The Cane (Bufo) Toad in Florida

Dr. Steve A. Johnson—tadpole@ufl.edu
Dept. of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
Presentation Overview

• Cane Toad in FL
  – Background
  – Identification
  – Distribution
  – Impacts
  – Management

• Update
  – UF Visiting Scholar in 2018
  – ACTA Todinator testing
  – 2019 Plans
  – Cane Toad educational videos

• Some resources
Cane Toad Background

Aka: Bufo, Giant, Marine Toad
Native to Central & South America
Introduced numerous places around the world
Major pest in Australia
  Declines of native species—toxicity
Multiple introductions in FL 1930s-50s: biological control, pet escapes
Found in central and southern peninsula
Expanding range in SW Florida
Cane Toad Identification

Toad body plan
Brownish back, often with mottling
Enlarged parotoid glands, triangular
May exceed 3 in., up to 6 in.
Ridge around eyes and above nose
No cranial crests
Native Southern Toad vs. Invasive Cane Toad
Cane Toad Distribution

Swath across state—Tampa to Miami/Keys
Isolated population in Deland
Expanding in SW FL
Gaps may be lack of documentation
Impacts of Cane Toads—
Human Quality of Life & $$$

Potentially lethal to pets, mainly dogs

Cost of treatment $$$

Maybe toxic to koi fish—all life-stages are toxic

Presently, Cane Toads in Florida are more of a socio-economic issue than an ecological problem.
Cane Toad Management

Turn off outside lights, replace with “bug lights”
Remove pet food and water bowls
Remove eggs laid in ornamental ponds
Remove debris piles and hiding places in yards
Do not leave pets unattended, esp. at dusk and night
Capture and *euthanize* Cane Toads—be sure ID is correct!

Hand capture adults ("Toad Busting")
Dip net and trap tadpoles
Contact nuisance wildlife trapper
Cane Toad Update

Dr. Ben Muller, Visiting Scholar at UF—Jul.-Dec. 2018

Tested the Toadinator and various toad vocalizations

Dr. Ben Muller, Post-doctoral Associate at UF—Apr. 2019

Additional testing of toad calls—choruses, freq., pulse rate

Radio telemetry at urban/wildland interface

Identify areas/species at potential risk from toads

Cane (Bufo) Toad video series

Three-part video series available on You Tube
Cane Toad Update

Dr. Ben Muller, Visiting Scholar at UF—Jul.-Dec. 2018

Commercial trap (Toadinator by ACTA) from Australia works in Florida
- Uses visual and acoustic cues to attract toads
- Identified different ‘accents’ between FL and Australia
- Developed call attractive to toad in Naples, FL
Cane Toad Update

Dr. Ben Muller, Post-doctoral Associate at UF
April 2019 – March 2018, funded by FWC
Additional testing of Florida calls
  Single call: vary call frequency and pulse rate
  Multiple calls: to mimic a toad chorus
Radio telemetry at urban/wildland interface
  20 toads tracked via VHF tag
  Determine preferred habitats to target trapping
Identify areas/species at potential risk from toads

In collaboration with The Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Cane Toad Videos—You Tube

The Cane or “Bufo” Toad: An Invasive Impact on Florida Pets

Background, impacts, poising symptoms, treatment, avoiding impacts
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cg1HUuxM7Zc&feature=youtu.be

The Cane or “Bufo” Toad: How to Identify this Invasive Pest

Identification tips, native species comparisons
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMzLes3BaCo&feature=youtu.be

The Cane or “Bufo” Toad: Capture Humane Euthanasia

Identification tips, native species comparisons
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCZlSVbOkWU&feature=youtu.be
Resources

My website
http://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/

“The Cane or Bufo Toad (Rhinella marina) in Florida”
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw432

Southwest Florida CISMA
https://www.floridainvasives.org/Southwest/

EDDMapS for reporting Cane Toads
https://www.eddmaps.org/

Please email me too:
tadpole@ufl.edu