



## African Dwarf Frogs *Genus Hymenochirus sp.*

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- African dwarf frogs are aquatic species of frogs inhabiting aquatic environments of tropical to sub tropical western and central Africa. Introduced populations also occur in several other areas of the world.
- They are small, unusual, dorso-ventrally flattened frogs ranging in color from grayish, grayish brown, to olive brown with dark spots and mottling. Unlike the African clawed frogs (with which they may be confused with), these frogs have webbed fore and hind limbs, eyes located on the sides of their head rather than atop, and more pointed snouts.
- If provided the proper care, these frogs can attain longevity of up to 5 years or slightly more.

### **Size**

African clawed frogs typically reach up to 1 ½ to 2 ½ “ in length.

### **Housing**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured lid or aquarium hood. These frogs are fully aquatic and never use dry land, but should still be provided with air flow. Dwarf frogs can be housed communally, but require a minimum of a 10-15 gallon aquarium. Use a quality canister filter and conditioner to help maintain cleanliness inside the aquarium but use an outlet. Dwarf frogs do not tolerate distinct water flow as many fish do. Allow aquarium to cycle for at least 2-3 weeks prior to introduction of clawed frogs. Live or artificial plants can be for added security and hiding opportunities, but ensure they are sturdy and cannot easily be shredded or uprooted by the frog(s). Provide ample hiding areas inside and around the tank using backdrops, log or cave hides, driftwood, rocks, or other furnishings. Substrate is not required, but larger pebbles or aquarium gravel that cannot be swallowed, or aquarium sand can be used safely with these dwarf frogs. Also maintain water pH at around 7, and do not allow it to differ substantially above or below this range.

If keeping multiple dwarf frogs within a single tank, provide adequate space and food to prevent them from nipping one another. Do not keep fish with any species of clawed or African dwarf frogs. These frogs also do not require any special lighting, but fluorescent or incandescent lighting can be used. Maintain these frogs within a temperature range of 70-80 degrees F. Do not exceed 80 degrees F.

### **Feeding/Diet**

African dwarf frogs in the wild are primarily scavengers, feeding on a variety of dead or dying small fish, aquatic insects and other invertebrates, and other forms of carrion.

In captivity, these frogs should be fed a varied diet including formulated pellet foods, frozen and/or freeze dried foods such as bloodworms, krill, brine shrimp, and beef, live foods such as roaches, crickets, earthworms, and nightcrawlers, and other pelleted fish foods. Feed young frogs daily, and adults every 2-3 days.

African dwarf frogs require additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation to their diets as well. Ensure that any foods given consist of these elements.

### **Handling**

African dwarf frogs are delicate, soft bodied amphibians. As with all amphibians, their skin is soft and permeable; Wash hands thoroughly and avoid any lotions, creams, or oils before handling any amphibian. These frogs are small and delicate, and cannot tolerate prolonged time

out of water. As such, they should not be handled whenever possible. Instead, use a fine mesh net to move capture and move these frogs to best avoid injuring them.

**\*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\***