

**FOUNTAINHEAD PET OWNERS:  
Use Caution with Cane Toads! Do Not Disturb Them! Keep Pets Away!**

**CANE TOAD ARRIVAL:** At certain times each year **cane toads** (*Rhinella marina*), known also as **bufo toads**, will appear in our residential communities. Cane toads are most active in the early evening and at night. We know the toads have arrived when we hear their mating calls. The male toads attract females with a low-pitched, consistent warbling sound that is lovely and quite difficult to ignore!



**Cane Toad**  
[<https://estero-fl.gov/> Photo]

**BACKGROUND:** Cane toads appear everywhere from the Keys all the way up to Lake Okeechobee. Nearly a century ago this species was first introduced to Florida by the sugar cane industry to control harmful crop pests. Unfortunately, the toads have increased in numbers and in habitat over decades due in part to pet trade escapes and intentional releases. One of the largest toad species in the world, cane toads are about 6" long at maturity, although a few can grow to an impressive 10"! However, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, cane toads pose a relatively low threat to Florida's ecosystem.



**Cane Toad**  
[Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Photo]

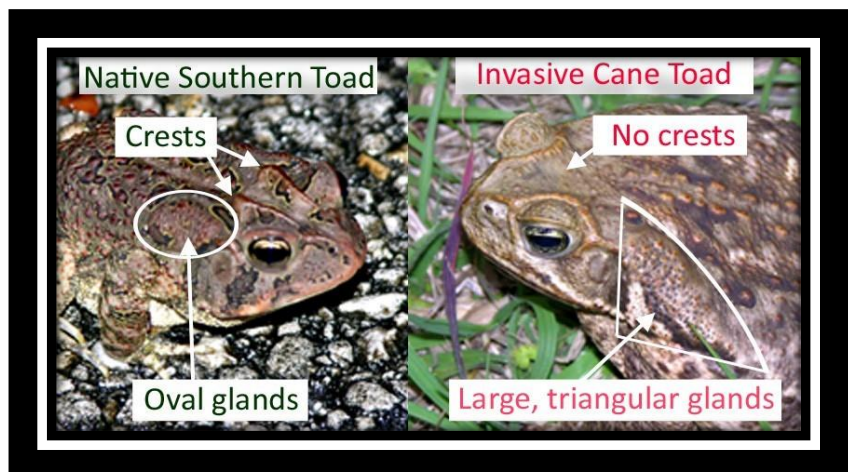
**PET SAFETY CONCERNS:** When cane toads are active **our greatest concern must be the safety of our pets**. Although they are not an aggressive species, cane toads--when threatened--secrete a milky toxin that oozes from their parotoid glands. All toads secrete toxins, but the **sticky toxin from the cane toad can sicken or be fatal to any animal that bites or tries to eat the toad**. This secretion can also irritate the skin and eyes of humans. If you suspect your pet has been exposed to this toxin, use a wet cloth to wipe down the inside of its mouth as much as you can. Rinse its mouth, but do not allow your pet to swallow this water. Contact your vet immediately. When helping your pet, wear gloves and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

**Please use caution when cane toads are around and active!**  
**Walk your pet on a short leash! Carry a flashlight! Leave no pet food outside!**  
**Keep your pet away from cane toads and all other wild creatures!**  
**Remember, the biggest threat cane toads pose is toxicity to our pets.**

It should be remembered that other non-invasive toads are similar in appearance to cane toads.

**Native Southern Toads**  
**Eastern Spadefoot Toads**  
**Oak Toads**

We are privileged to share our Florida environment with many wild creatures!



Photographic Illustration Courtesy of Dr. Steven A. Johnson, Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida

**Looking for more information on cane toads?**

- <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw432>
- <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw394>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cg1HUuxM7Zc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHzQJbfzIEY>
- <https://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/frogs/canetoad.shtml>