



**Water and wind  
build Great  
Sand Dunes**

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# OUTDOORS

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## Herpetologist writes chapters on rogue species

By **JESSICA WELSHANS**  
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In 1988, a film called "Cane Toads: An Unnatural History" addressed issues surrounding Hawaiian sugar-cane toads, which were transplanted in Australia. They were brought in to help curb one problem but instead created another.

The film, a sort of documentary followed conservation activists while they tried to eliminate the problem toads.

That was 22 years ago, and the toads still are an issue on that continent. Some say the film was one of the world's first views at what an invasive species can do.

A new film has been made as a follow-up for director Mark Lewis' 1988 film. It is called "Cane Toads: The Conquest" and it was one of the first 3-D films shown at Sundance Film



**PEELING**

Festival this past year. It has been described to be a wildly strange, funny and informative documentary.

Two publishing companies teamed together and created what they call a companion, or tie-in, book to the new film, titled "Cane Toads and other

Rogue Species." The book deals with invasive species that create problems all over the world.

Chad Peeling, operations manager of Reptiland, Route 15, Allenwood, wrote two chapters of the book, which was released in July.

Peeling's sister, Whitney, introduced him to the book's editor when he was in New York City, setting up a frog exhibit in the American Museum of Natural History.

"We talked for an hour or so (about the book) and he asked me to write a chapter in it," Peeling said.

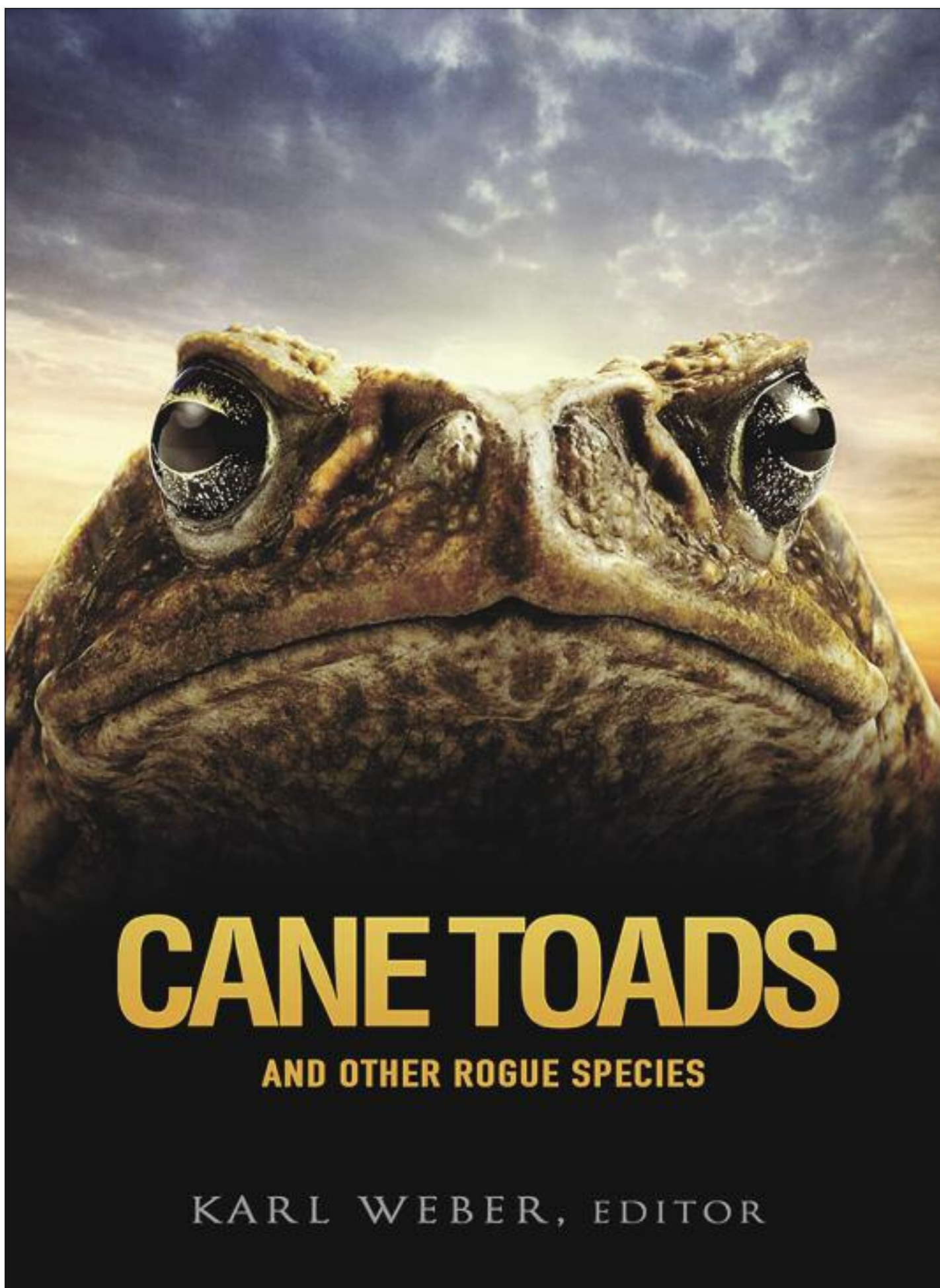
After the first chapter, called "The Fungus Amongus — Toad as a Victim," the editor asked Peeling to write another. The second chapter is named "Can the Ultimate Rogue Species Be Tamed?"

Each of Peeling's essays in the book deal with the problems of invasive or rogue species that sometimes devastate the environment.

He relates his own experiences here in Pennsylvania with invasives to other places around the world that have continuing problems.

### Invasive woes

In the first essay, he tells the reader about a disease that is threatening frogs all over the world — chytridiomycosis.



**Chad Peeling, operations manager at Reptiland in Allenwood, inset above left, penned two chapters in a newly published book, "Cane Toads and Other Rogue Species."**

"It has been found all over the U.S.," Peeling said. "There isn't a current epidemic in Pennsylvania, so if it's here, it's under the radar."

The disease virtually can wipe out a population of frogs in no time, he said.

"We are sort of on the cusp of understanding it, but we know it has been

around for a long time in some areas," he said. "When you take the strains and put them into a new environment, like for instance here, they become pathogenic."

Some amphibian species are affected quickly, while some, such as the cane toads, aren't affected at all.

The essay explains how the disease spread around the world — through humans and their activities. Laboratories, dumping waste water and even pets being released into wild they don't belong can all affect the natural order.

(See HERPETOLOGIST, Page F-5)

## Hummingbirds benefit from feeders in fall

By **STEVE PINKERTON**  
Lycoming Audubon  
Society

Although only the ruby-throated hummingbird nests in the east, birders and ornithologists over the past decade have documented a rapidly growing number of western hummingbird species showing up here, primarily from late summer through early winter. Most are a species called rufous hummingbird, which nest in the Pacific Northwest and southern Alaska.

However, in 2002, a calliope hummingbird — a Rocky Mountain species and the smallest North American bird — was spotted in Philadelphia, a first record for the state.

Also, just last December, an Allen's hummingbird, another western species, appeared in Lancaster County — another Pennsylvania first.

A network of hummingbird researchers across the east are trying to understand this west-to-east migration phenomenon and are trying to determine what migratory routes lead the humming-



**A hummingbird flies around at a home in Benton, Ky., on Sept. 20.**

birds here.

The researchers capture the hummingbird, affix a tiny numbered band to the bird's leg, and release it unharmed. Each year, researchers band several western hummingbirds reported in Pennsylvania, including a female rufous hummingbird in Williamsport that was banded on Oct. 18, 2003, and remained until Jan. 14, 2004.

Because they live in high elevations or northerly habitats, rufous, Allen's and calliope hummingbirds are extremely tolerant of cold weather and possess an ability that our local ruby-throateds lack — to drop into a deep, hibernation-like

state of torpor at night to save energy.

While they do feed on sugar water at hummingbird feeders, much of their food in fall and winter comes from dormant insects and those, such as midges, which are active even in cold conditions. Leaving a feeder up will not prevent a hummingbird from migrating, any more than a seed feeder will prevent finches or grosbeaks from migrating on schedule.

(See HUMMINGBIRDS, Page F-5)



**Reviews of equipment, books and apparel geared toward outdoor enthusiasts**

### SOG PowerAssist Multi-Tool

I believe the multi-tool is one of the more versatile, and maybe valuable, tools for men, women, campers, truck drivers, hikers, bikers, maintenance workers, boaters — or just about anyone in any situation — to have on hand.

When I brought home the SOG PowerAssist Multi-Tool, my husband's face lit up. I handed him the tool and asked him to put it to good use.

He loved it, saying its simple design was great and it wasn't overloaded with a bunch of useless gadgets like some other multi-tools he has used.

One of the feature that appealed to him is that when the tool is opened and an item selected, the tool locks. This prevents it from folding shut on your fingers.

The knife blade is one of many pieces on the outside of the tool, and the power-assist feature allows for one-hand operation of the blades without ever opening the tool.

Other utensils in the 11-tool item include large wire cutters, two blades, three-sided file, screwdriver and C-4 punch.

The pliers were one of the highlights. "They worked well and were sturdy enough that I removed rusted wood screws

(See OUTWARD BOUND, Page F-5)



# Herpetologist writes chapters on rogue species

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**Alarming killer**

He also writes about efforts to combat the disease. Peeling refers to an area in Panama that has one of the most diverse amphibian habitats in the world. The disease arrived there in 2004.

Within six months, 90 percent of the amphibian population were dead.

Similar cases occurred in parts of Australia, Africa, Europe and the United States.

"The real alarming part is how quickly it takes hold and wipes out a population," Peeling said. "It's not like a disease that sits and simmers, and some survive and some die. It's really lethal and fast. It's an equal opportunity killer."

## Diversity at risk

In his second essay, readers learn about the huge toll that invasive species can take on the diversity of an environment.

This issue is happening here, right in our own backyards, Peeling said.

"We are under the influence of invasive species, whether we know it or not," he said. "We live in a sea of them around here."

"But when you start looking deeper at what is happening around you, you see we have real problems and, in this area, it's affecting plants," Peeling added.

"Our forests are really being disseminated. You read stories



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

**A participant in the August 2006 Redneck Carp Tournament takes a swing at Asian carp in the Illinois River. The carp are spooked by the sound of motors and have a nasty habit of leaping from the water like missiles and colliding with boaters with bone-breaking force. The carp were imported from Asia to cleanse fish ponds and sewage lagoons in the Deep South but escaped into the Mississippi and have been working their way north since the 1970s. The prospect of a carp invasion alarms environmentalists and people whose livelihoods depend on a strong fishing and tourism economy. Asian carp, which can reach 4 feet long and weigh up to 100 pounds, can wreak havoc not by attacking native fish but starving them out by gobbling up plankton.**

about the plight of the hemlock and many other trees that are just going to go away. Our wetlands are in trouble — you know this from our duck hunters and others who are out prowling around. They can see the changes. The wetlands are being choked out by weeds." There are reasons why

species exist in certain lands but not in others. For instance, a species of frog native to Pennsylvania exists in harmony with nature here. However, it is creating devastation out west.

"The American bullfrog, which is native here, has been released west of the Rockies

and has devastated other frogs in California," Peeling said.

The bullfrogs literally have eaten one species of frog to the brink of extinction.

"But what can we do about it?" Peeling asks in his second essay. "Sooner or later, there is going to be a legal response to this, federally, where the gov-

## ON THE WEB:

www.canetoadstheconquest.com

ernment tries to address this problem, and the way it is addressed is going affect all of us."

Overzealous legislation could block every exotic aspect of life, he said, affecting even the simplest actions, such as eating bananas in cereal, wearing clothing made with foreign fibers, or picking out a tropical fish from the pet store.

Peeling said he hopes that when the issue of invasives is addressed that it is done with great care. He also hopes that readers of "Cane Toads and other Rogue Species" examine their own world and, recognize the problems with invasives here, and then look to see what is happening around the world.

He hopes the book will bring the amphibian crisis to light and that readers will consider the broader aspects invasive species can create and what it might mean for our future.

"With as many people as we have, we can only hope that we have instilled in those people some kind of pride over their ecological resources," he said. "I think we need to balance our freedoms with our responsibilities here and take a smart look at this problem."

The film premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival in January and is scheduled for release this fall.

# Hummingbirds benefit from feeders in fall

(From Page F-1)

Scott Weidensaul, a well-known author of nature publications who banded the Williamsport hummingbird, suggests that those people with hummingbird feeders leave one or two feeders up until at least Thanksgiving but preferably into December.

If anyone has a visit from a western hummingbird, or a hummingbird of any species after Oct. 15, they are asked to call Wayne Laubscher in Lock Haven at 748-7511 or Scott Weidensaul at 739-2874 or scottweidensaul@verizon.net.

Laubscher also is interested in hearing about sightings of other unusual bird species in Clinton County.

In addition, the Lycoming Audubon Society again will sponsor a Fall and Winter



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE PINKERTON LYCOMING AUDUBON SOCIETY

**A female rufous hummingbird drinks from a feed-**

Hummingbird Contest, with prizes to be awarded to the first three persons who have a western hummingbird come to their property.

The bird must be documented and identified through capture and

banding or at least observed or photographed by a qualified person from the Lycoming Audubon Society. For more information, call Laubscher or Steve Pinkerton at 494-1308 or stevepinkerton@comcast.net.

## Guest COLUMNIST

## PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

### Big game scoring book available in hardcopy

Copies of the 2010 Pennsylvania Big Game Records are available from the state Game Commission online at The Outdoor Shop, www.pgc.state.pa.us, or call 1-888-888-3459, or by mail at: PA Game Commission, Dept. MS, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

The book costs \$5, which includes sales tax, plus \$1.25 shipping and handling. For more information, e-mail Pennsylvania Big Game Records Program Coordinator Bob D'Angelo at the Game Commission Harrisburg headquarters, rdangelo@state.pa.us.

The Big Game Records Scoring Program "record book" has been on the commission's website for several years and will continue to be. But, responding to public requests, it now has been put into a bound booklet form.

Pennsylvania's Big Game Scoring Program is based on the Boone & Crockett Club's scoring program that was copyrighted by that organization in 1950. Established in 1887, by Theodore Roosevelt, the B&C Club was initially organized for the conservation of wildlife and natural resources on a national basis.



## Reviews of equipment, books and apparel geared toward outdoor enthusiasts

(From Page F-1)

with heads that were broken off from pressure-treated decking," my husband said.

The SOG PowerAssist Multi-Tool, which costs \$115, comes with a heavy-duty nylon case, and its belt clip is designed to make it almost impossible to fall off.

The company also has put on a blade-lock system that uses SOG's patent-pending side release.

Inspired by an elite joint services military unit — the Studies and Observation Group — that formed in advance of the Vietnam War to conduct covert operations and sanctioned to develop and purchase their own weapons, SOG was founded in 1986 by Spencer Frazer, a former R&D tool and die maker for the Top Secret Black Projects Division of the aerospace defense industry.

SOG Specialty Knives and Tools are available at Lowe's and Dick's Sporting Goods or online at www.sogknives.com.

— **Reviewers: Jessica and Tim Welshans**

### 'The Adventurers' Handbook'

Exploring the outdoors isn't as popular as it used to be because technology is so prominent in everyone's lives. Luckily, "The Adventurers' Handbook" (Feiwei and Friends, May 2010) is there to help us out — especially if you have a child with an active imagination, or one who may need help striking their own fire of imagination. The how-to-guide lets children

explore the world and learn how to survive the most extraordinary adventures, even ones they have only in their minds.

My stepson, Evan, has a pretty wild imagination and he recently became a huge fan of Indiana Jones, so this book seemed right up his alley.

This is what he said after reading "The Adventurers' Handbook":

"One thing I learned from this book is how to crack a coconut on an island. I even tried this at home, except the coconut I got had no juice inside. But how I learned to do it worked."

I also learned how to survive going over Niagara Falls. Do not try this; you might not survive.

One thing I liked about this book is everything is true and, if done correctly, you can do mostly everything in the book!

I think kids should read this book because some stuff can be useful in certain situations, like removing a leech in Madagascar or trying to hang ten in Hawaii. I also think it's really cool to read. This book has given me many inspirations to travel the world one day and do some of this stuff. I hope that one day I will be able to beat jet lag or use chopsticks in China."

— **Reviewers: Jessica and Evan Welshans**



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