

# Threats to the Western Leopard Toad (WLT) & Counteractions

Compiled by The Western Leopard Toad Conservation Committee

Threats	Counteractions
<p><b><u>Habitat Loss:</u></b> Urbanisation and agricultural development have led to the loss and fragmentation of suitable habitats for the WLT.</p> <p>Wetlands, crucial breeding grounds for these toads, are particularly vulnerable to siltation, pollution, drainage and development.</p>	<p>City of Cape Town (CoCT) has various bylaws and building regulations protecting WLT habitats.</p> <p>On-going maintenance to enhance WLT wetlands. (See link on Threats page to read more about CoCT's Liveable Urban Waterways project.)</p>
<p><b><u>Road Mortality</u></b> During the breeding season, WLTs often migrate across roads to reach breeding sites. This migration puts them at risk of being run over by vehicles, especially in urban and suburban areas where roads intersect within their habitat.</p> <p>The WLT's long lifecycle and later sexual maturity than other toads and frogs mean that every death of a mature WLT takes many years to replace.</p>	<p>CoCT and WLT CC members place caution road signs at mortality hotspots. By uploading road deaths onto iNaturalist.org you can directly assist in this data.</p> <p>=&gt; WLT CC organise volunteers to assist during migration. (Click on How can I help? on Threats page.)</p> <p>=&gt; Underpasses by Nature Connect are being trialled in Zeeloevlei, Cape Town. (See link on Threats page. )</p>
<p><b><u>Restrictions on Toad movement:</u></b> Barriers such as roads, solid walls on residential boundaries for security, embankments and canals restrict the free movement of toads.</p>	<p>CoCT has various bylaws and building regulations protecting WLT habitats. Developers are requested to install faunal holes in solid boundary walls within WLT habitat areas. (See photo in Gallery.)</p>
<p><b><u>Mowing during WLT migrations:</u></b> Routes, such as greenbelts, that adults and very young toadlets use between breeding sites and their habitat are nowadays mowed regularly in Cape Town.</p>	<p>CoCT has 'no mow' periods near WLT breeding sites when WLTs move: during adult migration and during the emergence of toadlets.</p>
<p><b><u>Predation and Invasive Animal Species.</u></b> Introduced species, such as fish (barbel) and birds (mallard ducks) prey on WLT eggs and tadpoles. Mallards also foul up the water by changing the water quality. Hadedda Ibises have been seen eating adult toads whole. All of this predation can significantly impact local populations, especially in areas where these introduced species are abundant.</p>	<p>CoCT Invasive Species Dept monitors various species considered to be highly invasive and harmful to local wildlife.</p>

<p>In 2010, Guttural toads were accidentally introduced from KZN into Bishopscourt, where small numbers bred in greenbelts and eventually reached Constantia in 2022. Gutturals compete for breeding sites, food, and perhaps also predate on (eat) tadpoles.</p>	<p>NCC has been contracted to remove Gutturals Toads within Cape Town. <i>Please contact them on 021 702 2884 if you hear or see a Guttural Toad.</i></p>
<p><b>Pollutants in freshwater:</b> Chemical pollutants from urban runoff, agriculture and industrial activities can contaminate water bodies where WLTs breed and live. Pollutants like pesticides, garden herbicides, fertilisers and heavy metals can directly harm the toads or affect their food sources. Their porous skin makes them especially vulnerable to man-made chemicals.</p> <p><b>Swimming pool water</b> often contains algicides and UV-protectors as well as chlorine. When backwashed into stormwater networks, the chemicals flow into our streams and vleis.</p>	<p>CoCT monitors the freshwater in the municipality. (See the link to the Public Inland Water Quality Dashboard on Threats page.)</p> <p><a href="#">A CoCT by-law prohibits discharging into stormwater and can incur a fine.</a> CoCT: Stormwater Management By-law APPROVED BY COUNCIL: 30 AUGUST 2005. C35/08/05. PROMULGATED 23 SEPTEMBER 2005. PG 6300; LA 31420. Pt 3. Prohibited discharges: “No person may, except with the written consent of the Council and subject to any conditions it may impose, discharge, permit to enter or place anything other than stormwater into the stormwater system.”</p> <p>The penalty of a fine is according to most recent tariff schedule. Discharge must be into sewerage drains.</p>
<p><b><u>Drowning in Swimming Pools and canalised rivers:</u></b> Every year many toads are found dead in swimming pools and deep drains.</p>	<p>Install a toad saver on the side of your pool, and/or stones on steps so toads can walk out ... (See Threats for link) Cover deep drains. (See Threats for link to How to make your garden toad-friendly).</p> <p>CoCT has plans to reduce canals in WLT areas and reinstate wetlands. (Click on Threats page to learn about the LUW project.)</p>
<p><b><u>Invasive floating plants:</u></b> Reeds and water hyacinth are a major problem in some wetlands, where they reduce and degrade toad breeding habitat.</p>	<p>CoCT has on-going initiatives to remove such plants. For example, water hyacinth is dredged at least twice a year from the Black River by Observatory and from the Diepriver in Lakeside. (See photo in Gallery)</p>
<p><b><u>Climate Change:</u></b> Shifts in temperature and precipitation patterns due to climate change can disrupt breeding cycles and alter habitats that the WLT rely on. These changes can affect the availability of suitable breeding ponds and the timing of breeding activities.</p>	