



Don't Lick that Toad! You, Your Pets and the Marine Toad of Belize



Image from savethefrogs.com

Living in Belize means that we are lucky enough to be surrounded by all sorts of animals in the wild. The Marine Toad, also known as the Cane Toad and the Giant Neotropical Toad, is one of the amazing animals that is native to Belize. The reason they were known as the Cane Toad is because they were very helpful to sugar cane farmers by eating a destructive insect known as the Cane Beetle. Unfortunately, they are not as well appreciated as they once were and people want to kill them because they are considered a nuisance or dangerous.

The Marine Toad may not be beautiful but it's an important part of our ecosystem and also very interesting. So let's find out more about them and how we can keep our pets safe around them too.



What is the Marine Toad? The Marine Toad's scientific name is *Bufo Marinus*. It is a very large toad and the females can grow much bigger than the males. One of them grew to over 5 ½ lbs. in captivity. They have warts all over their body and can live for 10-15 years in the wild. They are amphibians, which means they are born in water but live on the land.



Where do Marine Toads live? Marine Toads prefer to live in built up areas, where people live and love to be near water and soak in the evenings. They can travel far on land though. They are native to the 'Americas', including Belize but were introduced to other parts of the world because people thought they would be helpful to control insects. Because they are so large and they eat so much, they have caused a lot of problems in places where they don't belong and are known as an invasive species.



What do Marine Toads eat? Marine Toad tadpoles will eat plants like algae, but the adults have huge appetites and a big mouths. They eat pretty much anything they can fit into their mouth including plants, insects, small

rodents and birds, reptiles, other amphibians, pet food and even household garbage.



Are Marine Toads dangerous? To protect themselves from predators, Marine Toads produce a toxic substance that can poison pets and even humans if they are licked or eaten. So, it is important to keep your pets away from them and to wash your hands if you touch them. Marine Toads would never poison you or your pet on purpose.



What can I do to keep my pets safe? Keep your yard free of overgrown bush and garbage. Toads love to have a quiet, cool place to hide in the day.

There are many animals that can harm curious pets. Insects, snakes and toads, can all be dangerous to pets. Toads are fun for cats and dogs to play with. So, as a responsible pet owner, you must make sure your pets are not in danger. If you find any Marine Toads in your garden and you are worried about your pets' safety, carefully relocate them to a safe area. Then make sure to wash your hands.

Toads like to be by water. By getting rid of standing water near your home, you will decrease the number of toads and the number of mosquitoes. Keep lights off at night. As many insects are attracted to lights at night, the toads have learned to use this to their advantage to have an evening meal.

If your pet is drooling, disoriented, pawing at its mouth or showing other signs of illness or discomfort after playing with, licking or eating a toad, seek veterinary attention immediately.



Do not kill Marine Toads. By killing a toad you may think you are removing the problem, but for every toad you kill, another one will take its place. Marine Toads are very successful animals and are common in Belize. They are also very important for the environment.



Which animals do eat Marine Toads? Snakes, eels, fish, birds, crocodiles, rats, opossums and even ants have been known to eat Marine Toads



Did you know?

Marine Toad Toxin is used in some countries to help people grow hair. Marine Toads can inflate their body so that they look bigger to predators.