



Landcare Checks In - Monday 7 December 2020 at 2.00 – 3.00 pm

Discussion Topic: Cane Toads

- Who is involved in cane toad management in WA?
- What is the threat to WA biosecurity?
- How can landcare groups help?

View the recording http://www.landcarewa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/zoom_0.mp4



Discussion Notes

Jardine MacDonald, Rangelands NRM

- Rangelands is undertaking Federal Government funded cane toad work in West Kimberley
- Project proposal developed in consultation with DBCA
- Short term project over 18 months, finishing up this financial year
- Helping the DBCA team on the frontline
- Focused on the threat on native quolls and goannas
- Distribution of cane toad sausages – teaching quolls on the front line not to eat cane toads.

Clare Forward, Department of Conservation, Biodiversity and Attractions

- Cane toads crossed the WA border in 2009 and are moving 50 kms a year south.
- Currently around the Prince Regent River area. Estimated that they are 2 years from Derby and 6 years from Broome.
- Map of frontline on Parks and Wildlife Service website.

- Guided by the Cane Toad Strategy for Western Australia – understanding the impacts, mitigating impacts, collaborating with research institutions about new technologies.
- Partners – Rangelands NRM, Uni of Sydney, Aboriginal groups.
- Team of 3 full time employed to work implementing the strategy. Rely heavily on collaboration.
- Work focusing on the impact of cane toads on apex predators in Kimberley landscape – focus on quolls because critically endangered. Also goannas, leopard snakes, freshwater crocodiles.
- Cane toads are so adaptive and move so quickly in difficult landscapes that they are difficult to stop with current tools available, so aim is to mitigate impacts as much as possible.
- Conditioned Taste Aversion – training animals not to eat cane toads using a part of a toad which isn't going to kill them. Working with the Northern quoll – cane toad sausage distributed out of aircraft. Doesn't necessary work for other animals. Also trialling the release of tiny cane toads just in front of the front line and undertaking research into croc baits.
- Indigenous Ranger Groups are assisting documenting biodiversity currently out there to better understand the impacts, surveying of apex predators and collecting cane toads to make cane toad sausages.
- Cane toads move through the environment on average at 50 kms a year. Faster through river systems. Need to hydrate to stay alive. Do move through rugged dry environments but much slower. Collecting data on movement through desert environments.
- Can move by vehicles (hitchhiker toads), potting mix, pallets, flood debris (arriving on islands). Actively talking with transport companies.
- Computer modelling identifies the south west as suitable habitat, however other modelling suggests that not a suitable environment as they need hot and wet conditions.
- Using Toad Scan, a Federal mapping tool for collecting reports of cane toads. Rely heavily on people reporting toads ahead of the frontline.
- Identification is an issue, although a photo is requested 9 out of 10 reports are larger native frogs. Museum Frog Watch App and Toad App can help with ID.
- Scats - Big scats 1.5 inches long found on high places close permanent water, often under artificial lights where they collect bugs.

How can biosecurity and landcare groups assist?

- Promote reporting of cane toads on Toad Scan (part of Feral Scan)
- Assist with keeping on top of hitchhiker toads – possibly engage with travellers before they go up north, especially if visiting sensitive islands
- Alert people to cane toads as a possible future pest issue.

Useful links

Parks and Wildlife Service Website <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/pests-diseases/cane-toads>

Cane Toad Frontline Map <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/plants-animals/animals/canetoads/Cane%20Toad%20Frontline.pdf>

Cane Toad Strategy for Western Australia https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/plants-animals/animals/canetoads/20140470_CaneToadStrategyWA2014-19_FINWEB.pdf

Cane Toad Threat Abatement Plan
<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/2dab3eb9-8b44-45e5-b249-651096ce31f4/files/tap-cane-toads.pdf>

Toad Scan <https://www.feralscan.org.au/toadscan/>

WA Museum Frog Watch App <http://museum.wa.gov.au/explore/frogwatch/frogs/cane-toad>