

Supplements

Dusting prey items with a calcium supplement should be done twice weekly for growing frogs and weekly for adults. A multivitamin supplement containing vitamin A should be given weekly to both juveniles and adults.

Tips For a Happy, Healthy Animal

- Take a newly purchased horned frog to an exotic animal veterinarian for a wellness examination and fecal exam for intestinal parasites.
- Avoid excessive handling.
- House your frog alone to prevent cannibalism.
- Keep your frog's enclosure clean at all times.
- Maintain proper humidity at all times.
- Feed to maintain proper body weight.

It is Important to Avoid

- Direct sunlight.
- Substrates that your frog can ingest.
- Direct contact with heating sources.
- Cats, dogs, and other predators.
- Overfeeding your frog.
- Dirty substrates and water sources.

Common Disorders

- GI obstruction
- Skin infection
- Obesity
- Trauma from cage mates
- Nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism (Metabolic Bone Disease)
- Intestinal parasites



Additional Reading

The Horned Frog Family and the African Bullfrogs, Richard Bartlett, Patricia Bartlett

Horned Frogs, Ray Hunziker, Raymond E. Hunziker, R. Hunziker

Quick & Easy Horned Frog Care, Allen R. Both

Many commonly seen conditions are the result of malnutrition and/or inadequate housing and are preventable.

Regular visits to your reptile veterinarian should be scheduled to check for parasites and other early signs of disease and to promote a long, satisfying relationship with your Argentine Horned Frog. For help in finding a reptile/amphibian veterinarian in your area, contact the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians (www.ARAV.org) or contact the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (www.ABVP.com/diplomate)

HOW TO KEEP YOUR ARGENTINE HORNED FROG HEALTHY, HAPPY AND SAFE!



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NATURAL HISTORY

Argentine Horned frogs, or *Ceratophrys ornate*, are also called Ornate Horned frogs, Wide Mouth frogs, Pacman frogs, and Bell Horned frogs. These frogs are found throughout Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. These animals are found in the woodlands near shallow water, as they are exceptionally poor swimmers.

This is one of the hardiest species of frog available as a pet. One distinct characteristic of these frogs is their very large mouths. The name "horned frog" came from the large fleshy mounds over their upper eyelids that resemble horns. These Frogs have large mouths, large skulls, and peculiarly small limbs which lends this stocky frog a comical look. Colors range from bright green with reddish or brown markings. Albinos have been created both accidentally and by design as well. Some Argentine Horned frogs are also bred for a brown blotchy pattern over a tan background.

What to Expect From My Animal

Most Horned Frogs are docile enough to be handled, however, handling of your frog should be kept to a minimum. These animals have very sensitive skin and too much handling can damage their skin.

These frogs have a very high predatory instinct and will attack anything that moves, including your hand. They have teeth and a very strong bite, so use caution when handling your frog.

Is My Animal Male or Female?

Females will be larger than males when they are fully grown.

Males develop nuptial pads on the inner digit of their front legs. Males can also have a darker coloration on their throat. They also "sing" during mating season.

Housing and Substrate

These frogs should always be housed alone due to their tendency towards cannibalism. A 15-20 gallon (57-76 liter) aquarium or equivalent sized opaque plastic container such as a Sterilite or Rubbermaid bin can be used. Juveniles under 3 inches (8 cm) can easily be maintained in a 5 gallon aquarium or similar sized plastic container.

Appropriate substrates include soaked cloth towels or soaked paper towels to prevent buildup of organic debris and to prevent accidental ingestion of substrate. For a more natural looking enclosure, top soil, coconut husk, damp peat moss, or sphagnum moss can be used. These must be spot cleaned daily, mixed up daily and changed weekly. If this type of bedding is used, it is advisable to feed in a separate container or offer insects in a dish to avoid accidental ingestion of bedding.

A hide box should be offered to provide a secure place for the frog. Commercial hides are available or these can be created using a plastic flower pot on its side. Live plants can be easily uprooted by these powerful diggers and should be potted separately if placed in the enclosure. Fake foliage such as silk leaves can be used without problems and these items can be easily cleaned and disinfected.

Temperature and Humidity Requirements

Ambient temperatures should be maintained at 77-82° Fahrenheit (25-28° Celsius). At night, the temperature can drop as low as 72° Fahrenheit. (22° Celsius) Heating the enclosure is easily achieved by using under tank heaters mounted on the side of the tank. Basking lights

WHAT YOUR VETERINARIAN LOOKS FOR IN A HEALTHY ARGENTINE HORNED FROG

Vital Statistics:

Body length

Males are generally 4-4.5 inches long (10-12 cm)
Females grow up to 6 inches long (15 cm)

Body weight

Males weigh 150-250g
Females weigh 250-350g
Large females can weigh up to 450g

Age of sexual maturity

18-24 months

Longevity

Horned frogs generally live 7-10 years with proper care

● Nose clear

● Mouth clean and free from discharge

● Well muscled legs

● Eyes clear

● Skin free from discoloration or red spots

● Vent clean



NOTE: Most, if not all, reptiles and amphibians carry Salmonella bacteria in their intestinal tract and intermittently or continuously shed these bacteria in their feces, so they are unsuitable pets for very young children and those with compromised immune systems. Good hygiene must always be practiced around all reptiles and amphibians, including argentine horned frogs. For more information, please see the handout, Salmonella Information for Reptile Owners at <http://arav.org/salmonella-bacteria-reptiles>.



are not recommended. Monitor the temperature by placing a digital thermometer at the level of the substrate.

Humidity is extremely important to the health of these frogs. Humidity in the enclosure should be maintained around 60-80% and should be monitored with a hygrometer. Frequent misting, moistening of the substrate, large water bowls, and foggers can all be used to maintain these needed high levels of humidity. Mosses are an excellent way to control humidity but require spot cleaning daily and replacing weekly. The substrate should be wet but not dripping. Clay balls at the bottom of an enclosure covered by a particulate substrate will also dramatically increase the humidity of an enclosure.

Lighting Requirements

Argentine Horned frogs do not have many lighting requirements. They require a light cycle of 10 hours of light and 14 of darkness. This provides a natural photoperiod for your frog. For better health and behavior, an ultraviolet (UVB) light is recommended.

Diet

Horned frogs have a strong sense of sight and will eat anything that fits in their mouths and attempt to eat items that do not. Captive adults are frequently fed earth worms, crickets, super worms, roaches, and fuzzy mice (feed sparingly once or twice a month). In

the wild, these animals are known to eat other amphibians, rodents, insects, and small reptiles. All horned frogs are prone to obesity and this risk increases for those fed diets including rodents.

Juvenile frogs should be fed every other day generally what they can eat in 10-15 minutes (usually 3-4 good sized prey items). Sub-adults and adults should be fed 2-3 times a week in the same manner.

It is not recommended to feed Horned frogs from your hand as they have a powerful and painful bite. Placing the food in a dish or on a flat rock is a better option. Feeding with forceps is a very popular method as well.

Water

Water bowls should be kept shallow to prevent accidental drowning as these frogs are extremely poor swimmers. The water ideally should only be high enough for the frog to submerge itself. Water should be changed at least daily. Only use clean, dechlorinated water should be used. Never use distilled water as this will cause health problems in frogs!