

Asian black-spined toad

Duttaphrynus melanostictus

Have you seen this animal?

Report it immediately



Photo credit: Brian Gratwicke

Report sightings

Phone hotline
0400 693 807

MyPestGuide Reporter app
'ABST survey'

Download from the
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PEST



Photo credit: J. Maughn

Why is it important to report Asian black-spined toad sightings?

The Asian black-spined toad is not native to Australia. It could pose a significant threat to Western Australia's environment and biodiversity. It is not known to occur in the wild in Australia but it has the potential to establish in Western Australia.

The Asian black-spined toad is well adapted to life in disturbed environments and urban areas, and it has a generalist diet and high fertility. It could compete with native frogs and toads for food and suitable habitat. As a species from overseas it has the potential to carry parasites and diseases. The Asian black-spined toad has poison glands and its skin secretions can cause severe impacts for native species or pets that prey on the toad.

Asian black-spined toads in Western Australia

The Asian black-spined toad is a prohibited declared pest under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*. The importation, keeping, breeding and trading of this species is illegal and penalties apply.

An increasing number of Asian black-spined toads are being intercepted at Australian airports and sea ports from flights and ships arriving from Asia, where the toad is widespread. They are usually found in shipping containers, machinery and personal effects, such as bags and shoes.

Reporting Asian black-spined toad

Reports of Asian black-spined toad are critical to protect WA from the establishment of the species. If you think you have found an Asian black-spined toad, report it immediately.

Clear photos and an accurate description of where and when the animal was sighted are vital. If possible, attempt to contain the animal alive in a container that the animal can't escape from. Wear disposable gloves when handling the toad and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

All reports are responded to as a priority and may result in trapping, surveillance and the removal of confirmed toads.



Photo credit: J Maughn

How to identify an Asian black-spined toad

Size - Asian black-spined toads are stocky, about nine to 15cm in size with a small head and short hind limbs. Adults look very similar to the cane toad but they do not grow as large.

Colour - Their colour can range from greyish to reddish brown. The most common colour is a pale yellow-brown with dark or reddish-brown streaks and spots.

Distinctive features - Their back is covered with round pimple-like warts, often surrounded by a darker pigment and capped with dark, distinctive spines. Their head has elevated bony ridges, with long dark crests that border the eyelids and run down either side of the eye. They have black tipped, hooked toes.

Behaviour - They are ground-dwelling, poor climbers and are unable to jump very high due to the absence of large toe pads. They are nocturnal so shelter during the day under rocks, leaf-litter, logs and man-made structures such as drains, rubbish piles and houses. At night they often gather beneath lights to catch insects.

Call - Their call sounds like a phone dial tone (creo-o-o; cro-ro-ro-ro), sustained for about 30 seconds and repeated monotonously. It is very different to most native frog calls. It is heard at night and sometimes on overcast days.

Does anything else look similar?

Asian black-spined toads may be confused with WA native frogs found in the South West: motorbike frog or western tree frog, moaning frog, banjo frog, hooting frog, and crawling toadlet.

To compare the identification characteristics that set native frogs apart from Asian black-spined toads see below.

Native frogs

Western Australia has 78 species of native frogs. The photographs below assist in identifying native frogs that can be mistaken for Asian black-spined toads. Note, frogs can vary greatly in colour and patterning.

Motorbike frog or western tree frog



(*Litoria moorei*)
(53–74 mm).
Variable in colour and markings. Usually has a pale dorsal stripe and dark stripe from nose through eye and ear.

Moaning frog



(*Heleioporus eyrei*)
(45–63 mm). Often has prominent eyes. Brown with greyish, white or yellowish marbling on back and sides.

Banjo frog

(*Limnodynastes dorsalis*)
(60–75 mm). Usually has reddish colour to inner thigh, a pale dorsal stripe and a prominent lump on calf.



Hooting frog

(*Heleioporus barycragus*)
(60–86 mm). Chocolate-brown frog with raised yellow spots on sides.



Crawling toadlet

(*Pseudophryne guentheri*)
(35 mm). Mottled browns and greys with a warty looking back, flattened body and a small head.

