



Environmental Issues:

The Introduction of the Cane Toad in
North Queensland,

Australia

The Cane Toad (*Rhinella Marina*)

Cane toads are native to Central and South America. Glands behind their ears produce a toxic secretion which they use for defence against predators. The poison is absorbed through the skin, causing pain and irritation. It then acts on the heart causing cardiac arrest in smaller animals.

Cane toads were introduced to Australia in 1935 to control native beetle larvae that were attacking the roots of sugar cane crops in North Queensland. These toads thrived and the population of cane toads quickly grew. Many native predators were killed by eating the toad, its spawn or its tadpoles.

Populations have spread and the cane toad can now be found in the Kimberley Region in Northern WA and as far south as Yamba and Port Macquarie in NSW. The toad eats almost anything so they can be found in urban areas looking for scraps as well as threatening native species of bees, insects, lizards and other small animals.

Scientists are currently working on biological methods of control that may interrupt the breeding cycle of the toad.

