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Cane toad *Rhinella marina*

Cane toads don't like the cold so you're unlikely to see them in the northern United States. But in warm, humid climates they thrive and reproduce quickly, and are considered an invasive species in many areas of the U.S. and the world.

- The cane toad is indigenous to areas in northern South America through Central America and up to southern Texas.
- This adaptable species was introduced to several areas as a method of managing insects in sugarcane crops, and has proven difficult to control because it has few natural predators away from its native land. Many of the predators that do attack the cane toad lack immunity to its toxin and are killed by ingesting their prey.
- The cane toad can quickly reproduce in a new area. Within two years, the population in Oahu, Hawaii, went from 148 to more than 100,000.
- When cane toads were released onto sugarcane plantations in Australia to rid it of beetles, the toads soon reproduced into the millions. Instead of eating the beetles, the big toads ate everything else in sight, taking away food from native frogs.
- The cane toad is now considered an invasive species in Florida, Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands, many Pacific islands including Hawaii, and various countries around the world including Japan and Australia.
- Because this species is commonly found in suburban areas, it can pose a threat to outdoor pets that may attack it and be made ill or die from the toxins the toad secretes.
- In the toad's native range, snakes have developed a tolerance for the toxin. In introduced areas, some birds and rodents have learned to flip the toad over, slit the toad's belly and eat the insides to avoid the toxin.
- These animals take cover during the day under loose materials like logs, leaves, rocks, or loose boards.
- When breeding, females lay thousands or tens of thousands of eggs at a time in long jellylike clusters, and more than one male may fertilize them. Eggs hatch into tadpoles two to seven days later. After about two weeks to two months, tadpoles metamorphose into small toadlets the size of raisins. It takes about a year to reach full maturity.

Quick Facts

Length: 6 to 7 inches (15 to 17 cm)

Appearance: Large (females can weigh up to three pounds!) and warty with tan, brown, green or black skin

Life Expectancy: Up to 10 years

Diet: Just about anything—insects, snails and slugs, plants, and other toads

Range: Prefers tropical climates with nearby water

Behavior: This species spends most of its life on land and only enters fresh water to breed

Immerse yourself in the amazing world of *Amphibians* at Shedd Aquarium's special exhibit featuring 40 species of salamanders, frogs, toads and worm-like creatures called caecilians. Learn how these fascinating animals reproduce and adapt to survive today's changing world, and every day actions we can take to protect their future. *Amphibians*, sponsored by Walgreens, runs May 2015 through 2017.

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