

Species of the Month 11/2018 || Asian Common Toad

30 November 2018 || TO NUS Community

NUS Students Against Violation of the Earth (SAVE) and the Office of Environmental Sustainability present “Campus in a Tropical Rainforest”, an initiative that aims to create awareness of the biodiversity that surrounds us in NUS. In each monthly issue, we will be featuring a species that can be spotted or found in NUS to help us get to know them better. So, if you happen to be travelling around campus between classes, remember to stop and look around your surroundings, for you may be surprised to come across some of the other inhabitants of NUS.

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CAMPUS IN A TROPICAL RAINFOREST

SPECIES OF THE MONTH



Photo by: Annabel Lim

ASIAN COMMON TOAD

Species: *Duttaphrynus melanostictus* | Family: Bufonidae

 APPEARANCE	 HABITAT	 DIET	 FUN FACTS
<p>The Asian Common Toad is about 10 cm in length, and has a stout body with short limbs. It has elevated ridges on its head and a back covered in black-pigmented warts. There is a great variety of colouration in this species: Some toads appear brick red, some almost fully black, and some even a ghostly white. The most frequent colour is a pale yellow-brown, as seen in the photo above.</p> <p>Despite the diversity of colours and patterns, there is still a simple way to identify the Asian Common Toad. Every toad possesses a raised, oval-shaped pad behind each of its eyes. These speckled pads are actually the parotoid glands, which secrete a milky substance made out of bufotoxins. Yes, these toads are poisonous! The toxins can cause severe or even fatal reactions in predators, but fortunately only cause mild skin and eye irritation at worst in humans.</p>	<p>The Asian Common Toad is one of the most widespread in Asia, with a native distribution that spans Pakistan through Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Southern China, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore.</p> <p>They occupy a huge range of habitats, from riverbanks and beaches, to human-dense agricultural land and urban areas. Their incredible adaptivity has allowed them to increase their population size over the years.</p> <p>Within NUS, they can be found in the RVRC pond, the Multi-Purpose Fields next to FoS, and behind PGP. They are nocturnal and fond of moisture, so you'll have better luck spotting them at night or after rainfall.</p>	<p>They are primarily insectivorous, but being opportunists, do not limit their diet to solely ants, termites and flies. They can eat grasshoppers, spiders, worms, moths, wasps, millipedes, and many others. As if that's not impressive enough, they have also been observed eating everything from molluscs to cat food.</p> <p>Their voracious appetite can benefit us humans, though – they gobble up troublesome creatures like mosquitoes and crop pests too.</p>	<p>The Asian Common Toad is the second most invasive toad species in the world, right behind its infamous cousin the Cane Toad. After having been introduced to some islands of Indonesia, New Guinea, Madagascar and Australia, they have bred rapidly and expanded their range, outcompeting endemic amphibians, and poisoning local predators which have not evolved resistance and do not know to avoid them.</p> <p>They are in a position to devastate the biodiversity of those regions, especially in Madagascar where numerous native species are already struggling with deforestation.</p>

Initiative by:



Office of Environmental Sustainability



Check out other sightings of NUS biodiversity on the Campus Creatures Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/campuscreatures/>

You can also join the community in spotting the flora and fauna in NUS by sharing your sightings with pictures on the Campus Creatures Facebook page and Instagram the photos with #NUSCITR and #NUSbiodiversity.