



# Australia's Cane Toads Overrun!



by Sneed B. Collard III



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## Overrun!



by Sneed B. Collard III

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# Contents

A Close Call .....	4
Problem Beetle .....	6
A Failed Experiment .....	8
Signs of Trouble .....	10
Toad Overload .....	12
Eating Everything .....	14
Toxic Toads .....	16
Conquering a Continent .....	18
What About Wildlife? .....	20
Living with Toads .....	22
Can They Be Stopped? .....	24
Lessons Learned .....	26
Other Invasive Amphibians .....	28
Glossary .....	30
Bibliography .....	31
Read More .....	31
Learn More Online .....	31
Index .....	32
About the Author .....	32

# A Close Call

In 2013, in the town of Hemmant in northern Australia, Nikita Den Engelse found her dog Wally frothing at the mouth and trembling. “I was concerned he was going to die,” she said. Nikita rushed the dachshund-shih tzu mix to a **veterinarian**, who knew exactly what had happened. Wally had been poisoned . . . by a toad.



A dog approaches a toad in northern Australia.



Fortunately, after getting treated by the vet, Wally survived. Many other animals, however, are not so lucky. They die after an experience like this—one that has occurred over and over since an **amphibian** known as the cane toad arrived in Australia.



Cane toads release poison from their bodies that can make dogs and other animals very sick.

A cane toad is one of the largest toads in the world. It measures 4 to 9 inches (10 to 23 cm) in length.



# Problem Beetle

Australia's cane toad story began in the 1930s. At that time, Australian sugarcane farmers had a serious beetle problem. Young cane beetles called **grubs** were eating the roots of tall sugarcane plants, causing many plants to die. The farmers tried everything to stop the beetles. They trapped them, poisoned them, and even plucked them off the plants by hand. Yet the cane beetle **population** kept growing.



This is a kind of beetle that attacks sugarcane plants.

Sugarcane is a tall grass that has a stem, or cane, that's filled with sugary juice. In factories, the cane juice is turned into pure white sugar.



In the early 1930s, a team of Australian scientists learned that toads were being used in Hawaii to eat large numbers of cane beetles. In 1935, the scientists went to Hawaii to capture some of the toads. They shipped 102 of them back to Australia with the hope that the toads would kill the plant-destroying beetles in Australia's sugarcane fields.

## How Cane Toads Came to Australia



Cane toads are **native** to Central America and South America. Scientists brought them to Hawaii in the early 1930s to control beetles and other insect **pests** on the islands.

# Index

- African clawed frogs 28
- American bullfrog 28
- amphibians 5, 11, 12, 17, 25, 27, 28–29
- baby toads 8, 13
- beetles 6–7, 9, 10
- blue-tongued skinks 22
- cattle 24
- children 11
- coqui frogs 29
- crows 23
- dogs 4–5, 10
- eating 6–7, 9, 14–15, 17, 20–21, 22–23, 28–29
- eggs 12–13, 24
- frogs 17, 28–29
- Hawaii 7, 29
- insects 6–7, 8–9, 14–15, 29
- invasive species 11, 26, 28
- lizards 20, 22
- marsupial mammals 21, 23
- pets 4–5, 10
- planigales 23
- poison 4–5, 6, 10–11, 16–17, 18, 20, 23, 25
- ponds 12, 24–25, 28
- predators 17, 18, 20, 24, 29
- prey 14
- Puerto Rico 29
- Queensland 8, 15, 18
- quolls 21, 22–23
- scientists 7, 8–9, 10, 21, 22, 24
- Shine, Rick 22, 25
- South America 7, 28
- spreading 10, 18–19, 26–27
- sugarcane 6–7, 8–9
- tadpoles 13, 25
- United States 28

## About the Author

Sneed B. Collard III has written more than 70 books for young people. In 2006, he received the prestigious *Washington Post* Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award for his body of work. Visit him at [www.sneedbcollardiii.com](http://www.sneedbcollardiii.com).



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# Australia's Cane Toads

## Overrun!

Large, dangerous amphibians are overrunning much of northern Australia. These animals, called cane toads, show up on roads, in ponds, and in people's backyards. Because they ooze a powerful poison when attacked, they kill many pets and native wild animals each year. Look inside to learn all about these destructive animal invaders.

**Australia's Cane Toads**  
**Overrun!**

**Feral Pigs**  
**Chomp, Chomp!**

**Florida's Burmese Pythons**  
**Squeezing the Everglades**

**Guam's Brown Tree Snakes**  
**Hanging Out**

**Red Imported Fire Ants**  
**Attacking Everything**

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