



\*Jake Burchell and Kaeden Miller/Frogtown Exotics

## Cane, Giant, or Marine Toad (*Bufo/Rhinella marina*)

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### Successful, Giant Invaders

Cane toads are also known as the marine toad or giant toad. The Cane, or marine toad is a large, bulky terrestrial toad species ranging in color from light to dark brown, yellowish, to orangeish with warty skin, and a pair of very large, distinctive paratoid glands behind the eyes. These very large toads have voracious appetites, and can be extremely prolific breeders, breeding in nearly any temporary to permanent wetlands and bodies of water, and consuming nearly any smaller vertebrates and invertebrates they can capture and swallow. Both of these characteristics, along with the fact that few, if any native predators have evolved to be able to predate upon these toads without death or ill effects have contributed greatly to the cane toad becoming a successful invader in many areas of the world. Cane toads and some related species are a controlled, regulated, or prohibited species in some states. Always check any applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances that may pertain to the specific possession of this species.

### Taxonomy

**Life:** All living, physical, and animate entities

**Domain:** Eukaryota

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum/Sub Phylum:** Chordata/Vertebrata

**Class:** Amphibia

**Order:** Anura

**Suborder:** Neobatrachia

**Family:** Bufonidae

**Genus:** *Rhinella/Bufo*

**Species:** *Rhinella/Bufo marina*\*

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

### Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, cane or marine toads can attain longevity of 10 to 15 years or more in captivity.

### Distribution and Habitat

Cane toads are indigenous to the grasslands, woodlands, agricultural, and residential areas of tropical Central and South America. They have also been widely introduced elsewhere including Australia, Florida (and the Southeastern United States), and the Caribbean, where they have

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oftentimes become a serious ecological invasive as a result of failed attempts to control sugar cane beetles and other destructive insect pests.

### **Conservation Status**

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

### **Experience Level Required**

Intermediate/Moderate.

### **Size**

Adult cane toads can reach 3 ½ to 6 inches in males, and larger females reaching up to 9 inches, or sometimes larger and weighting as much as nearly 6 lbs.

### **Housing and Enclosure**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A single adult cane toad can be housed in a 20 to 40 gallon terrarium, enclosure, or appropriately sized plastic container with a secured lid or top. Cane toads can be cannibalistic, and should therefore not be housed together, particularly with smaller toads. These toads require higher levels of humidity, and substrates that can help establish and maintain the necessary humidity levels that can be used include coconut husk fibers, cypress mulch, live/sphagnum moss, and pesticide/fertilizer free potting soil. Paper towels can also be used for a less attractive, yet utilitarian substrate for these toads. Cane toads will also benefit from daily misting as well. Other furnishings to provide can include live or artificial plants for added aesthetics, and hiding opportunities such as upturned plastic or ceramic plant pots, log or rock hides, or similar hides. Also provide a large, shallow water dish in the enclosure and change at least 2 to 3 times weekly. Spot clean daily and clean the enclosure at minimum every 2 to 4 weeks.

### **Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity**

Cane toads have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). Maintain cane toads at higher humidity at around 70 to 80%, and be sure to mist the enclosure at least once daily. These toads can be maintained at or around 70 to 85 degrees F. Provide a 12 to 14 hour light cycle if overhead lights are used. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

### **Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition**

*Insectivorous to Carnivorous*; Cane, or Marine giant toads can be voracious predators in the wild, and will feed on a variety of insects, arachnids, worms, and other invertebrates. They may also occasionally catch and consume smaller vertebrates as well, and will often even scavenge leftover dog or cat food if left outdoors. These large toads in captivity should be fed 2 to 3 times weekly. They are very sight oriented feeders, and will eat feeder crickets, roaches, earthworms, redworms, bloodworms, or mealworms as well as feeder fish and occasionally pre-killed rodents of appropriate size, although these prey items should be given only sparingly. They can also be given many commercially available pelleted diets, or freeze dried foods, but these must be animated. Do not overfeed cane toads, or obesity and other health issues can become concerns. Feeder insects should be gut loaded by provided them a quality diet containing vitamins and

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minerals. Gutloading and dusting insects with vitamin D3 and calcium supplements 1 to 2 times weekly for added nutritional value will greatly benefit the health and well-being of these toads. Feed them using tongs, forceps, or otherwise in the enclosure or in a dish and not by hand, as they can become acclimated enough to mistake a moving hand or finger as food during feeding. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

### **Handling**

Cane toads are large, hardy amphibians when it comes to handling. Many of the more terrestrial species of toads in the genera *Bufo* and *Rhinella* are more tolerant of drier or varied conditions associated with common handling practices, but over handling even these species should be avoided. Cane toads, and some other related species do possess medically significant bufotoxins that can be excreted as a white, milky substance from their large paratoid glands when the toad is physically attacked or otherwise threatened sufficiently. While largely common sense and no known human deaths have been attributed to these toads, never allow ingestion or facial contact with these toads, or allow contact with very young children, or other pets or animals. A cane toad's bufotoxins can be fatal for many species that try to ingest these toads. Cane toads and related species are also listed as a controlled or prohibited species in some states and localities; know any and all applicable laws, legislation, and ordinances that may pertain to possession of these species.

**\*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\***

### **Contact**

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at [info@madisonherps.org](mailto:info@madisonherps.org)

*Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility.*

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