



*Erin Bockstor

Bird Poop Treefrog (*Hyla/Microhyla marmorata*)

This Frog's Evolutionary Defenses Don't Stink!

Also commonly called the Amazonian mossy frog, or marbled tree frog, although these common names may also be confused with other species of frogs with these same, or similar names. They also may be called “bird dropping treefrogs” as well. This species earns its common name of “bird poop” or “bird dropping” frogs due to their cryptic coloration and appearance that is said to strongly resemble bird poop deposited on a branch or along bark of the sides of trees or shrubs. The bird poop treefrog is a chubby, relatively small to medium sized tree frog with warty or lumpy skin ranging in color from grayish to pale bluish, grayish, or greenish-gray with one to several large, imperfect “X” shaped or otherwise irregular darker to lighter colored dorsal blotches and/or markings. There are also oftentimes a yellowish to orange-yellow wash on these species' groin region, as well as in between its webbed digits on its hind feet.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Suborder: Neobatrachia

Family: Microhylidae

Genus: *Microhyla* or *Hyla*

Species: *Microhyla/Hyla marmorata**

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, bird poop tree frogs can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

Bird poop treefrogs are indigenous to the tropical and sub-tropical lowland rainforests, woodlands, and moist mountaine forests of tropical and Amazonian rainforests, woodlands, and surrounding regions of South America including Surinam, Brazil, Nicaragua, and Peru.

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

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Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Adult bird poop treefrogs typically reach up to 1 ½ to 2 ½ inches in size.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 10 to 15 gallon tall glass aquarium or terrarium is suitable for a single bird poop tree frog, with an increased 10 gallons per frog accordingly if housed communally. These frogs can be housed communally in accordingly larger housing as well. Provide several horizontal perches for the frog(s) to climb and rest on. Provide additional live or artificial foliage, logs, cork bark, or other cage furnishings for added security and aesthetic appeal. Substrates that retain some moisture and humidity should be used such as paper towels, or sphagnum moss, cypress mulch, or potting soil for more naturalistic enclosures. Substrate should be pesticide free. Provide a large, shallow water dish in the enclosure and change at least 2 to 3 times weekly. Spot clean daily.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Bird poop frogs have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). Maintain these tree frogs at higher humidity at 70 to 80%, and be sure to mist the enclosure at least once daily. Maintain these frogs at ambient temperatures of 70 to 75 degrees F and a gradient warmer/basking temperatures of between 78 and 80 degrees F, but do not allow for temperatures to drop below or rise above this range during the daytime. A misting or other commercially available fogging system can be used to help maintain humidity. Nighttime temperatures can be allowed to drop to around 68 to 72 degrees F, and a 12 to 14 hour light cycle can also be provided. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous; In the wild, bird dropping tree frogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. In captivity, feed bird dropping treefrogs a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. They can also be fed microfauna including springtails, isopods, and fruit fly cultures. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Bird dropping treefrogs also require additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation 1 to 2 times weekly or as otherwise directed for optimal health and development. This is in order to prevent Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD) and other growth and nutritional deficiencies. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed them, as obesity and other health related issues can become an issue. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

As with many amphibians, bird dropping tree frogs are fragile animals that are sensitive to frequent handling. This species will tolerate some level of careful but deliberate handling when

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they are adults, but prolonged handling in general may unnecessarily stress these frogs. As with all amphibians, their skin is soft and permeable; Wash hands thoroughly and avoid any lotions, creams, or oils before handling any amphibian.

****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****

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility.

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