recording program. This educational will be run over three days.



KTB has also been asked to present an educational for the Aboriginal 'Derby Bushrangers'. This will be the second cane toad educational presented to the Derby Rangers by KTB. The Derby Rangers are

keen to include invertebrate recording and monitoring into their "What's in your Backyard?" biodiversity program. Danielle Taylor and Barbara, both teachers at Derby High are the motivators and organisers behind getting the Derby School and the Rangers involved in the KTB educational programs.



KTB will be also presenting its educational package to Derby's 'Holy Rosary' school. This will be the second visit to this school and KTB hope to involve the school in the biodiversity recording and monitoring programs.

A follow up visit will be made to Derby's 'School of the Air'. During the 2010 KTB educational program KTB managed to reach well over a dozen remote Kimberley stations. The 2011 cane toad educational will include the 'Iconic Species' monitoring and the 'what's in your backyard?' programs.

KTB will also visit Mowunjum Aboriginal community. This will be the first time KTB have taken their cane toad educational package to this community although many of the Kimberley Land Council

Rangers are from Mowunjum and after joining toad busts with KTB in Kununurra have taken the toad message back. KTB will focus on toad identification and on their "What's in your Backyard?" biodiversity recording program.

KTB will also visit the Broome Primary school to run its toad identification program.

KTB will also revisit Wuggabun, Doon Doon, Warmun, Halls Creek, Bayulu and Looma communities during March 2011. Kununurra District High and Wyndham District Schools have asked for follow ups on the KTB Educational programs run in 2010. These will be followed through sometime during first term.

[top](#)

## **7: Fencing, air rifles, traps and people busting!**

### **Fencing!**

Advocates of cane toad proof fencing to keep toads out have come out in force since the recent media announcement by Dr Mike Letnic from the University of Sydney of the success of his fencing trials in keeping toads from waterholes.

Dr Letnic presented a paper on his fencing trials at the KTB Environmental Forum held in March 2010. All his fencing trials were carried out in semi arid areas and around artificial water holes. KTB have found that similar experiments with nets and traps in and around turkey nests and dams in semi arid zones were also successful.



Dr Letnic does make it quite clear however that while fencing is a useful tool to catch toads heading to man-made water holes in dry arid zones, toad fencing in areas holding large natural bodies of water would not be realistic.

Fencing requires constant monitoring to avoid bi-catch and to ensure that it is doing the job it was designed for. KTB advise people thinking of putting up a 'toad' fence to think carefully about what they are hoping to achieve.



Recent fencing trials in and around Kununurra have clearly shown that a) there is no such thing as a 'toad proof' fence, and b) that an un-monitored fence will very quickly become useless due to animal activity, floods and fire.

### Traps!

Traps can also pose similar problems. Unless monitored on a regular basis traps very quickly fall into disrepair and can also attract bi-catch.

### Air-rifles!

KTB volunteers and other community groups are generally made up of family groups with lots of children. Air-rifles being used in such situations is a sure recipe for disaster. Years of toad busting have shown how durable toads are with many surviving the most unbelievable injuries. It is unlikely that a "killing" shot every time one shoots a toad is a sure thing. KTB do not advocate air-rifles as a method to deal with toads.

### 'People busting'.

After six years in the field toad busting, using various trap designs and experimenting with various other methods including fencing, KTB have determined that actually spending a few hours a week physically picking up adult toads, dealing with all other stages of breeding as it occurs is the surest and most successful way of keeping toad numbers under control.

[top](#)

***If everyone became a toad buster.***

***The toads would be busted!***

