

Sex driven toads raid Australia

By Emily Rosenbaum
Staff Reporter

Sex-crazed toads with insatiable appetites are taking over Australia, leaving destruction and havoc in their wake.

This may sound like the plot of a low-budget horror film, but it's actually the focus of a documentary to be shown at Sheldon Film Theater. While it may be hard to believe, the Bufo Marinus, better known as the Cane Toad, has overrun the land Down Under and is causing serious problems for local farmers.

This strange tale has found its way to the screen in "Cane Toads: An Unnatural History." The documentary will be screened at Sheldon Art Gallery June 16 to 18 as part of the Flatwater Film Festival.

"Flatwater presents itself as a perfect place to show this kind of film," said Jeane Franz, assistant curator of films for Sheldon. "It's funny and educational."

"We couldn't show a long, heavy documentary during the Flatwater Festival, it just wouldn't work," she said.

The Cane Toad first arrived in Australia in 1935 to help save the nation's sugar cane crop from the Greyback beetle. The government imported 101 of the amphibians from Hawaii not realizing that the beetles could simply fly away from the toads. The toads, nevertheless, adjusted happily to their new environment, gobbling up everything within reach. The Greyback beetle survived quite easily.

The eating habits of the Cane Toad are not the only notable feature of this animal. Apparently its mating habits are causing a sensation among Australians. The male toad couples with the female of the species and rides along on her back for several hours.

predators that bite the toads' skin are instantly poisoned.

With all its negative aspects, the Cane Toad has proven useful in some areas and to some people. Many children keep Cane Toads as pets and testify that the toads are quite lov-

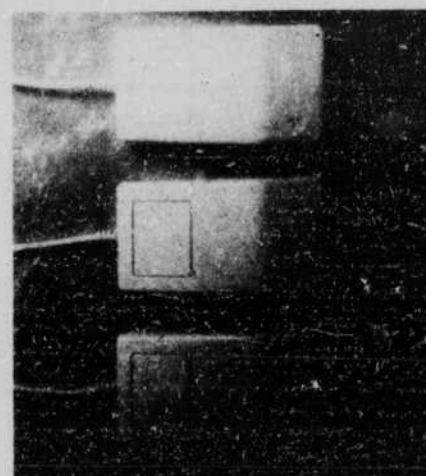


John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

Millions of Cane Toads now inhabit Australia and estimations show that the toads are spreading throughout the country at the speed of almost 17 miles per year. Efforts are underway to control the population, but so far nothing has proven successful. The toads protect themselves with an excellent defense mechanism, as all

able. The venom is exported to Japan and used as an aphrodisiac. Still others use the poison for psychedelic enjoyment.

"Cane Toads: An Unnatural History," the first film written and directed by Australian Mark Lewis, has brought him international recognition.



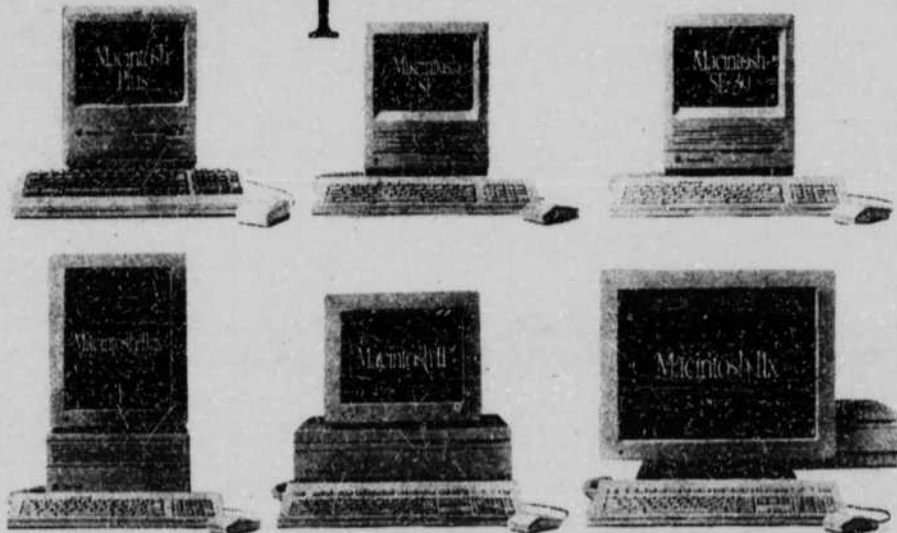
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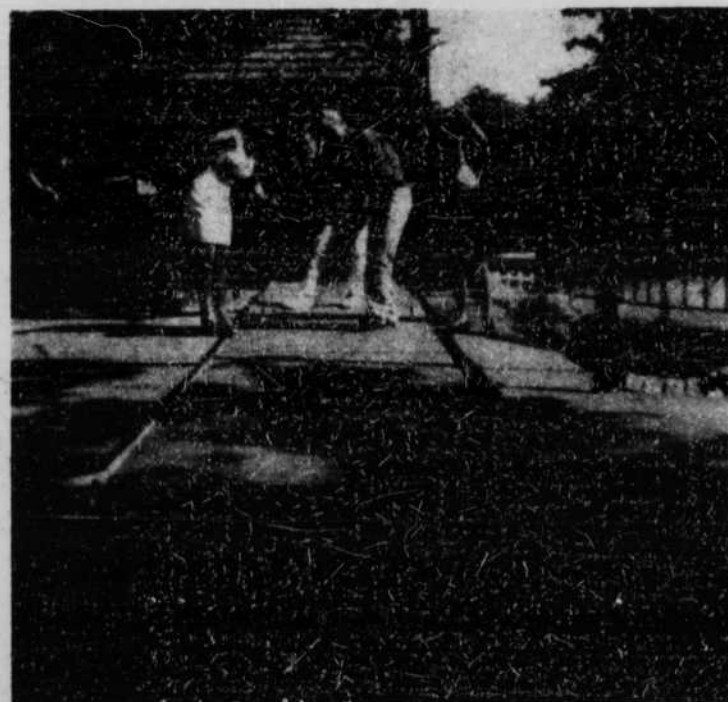


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