



CANE "BUFO" TOAD INFORMATION

as cited by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Regulatory Status

The cane toad (also known as the bufo, giant or marine toad) is a large, nonnative amphibian that has been introduced into Florida. Cane toads are considered an invasive species and are poisonous to most animals that try to bite or consume them. Cane toads are not protected in Florida except by anti-cruelty law and can be removed from private property and humanely killed year-round with landowner permission. Captured cane toads may not be relocated and released.

Captive-held cane toads are regulated as Class III wildlife in the State of Florida. A permit is not required to possess cane toads as personal pets. However, a License to Possess Class III Wildlife for Exhibition or Public Sale must be obtained to possess these amphibians for commercial use and a Captive Wildlife Importation Permit is required to import this species into the state.

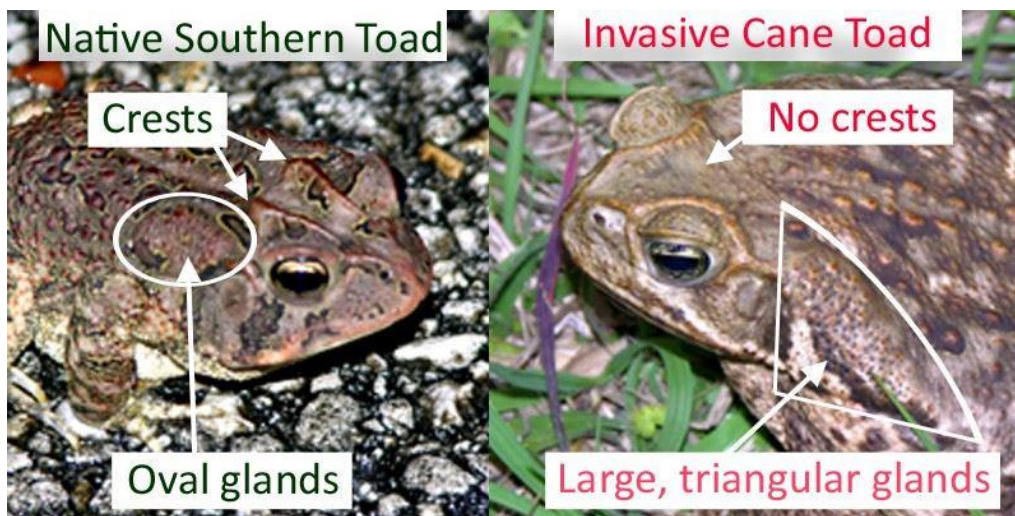
Description

Cane toads are reddish-brown to grayish-brown with a light-yellow or beige belly and can be uniform in color or have darker markings around the body. They have enlarged glands behind the eyes, which angle downward onto the shoulders. The glands secrete a potent milky-white toxin (bufotoxin) as defense against predators including domestic pets.

Cane toads generally range in size from 6 to 9 inches in length. They can be confused with the native southern toad, however, adult cane toads are much larger than adult southern toads which only grow to a maximum of approximately 3 to 4 inches.

Cane toads do not have ridges across the head, as seen in the southern toad.

In Florida, cane toads are found in urban, suburban and agricultural areas. Cane toads are commonly found in yards, around buildings or near canals and ponds. Cane toads breed year-round in standing water, streams, canals and ditches.



How to Identify Invasive Cane Toads

Dr. Steve Johnson, UF IFAS Wildlife Ecologist, shows how to identify the Cane or "Bufo" toad, an invasive toad invading Florida backyards and threatening Florida's pets. <https://youtu.be/RMzLes3BaCo>

Diet

Cane toads are omnivores and eat a variety of vegetation, insects, small birds, other toads or frogs, lizards, small mammals, and snakes. If available, cane toads may be attracted to and eat human table scraps and pet food. Never leave pet food outside to avoid attracting cane toads and other animals.

Native Range

Cane toads are native to the Amazon basin in South America and north to the lower Rio Grande Valley in southern Texas.

Florida Distribution and Sightings

Cane toads were first introduced into Florida to control agricultural pests in sugar cane in the 1930s and 40s. It is believed that current populations are the result of escapes and released by importers in the 1950s and 60s. Cane toads are currently found in central and south Florida, generally south of the I-4 corridor. Visit IveGot1.org for a map of credible cane toad sightings.

Potential Impacts

The skin-gland secretions of cane toads (called bufotoxin) are highly toxic and can sicken or even kill animals that bite or feed on them, including native animals and domestic pets. The skin secretions may irritate the skin or burn the eyes of people who handle them. Cane toad eggs also contain bufotoxin and can harm or kill native animals that consume them. Cane toads also potentially compete with native frogs and toads for food and breeding areas.

To safely remove cane toads, wear eye and skin protection, and wear latex, rubber, or nitrile gloves if handling. Captured cane toads may not be relocated and released. Homeowners that need assistance removing cane toads from their property can hire a wildlife trapper. It is also very important to make sure that you have properly identified the animal as a cane toad and not a native southern toad, which is a beneficial part of the Florida ecosystem.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I remove cane toads from my property?

Yes. Cane toads are not protected in Florida except by anti-cruelty law and can be removed and humanely killed on private property year-round with landowner permission. To safely remove cane toads, wear eye and skin protection, and wear latex, rubber, or nitrile gloves if handling. Captured cane toads may not be relocated and released. Homeowners that need assistance removing cane toads from their property can hire a wildlife trapper. It is also very important to make sure that you have properly identified the animal as a cane toad and not a native southern toad, which is a beneficial part of the Florida ecosystem. Adult cane toads range in size from 6-9 inches long, while southern toads only grow to 3-4 inches long. Southern toads will have well defined cranial crests which look like ridges or horns above their eyes and a small, oval shaped gland visible behind their eyes. Cane toads do not have crests above their eyes and possess a larger, triangular shaped gland behind their eye. You can learn more about how to properly identify cane toads on this video from UF: Cane Toads - How to Identify This Invasive Pest - YouTube.

https://youtu.be/RMzLes3BaCo?list=PLPI8i90YEmZ2E6jylrit8W-tL-G_hR1dT

This video from the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences goes over some methods to humanely capture and kill cane toads. <https://youtu.be/JCZISVbOkWU>

What should I do if my pet bites or swallows a cane toad?

If your pet bites or swallows a cane toad, they can become sick and die in as little as 15 minutes without proper treatment. Cane toads release a milky toxin that can stick in a pet's mouth. Symptoms may include frantic or disoriented behavior, brick red gums, seizures, and foaming at the mouth. If you see these symptoms, follow these steps:

1. Wash toxins forward out of mouth using a hose for ten minutes being careful not to direct water down the throat.
2. Wipe gums/tongue with dish towel to remove toxins.
3. Get your pet to the vet!

This instructional video from the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences outlines these steps. <https://youtu.be/Cg1HUuxM7Zc>

What can I do to keep cane toads off my property?

Remove places where cane toads or their prey can hide or seek shelter:

- Cut your grass regularly and keep it short
- Fill in any holes around structures
- Trim the underside of shrubs
- Keep branches or riprap off the ground
- Clear away brush piles
- Remove clutter

Remove food that can attract cane toads and their prey:

Feed pets indoors when possible

- Bring outdoor pet food and water bowls indoors at night
- Clean up any food scraps from pet bowls or outside tables and grills

What should I do if I come into contact with a cane toad?

Thoroughly wash your hands after coming into contact with a cane toad, as you would after touching any wild animal. Always wear latex, rubber or nitrile gloves to safely handle cane toads.

What if I have a pet cane toad I can no longer care for?

Escaped or released pets remain a primary source of introduced species in Florida, and it is illegal to introduce nonnative species into the state. Pet owners who can no longer keep their exotic pets, including cane toads, can find a new home for them through the FWC's Exotic Pet Amnesty Program. This program helps reduce the number of nonnative species being released into the wild and fosters responsible pet ownership by giving pet owners a responsible and ecologically sound alternative to releasing an exotic animal. **Note:** The FWC does not rehome wild-caught nonnative wildlife.

Pursuant to section 120.74, Florida Statutes, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has published its 2019 Agency Regulatory Plan.