

# 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!



KIMBERLEY SPECIALISTS  
Caring for the Kimberley



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



### KIMBERLEY TOAD BUSTERS NEWSLETTER 50:

02/11/2012

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

Declared by the Federal Government 12 April 2005

KTB Newsletter 50

2013 United Nations Finalist as well as finalist in 7 other state, national and international awards since 2006.

Collated by Lee Scott-Virtue President, founder & volunteer CEO of Kimberley Toad Busters. 02/11/2013

The 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 by maintaining [www.canetoads.com.au](http://www.canetoads.com.au); raising funds and supporting cane toad scientific research.

KTBs are a tax deductible charitable entity. Please see our website for our direct donation facility, or ways in which you can sponsor community toad busting efforts or one of our research or educational projects.

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

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### Newsletter contents:

1. KTB Research up-date
2. KTB species loss chart
3. KTB "Kids at Risk" Program.
4. Dana Lyons new 'Cane Toad Muster' song release
5. KTB chronological history.

### Introduction:

It has been several months since Kimberley Toad Busters has put out a Newsletter and we apologise for this but in the absence of Newsletters and Press Releases we have been up- loading most of our cane toad fieldwork, education programs and research activity results onto our website [www.canetoads.com.au](http://www.canetoads.com.au) and our facebook sites

[https://www.facebook.com/KimberleyToadBusters?ref=tn\\_tnmn](https://www.facebook.com/KimberleyToadBusters?ref=tn_tnmn)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Kimberley-Toad-Busters-KTB/113247412075404?ref=h>

We will continue to up-load as much electronic information as possible but will also be sending out at least two more newsletters before Christmas to bring everyone up to date with what has been an incredibly busy 2013 for Kimberley Toad Busters.

## 1. KTB Research up-date

Kimberley Toad Busters continues to sponsor cane toad and other scientific research as well as run its own program of biodiversity recording and monitoring. Focus for 2013 has been the ongoing KTB biodiversity recording and monitoring on Nicholson Station, with most of the resources focused on Marella Gorge. KTB have been undertaking comprehensive invertebrate and vertebrate studies in an effort to record as much data as possible before the cane toads arrive in the gorge system itself. While KTB will be recording numbers and other information on cane toads as they arrive in the gorge they will not be removed from the system. A six month comprehensive study will be done on the full impacts of the toads on the recorded native vertebrate and invertebrate species.

## Research Proposal for Marella Gorge.



Jordy Groffen preparing turtle traps.

Little is known about the short term impacts of the invasive cane toads on Australian vertebrate native biodiversity. Almost nothing is known about the short term impacts on invertebrate populations.

A well-researched small gorge system, not yet invaded by cane toads, has been selected by Kimberley Toad Busters and Kimberley Specialists to test the short term impacts of cane toads on vertebrate and invertebrate native species.



Erecting Biodiversity trapping fences.

KTB have been focusing much of their biodiversity research for 2013 on Nicholson Station, and particularly in Marella Gorge, a unique system, approximately 4km long and located 27km west of the Nicholson Homestead research base. Marella Gorge is known for its rich biodiversity and particularly for its high population of freshwater crocodiles and turtles, two species very vulnerable to the direct impacts of the cane toad.

Toads are expected to reach the Marella Gorge system in the next month. This research program is being directed by KTB Animal Scientist Jordy Groffen and Gary Rethus, KTB Biodiversity expert and will run for a 6 months.

## The Research Objectives of the KTB Nicholson Station research program.

To determine the short term (6 months) effect of the cane toads invasion on the amphibian, fish, bird, mammal and reptile population in Marella Gorge

- To determine which native species are affected, directly or indirectly, within 6 months of the invasive cane toad arrival?
- To determine what population level of cane toads is required before they start to have an effect on the native wildlife in Marella Gorge?

Determine the diet and general health of this invasive cane toad frontline in Marella gorge

- To determine if there is male colonizing front who will reach Marella Gorge first and how soon after females begin to arrive?
- To determine how soon after the cane toads initial arrival in Marella Gorge breeding begin?
- To determine what areas of the gorge show evidence of preferred toad occupation and breeding?
- To determine the stomach contents of the toads in Marella gorge
- Determine the density of the lungworm parasite in the toads invading the Marella Gorge system.
- Determine the population of male/female and size ratio of cane toads in Marella Gorge.



**For more information on KTB research results go to our website to read field and other reports**

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



Preparing trap-line fencing



Gary Rethus recording & identifying trap contents



## 2. KTB species loss chart

KTB have compiled a table of anecdotal and scientific evidence of affected wildlife KTB has seen in the last 9 years of being in the field toad busting.

The following list of toad impacted species is based on mostly anecdotal evidence of KTB volunteers in the field. KTB field data is based on toad busting activities since 2005. It is clear from the observations recorded that the impact of toads on some species is influenced by the type of habitat system the cane toads have invaded. Uncontrolled numbers of toads recorded by KTB in the early years of toad busting in the NT indicated that the biggest effects on wildlife were observed where toad numbers around waterholes were initially much higher. KTB have observed a marked decrease in species loss in areas where adult toad numbers and subsequent breeding have been reduced.



<u>Species</u>	<u>Effect</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Effect</u>
King Brown	Numbers going down	Pelican	Numbers going down
Childrens python	Numbers appear to be going up	Magpie Geese	Numbers do not appear to be going down
Black headed python	Numbers appear to be going up	Jabiru	Numbers appear to be going down
Whip snake	Numbers appear to be going up	Brolga	Numbers appear to be going down
Western Brown	Numbers appear to be going up	Straw necked Ibis	Numbers appear to be going down
Keelback snake	Numbers going up	Lavender Beetle	Numbers possibly going down
Friiled necked Lizard	Numbers going down	Lady Bird Beetle	Numbers possibly going down
Gilbert's dragon	Numbers going down	Dung beetle	Numbers going down





Freshwater crocodile	Numbers going down	Native Bee	Numbers appear to be going down
Blind snake	Numbers possibly going down	Bombardier beetle	Numbers going down
Mertens water monitor	Numbers going down	General insect activity	Numbers going down. More research
Yellow spotted Monitor	Numbers going down	Centipede	More research needed but number appear to be going down
Tree monitor	Numbers going up?	Scorpion	More research needed but number appear to be going down
Sand monitor	Numbers going down	General beetle family	Numbers appear to be going down. More research
Gould monitor	Numbers going down	Grasshoppers crickets	Numbers appear to be going down. More research
Freshwater Turtle	Numbers going down	Freshwater crab	Numbers going down
Giant burrowing frog	Number going down	Barramundi	Numbers do not appear to be going down
Saltwater crocodile	Numbers going up	Bait fish (stripies)	Numbers appear to be going down
Water rat	Numbers going up	Land snails	Numbers going down
Black tipped or whistling Kite	Numbers appear to be going up	Northern spotted quoll	Numbers going down
Kookaburra	Numbers may be going down	Greater Bilby	Numbers going down/up?
Crows	Numbers going up	Domestic chickens	Numbers going down in some areas
Whistling Ducks	Numbers may be going down. More research	Feral Cats	Numbers do not seem to be effected
Honey Bee Eater	Numbers going down	Dingo's	Numbers going down
Birds of prey general	Numbers appear to be going down. More research	Bilby	Numbers appear to be going down due to food competition. More research





Victims of the cane toad. Every waterhole invaded by toads is witness to this decimation.

### 3. KTB “Kids at Risk” Program.

Kimberley Toad Busters have developed the Kids @ Risk Positive Outcomes Program to address social issues within the community associated with juvenile delinquency. This program arose from the interest and involvement of Aboriginal children to toad busting. Toad busting appears to be the ‘glue’ that might assist many of these children to re-establish a positive link



Lake Argyle toad busting weekend

to society and school. The program is aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour, increasing self-esteem, creating positive leadership abilities, self-awareness, more involved with the culture, more knowledge of the biodiversity and increasing school attendance amongst the youth of Kununurra. The program supports a collaboration of agencies such as Save the Children, Juvenile Justice, Kununurra Police and Kununurra District High School (and other recognised community groups) who are currently independently attempting to reduce the impact of these issues on the community as a whole.



Cane toad educational and toad processing.

Two successful trial weekends were run in 2012 at one of the canoe camps on the Ord and the other on Lake Argyle. This was followed by 6 weekend programs in 2013 at Darlu Darlu Aboriginal Community, Lake Argyle and Nicholson Station. KTB have also endeavoured to work in with Rustic Pathways so that overseas and other Australian students can actively participate and be involved in the same activities as the “Kids at Risk” positive Outcome Program.



Learning how to abseil.

KTB plan to run longer programs at Nicholson Station in 2014. It is proposed that these programs at Nicholson Station will be up to 10 days at a time to enable more in-depth and more rounded educational learning experiences for the children involved. The youths will travel to Nicholson Station where they will engage in toad busting activities, abseiling and canoeing, cultural activities such as learning about country and culture/bush foods and medicines, bush safety survival skills, snake and other biodiversity trapping and handling, healthy food and spiritual sessions, and a range of other activities. Four 10 day school holiday programs at Nicholson Station have been proposed for 2014 but their implementation will be dependent on funding.

### 4. Dana Lyons new ‘Cane Toad Muster’ release

It was a great moment when Dana Lyons, famous American environmental singer, known for his internationally famous song “Cows with Guns” contacted Kimberley Toad Busters and offered to help in their campaign.





Dana Lyons with Lee Scott-Virtue, Ju Ju Wilson, Taz Lamb and Melli Wilson

Dana heard of the incredible community efforts while still in the states and decided that what the Kimberley community was doing in their efforts to mitigate the cane toad impact on native biodiversity was truly amazing and wanted to get to know and meet with the KTB and understand how and what the Kimberley Toad Busters were actually achieving. Dana was intrigued as it sounded to him more like a military exercise to the cane toad issue than the sort of environmental approach he was used to seeing in other parts of the world when people were dealing with environmental threats.



Dana said he had no problems finding lyrics for his new song 'Cane Toad Muster' and mentioned several times in interviews that one of the inspirations behind the lyrics was a comment by Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley President John Moulden, 'that the Kimberley was at war with the cane toads, and that if every man, woman and child was out there killing toads, then the toads would be wiped out'. Interesting as the KTB mantra is that 'if everyone became a toad buster the toads would be busted'.



Dana standing in front of the KTB banner.

Dana spent three weeks touring the Kimberley, visiting remote communities and towns, and discussing various environmental and social issues that seemed to be of great concern to the community in general and how some of these issues were affecting the Kimberley environment. Dana commented that everywhere he went, no matter whom he talked to, the energy and commitment to the need to do more to look after the Kimberley environment was the same. He further commented that burning and cane toads were also some of the issues that most people seemed concerned about.

Dana's said that he had a lot of fun composing the song and felt that he had captured the essence of the soul of Kimberley people and the results of the efforts the Kimberley Toad Busters had been trying to achieve. KTB feel strongly that Dana absolutely captured the efforts of the Kimberley community.

View Dana Lyons "Cane toad muster" song composed for the Kimberley Toad Busters:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n0PUBV0Q\\_U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n0PUBV0Q_U)

## 5. Chronological History of the Kimberley Toad Busters.

KTB began the community fight against the cane toad in 2004, alerting government and the community of the impending arrival of cane toads in the Kimberley. This chronological history provides a brief step by step progress and achievements of the Communities 'battle' for recognition, its victories, phenomenal education program and the media response to the Communities efforts. This is a living document.

View KTB Chronological history from 2004 - 2013

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

For more information and/or data from this survey please go to our website [www.canetoads.com.au](http://www.canetoads.com.au)

Or contact us on [kimberleytoadbusters@canetoads.com.au](mailto:kimberleytoadbusters@canetoads.com.au)

Phonr 08 91682576 or 08 91687080.



### Kimberley Toad Busters awards!

For more information on any of the articles contact:  
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