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Zero Toads more achievable?

Frogwatch has been conducting field trials of the cane toad tadpole control technique using the bufotoxin secretions of cane toads as bait to attract tadpoles into traps. (Shine 2012) In short we put toad toxin from the glands of toads into the traps and effectively removed tadpoles.

In our first trial the tadpole traps captured all of the tadpoles in a backyard pond and no metamorph toads (small toads newly emerged from the tadpole stage) were seen at the site. In the second trial the traps collected 16116 tadpoles and just 67 metamorphs were collected from the site.

FrogWatch is urging the community to renew its efforts to control cane toads in the greater Darwin area after the field trials showed this newly developed technique adds to our overall control capability.

Co-ordinator Graeme Sawyer said "It is important people do not give up on the control effort and with an early start to the storms this year it is important to be vigilant now. Toadbusting efforts have significantly reduced toad numbers and this new capability to reduce tadpole numbers should mean we can reduce the numbers even further.

Whilst it is too early to fully understand the implications of this technique it appears that the tadpole trapping technique does increase our ability to control cane toads. Importantly it requires minimal people time to implement a significant new element of a harm minimisation strategy.

The harm minimisation strategies we have developed involve removing as many mature cane toads as possible during the refuge period (dry season) when the toads are congregated on remnant water. Traps, hand collection (toadBusting) and especially exclusion fencing can have a major impact on toad numbers.

These manual control techniques are able to significantly alter cane toad populations and there is evidence, of the benefits to the reptile populations, by removing small cane toads from an area,

By being able to control tadpoles we are stopping the smaller cane toads from emerging onto land and thus stopping the population increase in an area due to breeding. This gives us more hope that a Zero toads policy is feasible.



Picture - Cane Toad tadpoles in a funnel trap during the trial in Leanyer.

For more information go to the frogwatch website.

[Http://www.frogwatch.org.au](http://www.frogwatch.org.au) and into the toadWatch link

For more information contact.

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Reference

Shine et al 2012 , Michael R. Crossland, Takashi Haramura, Angela A. Salim, Robert J. Capon and Richard Shine, Exploiting intraspecific competitive mechanisms to control invasive cane toads (*Rhinella marina*) Proceedings Royal Society B (2012)