



Sixteenth Edition  
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A project of



frogwatch.org.au

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With support from  Northern Territory Government



**SPECIAL EFFORT NEEDED  
FOR THIS YEARS TOADAUDIT**



**ARE WE MAKING  
PROGRESS ON THE TOAD  
FIGHT?**



**NEW TOADBUSTING  
PLANS**

**Yes We  
Can Stop  
the  
impact of  
Toads-  
and we  
must!**

## EDITORIAL

### TOAD AUDIT TIME AGAIN!

Tuesday August 18<sup>th</sup> is the annual ToadAudit night which signals the start of the core ToadBusting season in the Top-End. We need everyone to have a look around their area and report what they find via the Frogwatch website.

This information, even if no toads are found, is vital in planning our annual push to remove cane toads from the greater Darwin area before the wet season returns.

The Darwin Zero Toads project is a core element of our current strategy and is showing very encouraging results. (see details below) We have seen greatly reduced numbers of cane toads in many areas of Darwin as a result of this work and are now moving to extend that work to other areas of the Greater Darwin area.

This year it is more important than ever to get accurate ToadAudit information to allow us to quantify the impact of the new strategy, especially the new fences designed to stop cane toads. FrogWatch is urging everyone to check their yards, schools, businesses and nearby parks and public lands for cane toads on August 18 or during the following week.

We need to think about our workplaces and schools as well. Have a talk with the people in your workplace or school and see if something can be organized for the week that involves checking your worklocation as well.

FrogWatch (Nth) is focused on minimizing the damage cane toads do to our top-end ecosystems and wildlife and now is the time for people to make sure we get rid of every cane toad we can before the rains return and toads start to breed. This is a vital aspect of toad control, we need to make sure there are no toads in your area that can breed once the build up starts!

It is vitally important that we do not let toads take over our local areas, if we lose focus on this the cane toads will bounce back and we will lose urban wildlife populations.

There is still hope of a long - term solution to toads and we need to make sure we minimize the damage toads are doing until these solutions become a reality.

We need you to let us know what you find. Even if there are no toads in your area it is

important for us to know that you checked. Please report what you find to either the hotline 1800243564 or email us on [toadreport@frogwatch.org.au](mailto:toadreport@frogwatch.org.au) or report it on the website at <http://www.frogwatch.org.au>, go to the cane toad site option and choose the sightings/catches heading.

If you see a toad please catch it and put it in one of the Detention centres or freeze it, and contact FrogWatch as we want to know.

#### What do you do on the night?

To check for toads you need to walk around the areas with a bright light to see if there are any toads around. Adult cane toads spend the daytime under cover and come out at night. They will go to wet areas to get water and also into open spaces, especially areas with lights, to feed. Areas of short grass such as lawns are favorite hunting areas for toads. Major drains are a refuge area for toads, especially the sections where the concrete ends and the bush starts. Keep your eyes open for toadlets and for tadpoles as well. These are easy to see in daylight also.

In parks and reserves toads will be around wet areas and cleared, well lit areas as well. You do not need to go looking under things or into thick bushes looking for toads at night, they will be in more obvious spots.

For details see the FrogWatch website <http://www.frogwatch.org.au>.

### ARE WE MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS STOPPING TOADS?

The reports from many areas around Darwin are very encouraging. Toad numbers seem to be lower than in previous years. This is really quite extraordinary as toad numbers normally increase greatly after toads get to an area.

We really are making a difference and have goannas and other wildlife to show for it. This is a stark contrast to other parts of the NT. We are actively working to spread this strategy further into the Palmerston and Rural areas.

The preliminary results from the Zero Toads project are encouraging and the fence installed across the Amy Johnson Avenue ( See red line on image below)

has provided a major boost to our effectiveness.

The fence has provided a barrier to toad movement and because it holds toads along the fence line it makes toad busting much easier and much more effective. 1 person can control toads along a fence line with regular patrols whereas it may not be possible to control toads in the area without the barrier.

As an example in over 30 trips to the site only one live toad has been seen on the road surface some 30 metres from the fence and yet over 1168 toads have been picked up along the fence.

During the project period the numbers of toads in nearby areas has dramatically reduced when compared to last year. This is likely to be because the fence has blocked the movement of toads into those

collected by concerned residents and the children at the school.

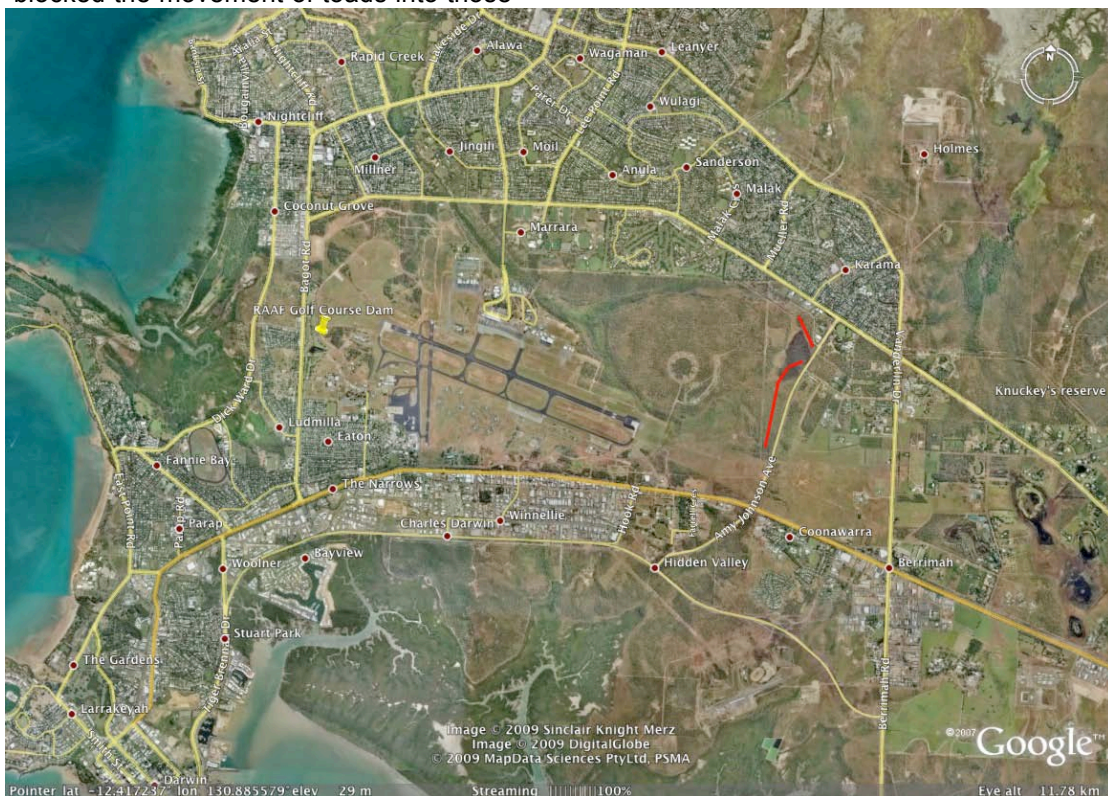
By the end of March numbers had dropped dramatically with only the occasional toad being found.

It was thought the cane toads came from the Airport area as large numbers were found in the park nearest to the Airport and further searches on the Marrara golf course and the Marrara sporting complex yielded more toads of the same size.

During the early wet season in November and December small numbers of toads were found in the park area at total of 20.

In late December 2009 a fence was placed across the corridor leading to the airport and over 1100 toads have been removed from along the fence in the first 5 months of 2009.

Only 8 adult toads were found in the Anula Parks area after the fence was



areas. The suburb of Anula is a case in point.

Patrols in the Anula area, during the January and February period in 2008, had been yielding low numbers of cane toads (1 or 2 a week) and all of them adults.

Suddenly in early March, after two weeks of especially heavy rain, there were small cane toads (40 -60 mm) being found around the school and students reporting dead frill-necked lizards in the school grounds and finding small cane toads.

A Toad 'bust' on Friday 14th March collected 111 cane toads from around the area and a further 107 toads were

erected and no sub adult toads were found during the 2009 wet season. We will continue to monitor these areas.

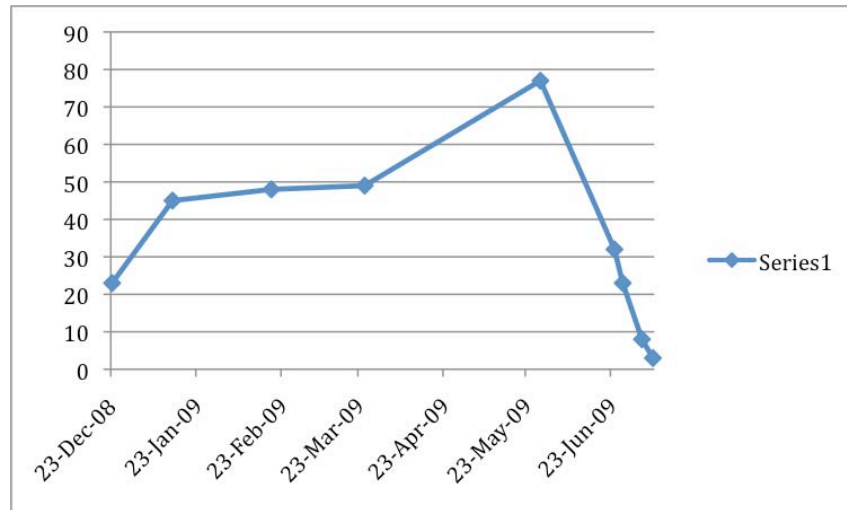
At the western end of the Airport corridor we have been monitoring the waterhole on the RAAF golf course. The site is the only open water body in the area that holds water throughout the year and provides a key refuge for toads in the area.

We hope to see toad numbers reduce at this site over time and expect to see the number of cane toads at this site drop off as the dry season proceeds, and then not increase next wet season in the way they have over the past few years. There are

toads in the area and they have been there for several years and have bred in the dam in the past.

Results from toad bust in the area show significant numbers being captured but an encouraging decline of numbers is evident over

recent weeks. We will have to wait until the return of the wet season to see if the numbers increase as they have in previous years.



**Pic RAAF golf course dam monthly captures**

## NEW TOADBUSTING PLANS

It's ToadBusting time, and FrogWatch is planning a new approach to this as we really push to try to get Zero Toads in the Darwin area and really low numbers across the greater Darwin Region.

FrogWatch people will be doing toadBusts each Monday and Wednesday evening from Late August. Volunteers are encouraged to come along and participate in these busts. We will also be doing some ToadBusts on Friday and Saturday nights as in the past. A new schedule will be available in the next 2 weeks.

Information about ToadBusts and locations will be on the website each week.

## SPONSOR A CANE TOAD TRAP



FrogWatch is continuing its appeal to the community and businesses to help fund part of our strategy to stop cane toads overrunning Darwin. We are seeking people and businesses to sponsor cane toad traps and sections of deflection fences to shut off the major corridors cane toads are using to move into areas across the Greater Darwin region. Call 1800243564 or 0411881378 for more details, or email [info@frogwatch.org.au](mailto:info@frogwatch.org.au).

Darwin is not being overrun by cane toads, as many predicted - with only small numbers of cane toads managing to get through into the Darwin area so far.

Unfortunately even a small number is enough to cause significant damage to our wildlife and ecosystems, especially to animals like quolls and goannas and, in time, green tree frogs and other native animals through displacement. Darwin is the only capital city that has animals like goannas. Our wildlife is a part of our lifestyle and a big part of the spirit of the Territory. We do not want to see cane toads destroy it.

We are confident we can reduce the numbers of cane toads even further by using deflection fences and traps. Our trials, see picture below, have shown that fences and traps combined can block toad movement and increase the effectiveness of the traps.



Picture – Sponsored trap on the Deflection fence at Hidden Valley.

Our plan is to get a series of deflection barriers and traplines set up to protect Darwin's wildlife and lifestyle. To do it we need support in terms of funds and help to install and manage the traplines.

In return, you get your details on the FrogWatch website as a sponsor on the section of the site that shows the numbers of cane toads caught in your trap.

This project is a great way for your business or social club to make a real contribution to keeping Darwin a Zero Toad Zone.

In recognition of your Sponsorship we provide you with a certificate and we will acknowledge you through our website (about 30 000 visits per month) and our newsletter (1200 people). We will also provide a website where the ongoing capture data for your sponsored trap will show and the capture data will be updated regularly. You will be able to link this to your own website if you wish to. As the traps are checked, capture data will be recorded on the website and the tally showing your impact will be there for all to see.

FrogWatch Nth is a not for profit organization focused on raising environmental awareness, especially about issues relating to frogs. FrogWatch has been active in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley region of WA for over 10 years and has developed a very strong public profile across a wide spectrum of the community.



A secure SuperTrap, complete solar system, lights, a controller, batteries, water systems and anchor stake cost 650.00 each. You can sponsor a complete trap or join with others to co-sponsor a trap. Sponsorship is \$600.00 per trap.