

Argentine Horned Frog Care Sheet



Scientific Name: *Ceratophrys ornata*

Common Name: Argentine Horned Frog (AKA Pacman Frog)

Where are they found? South America from Brazil to Argentina

Natural Habitat: Shallow water. Spend a lot of time buried underground during the fall and winter months of the year when the temperatures are cooler.

Description: Females are much larger than males. Males have nuptial pads on thumbs or inside of hands. (Can't be sexed until they are nearly adults). Males also usually have a darker colored throat than the females. These frogs have big eyes that stick up from body (hence the name "horned" frog). Big, fat, round, colorful frog with a huge mouth which when open, is almost as big as the whole animal. They are available in normal and albino phase.

Vocalization: When threatened, they can make a screaming sound.

Size: Approximately 8 inches in diameter for an adult female.

Color: Yellow or light green with black edged green spots. Yellowish-white belly. Albinos are orange, yellow and white.

Diet in the wild: Anything alive that will fit into their mouth! They eat everything in one bite.

Do they make good pets? Yes. They are low maintenance and interesting pets, however they are not very active.

Housing: Large plastic aquarium or 10-20 gallon aquarium. They cannot jump very high, so they don't need tall housing.

Temperature: They are tropical and need a warm environment. The air temperature should be 80° F.

Humidity: Keep substrate moist, but not wet. Can mist cage daily to add humidity.

Furniture: Water bowl large enough for soaking (change and disinfect weekly or if you notice feces in the water) and hide box. You can add real or artificial plants. Pothos work well. Plants reduce stress and give more hiding areas.

Substrate: Sphagnum or green moss deep enough for them to burrow. Keep moss damp, but not wet.

Diet: Crickets, mealworms, pinkie mice and goldfish when they are small. Larger mice as they get larger. Supplement insects with calcium powder.

How often: Babies eat more often, every other day; adults every 5-7 days.

Breeding in captivity? Yes. But it is difficult. They need to go through a period of estivation in the winter.

Fun facts:

- Always wash your hands after handling any animal.
- Never use Roccal antiseptic cleaner, betadine or hydrogen peroxide. These are commonly used with reptiles, but are toxic to amphibians. After washing hands with soap, make sure you rinse off all the soap because amphibians absorb chemicals through their skin.
- Keeping animals housed together is risky. They are cannibalistic and a larger one will eat a smaller one.
- Horned frogs are voracious eaters. They do have teeth! And they can bite.
- They eat 1/3 of their body size in a meal.

- They close their eyes and press in from the outside to aid in swallowing large meals.
 - They puff up when threatened so their already big size looks more menacing.
 - They are filled with water which helps them to always have a supply to stay hydrated.
 - Do not have long tongues like some frogs to catch insects.
 - They are a “sit and wait” animal. They wait for food to come to them.
 - Problems: Skins that appear cloudy can be a sign of a sick animal, however it could be a sign that the frog is ready to shed his skin. Unhealthy frogs do not have the rapid movement of the sac under the bottom jaw. They often urinate in the moss/water where they sit. It is very important to keep the substrate clean because they will absorb the urine through the skin.
 - When horned frogs go through estivation (and it usually happens in winter, but that varies between individuals), do not disturb the frog. It will stop eating and drinking during this time. Instead of shedding, they will retain the skin. Between the unshed skin and the frog there will be a layer of moisture. In the wild this happens during the dry season. If it is too hot or too cold your frog will go into this state. When the temperature returns to about 80° he will go into the water, shed the skin and go back to his normal feeding routine.
-