

# TOAD NEWS



Twelfth Edition  
March 2008

A project of



[frogwatch.org.au](http://frogwatch.org.au)

PO Box 4508 DARWIN NT 0801

1800 243 564

With support from  Northern Territory Government

 105.7 ABC  
Darwin

 NTAP

 DARWIN

 NTT



**EDITORIAL – Wet  
Season toad invasion  
progress**



**NEW POSITIONS  
AVAILABLE IN NT AND WA**



**FROG FRIENDLY  
MAYOR FOR DARWIN?**



**MAJOR TOADBUST  
REPORT**



**REPORT FROM FIRST  
MAJOR FENCE TRIAL**



**NIMBY WEEK UPDATE**



**ANULA INVASION**

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

## EDITORIAL

As the Wet season progresses in the Top End we are again seeing cane toads moving into the Darwin area and becoming increasingly active in Palmerston and the Rural area and right across the Top End.

This annual movement of cane toads with the rainy season is our biggest problem and it is vitally important to keep up the effort and get rid of any toads that turn up in your area.

It is not “the end” when a toad shows up as we can continue to get rid of them and once the Dry season arrives we can eradicate the few remaining toads.

This is the core of the ToadBuster strategy and by not allowing toad numbers to build up in your area you are protecting all sorts of wildlife - as well as our lifestyle.

It is really important to be on guard and stop cane toads breeding in new areas, or to get rid of the tadpoles before they become toads. Otherwise we loose our frillies.

Reports from many places suggest that cane toads are in fewer numbers than in previous years but that they are still there.

Many FrogWatchers have commented about these lower numbers. One comment from Leanyer was “Last wet season we had thirteen toads in our yard, this year we have only had two.”

Another tally from the Howard Springs area shows similar results. The figures below show the 2006 and 2007 tallies from their block.

	2006	2007
Traps	32	23
Dogs	2	1
Spot lighting	34	25
Ponds	7	4

Car light driveway	4	1
Out in the open	4	4
Cleaning yard	10	
Totals	93	58

If you have a tally record please send it to FrogWatch. You can email a copy to [info@frogwatch.org.au](mailto:info@frogwatch.org.au) or post a copy to PO Box 4508 Darwin NT 0801.

Similar results can be seen from some of our toadBusts as well. Recent Wet season busts around the region are yielding quite low numbers.

## POSITION VACANT

FrogWatch is looking for the right person to take on a part-time role in helping to organise and facilitate the community effort in the campaign against cane toads and to help with day-to-day activities of FrogWatch.

The person will be required to work with co-ordinators Graeme Sawyer and Ian Morris in coordinating the work of FrogWatch and the volunteers who make up the effort against toads. They will also be required to assist in the running of toadBusts on some occasions.

Work includes organising events like displays, liaising with agencies, writing submissions, fielding phone calls and advocacy work in the campaign against cane toads.

Some of the work will be able to be done from home but it will require a Drivers licence. The ability and interest to do some night-time work and weekend work would also be appreciated.

Exact hours and conditions will be negotiable.

For further details contact Graeme on 0411881378 or email [info@frogwatch.org.au](mailto:info@frogwatch.org.au).

## FROG FRIENDLY MAYOR?

Graeme Sawyer, one of the co-founders of FrogWatch, has decided to stand for the Position of Lord Mayor of Darwin.

He is standing on a platform of sustainable environmental principles and community participation.

His campaign is built around the slogan Sustainable Environments - to live, work and play in.

Graeme says he has been greatly impressed by the community attitudes shown through the ToadBusters campaign and the great concern people have for the natural environment and Darwin. This has been a key factor in his decision to run.

With his technology background he is very keen to use the internet to reach people and to save paper during the campaign. You can also do him a favour by passing this message on to all your contacts in Darwin.

As an independent candidate he is seeking support for his campaign from the community. He is seeking financial support and support from people who can help with other aspects of the campaign such as helping to hand out material on election day, March 29th.

Graeme says the election process is a bit like the toad fight, every little bit of effort helps. So if you can help please do.

If you can help please give him a call on 0411881378 or 89456005.

## MAJOR TOADBUST REPORT

The Stop the Toad Foundation, a WA based group, working on the effort to stop cane toads moving towards WA, have released the report from their Great ToadMuster 2007.

The Muster showed some very interesting results. What was most interesting was the change in cane toad numbers, particularly the change in the make-up of the cane toad population in the area.

In 2006 the Muster removed almost 50,000 cane toads from the Whirlwind .Plains area just west of Timber Creek. The 2007 Muster found just 12,000 toads across the same area.

In 2006 43% of the toads caught were sub adult (less than 89 mm snout vent) , indicating that they had been bred in the area. In 2007 sub adult toads made up just 3% of the toads found.

The Muster report also contains more details about the exclusion barrier fencing trials mentioned in our last



Newsletter.

Pic – Toads blocked by the exclusion fence mentioned in the report.

A full copy of the report can be downloaded from the Stop the Toad Foundation's Website.

<http://www.stophthetoad.org.au/main/muster.php>

## **FENCE TRIAL REPORT**

Included with the Muster report is a report into the trial of a large scale deflection fence on the border of Gregory National Park.

This is the first large scale trial of such a strategy that we are aware of. The plan was developed from the first FrogWatch trial fence at Noonamah in the Elizabeth Valley.

The trial has shown another element that can be used to stop cane toads and it is becoming increasingly obvious that we can have a huge impact on cane toad populations with strategies that combine cane toad traps, fences and toadBusting! The Full report is at the website location <http://www.stophthetoad.org.au/main/muster.php>

## **WA CANE TOAD PROJECT POSITION ADVERTISED**

The Stop the Toad Foundation has also just advertised a WA based position for a person to coordinate their project. It is a full time position.

Details on their Website <http://www.stophthetoad.org.au>

## **NIMBY WEEK**

Our annual NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) week this year will be held in April from Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April through to Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April.

This week signifies a time to refocus on the toad fight as the wet season winds down and to get rid of toads

that have made it into your area during the previous wet season.

More information will follow but it is a good time to start planning and maybe talk to others in the area you live in about ideas for the week.

One particular focus for this year will be on school grounds and similar places. They are proving to be collection points for toads as they are quiet places with open spaces at night and have plenty of good hiding places during the day.

We have had a very alarming outbreak of toads around Anula School in recent weeks. Small toads 40 to 60 mm in length have turned up at the school during the big rains of the past month. The result is the kids have found five dead frill neck lizards in the past week!

This highlights the need for people to tell us about toads in their area and the size is important. Make sure you are reporting all the cane toads you catch, (or see) to the website or on the 1800 243 564 hotline.

Also keep your eyes open for cane toad tadpoles the big rains of the past few weeks have triggered more egg laying and we have dealt with a number of breeding sites recently.

## **NEW WEBSITE**

Sometime over the next 10 days the new website will replace the old one. The address and the logins will not change but you will notice that there is a new look and structure and some new information, especially about toad identification.

## **MISSING FROGS**

One of the main elements of the night-time sound scape across the Top End in the low squelching croak of the FloodPlains Toadlet, uperoleia

innundata (you can see the frog and hear its call on the FrogWatch website in the frogList section.

Recently we have been to some places where they were not common like they have been. We would be interested in your feedback about whether you are hearing any?

## **TELL US YOUR TOAD STORY**

If you've had a weird, informative, humorous or horrible experience with toads, email your story into [toadreport@frogwatch.org.au](mailto:toadreport@frogwatch.org.au) and we'll include it in our next ToadBuster News. We're constantly on the look out for toad information – one of the odd aspects of toads in Australia is that 70 years after they were foolishly introduced, there is still a lot less information, expert or otherwise, about toads and their effects on the environment, than one would expect.

Your story will add to our pool of knowledge, whether you've been squirted in the eye, observed unique toad behaviour, got toads on the run in your area, or rescued a potential toad victim, tell us your story.

## **ANULA INVASION KILLS FRILLIES**

FrogWatch is calling for a special community effort in Anula and nearby suburbs in an effort to find the source of the small cane toads that have killed at least five frill-necked lizards in the Anula School area in the last week.

The small toads measure about 50mm from snout to vent, and so are about 4- 6 months old. They have started to move during the big rains of

the monsoon but it is a bit of a mystery as to their exact source.

FrogWatch co-ordinator Graeme Sawyer says the toads may have come from someone's backyard, or it could be from the Airport side, or from the Leanyer side of Anula. There are likely to be others in the areas around where the toads bred. Small toads are a particular threat to frillies because they are active in the day-time when frillies are feeding and they are the right size to be a food item. Big toads don't impact on the frillies but little ones are deadly.

These are the first toads of this size we have seen in Anula, (see picture)in



fact some of the first we have seen in Darwin. There were some toads in this size range on the bush fringes in Leanyer, Karama and near the hospital last wet season, but not in the suburbs like Anula. For the past two wet seasons we have only been getting large toads in the suburbs.

FrogWatch is urging Anula residents to make sure there are no toads in their yard and to join a toadBust on Friday night March 14, meeting at the car park between the school and the shop at 7.15 pm .

There is no need to wait for Friday if you live in the area and have time to

check the area before then. Ten toadlets were collected near the school on Saturday 15th and the children at the school have also found some during the day. It is important that any cane toads found are reported to the FrogWatch hotline 1800 243 564 or through the website <http://www.frogwatch.org.au>.

This is a stark reminder of just how vigilant we need to be to keep toads at bay during the wet season. The Anula park has one of the highest concentrations of frill-necked lizards known to researchers and it is important we protect them.

There will also be a ToadBust at Leanyer, Patterson Street drain on Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup> Meet at 7.15 between the drain and the Lake Leanyer complex near the Patterson Street Vandelin Dve intersection

## 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.