



\*Patrick Charles

## Budgett's Frog (*Lepidobatrachus laevis*)

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### **An Appetite that's not on a Budget**

Budgett's frogs are also sometimes known as the Paraguayan horned frog or "Freddy Krueger" frog due to its aggressive defensive nature and its ability to emit a shriek or scream when disturbed. Budgett' frogs are largely sedentary, aquatic to semi aquatic ambush predators. The Budgett's frog is a large, pudgy bodied frog that ranges in color from pale olive green to pinkish green often with lighter green to yellowish spots or mottling. The limbs are short, mouth is very large, and eyes are set high atop their heads.

### **Taxonomy**

**Life:** All living, physical, and animate entities

**Domain:** Eukaryota

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum/Sub Phylum:** Chordata/Vertebrata

**Class:** Amphibia

**Order:** Anura

**Suborder:** Neobatrachia

**Family:** Ceratophryidae

**Genus:** *Lepidobatrachus*

**Species:** *Lepidobatrachus laevis*\*

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

### **Lifespan and Longevity**

If provided the proper care, Budgett's frogs can attain longevity of up to 15 to 25 years or more.

### **Distribution and Habitat**

These large frogs are indigenous to still to slow moving pools, ponds, streams, and rivers of South America, most notably, Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina.

### **Conservation Status**

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC), but in need of updating.

### **Experience Level Required**

Intermediate/Moderate.

### **Size**

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Budgett's Frogs are large frogs that typically reach 4 to 6 inches as adults.

### **Housing and Enclosure**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured lid or aquarium hood. Budgett's frogs are not overly active frogs and can be kept in a 10 to 20 gallon aquarium with a secured top. Budgett's frogs are largely aquatic, and should be maintained in about 2 to 3 inches of water as juvenile frogs, and anywhere from 6 to 9 inches of water for adults. Water temperatures for these frogs should be maintained at around 77 to 82 degrees F. Adequate filtration should also be provided, but these frogs do not tolerate faster flowing water. Substrate is not required when housing Budgett's frog, but if it is used, aquarium sand or gravel can be used, but additional care should be taken that frogs housed on a substrate are monitored and do not ingest substrate. Additional decorations such as live or artificial plants, furnishings, and hiding opportunities should also be provided, as well as a basking dock, substrate dam, or access to dry land in the enclosure.

### **Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity**

Budgett's 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). When it comes to temperatures, these frogs can be kept within 75 to 85 degrees F. Create a thermal temperature gradient using any of the products or methods above. 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 to Carnivorous***; Budgett's frogs can be voracious predators in the wild, and will feed on a variety of insects, arachnids, worms, and other invertebrates. They may also occasionally catch and consume smaller vertebrates as well including small fish, and other reptiles and amphibians. These frogs in captivity should be fed 2 to 3 times weekly. They are very sight oriented feeders, and will eat feeder crickets, roaches, earthworms, redworms, bloodworms, or mealworms as well as feeder fish and occasionally pre-killed rodents of appropriate size, although these prey items should be given only sparingly. They can also be given many commercially available pelleted diets, or freeze dried foods, but these must be animated. Do not overfeed these frogs, or obesity and other health issues can become concerns. Feeder insects should be gut loaded by provided them a quality diet containing vitamins and minerals. Gutloading and dusting insects with vitamin D3 and calcium supplements 1 to 2 times weekly for added nutritional value will greatly benefit the health and well-being of these frogs. Feed them using tongs, forceps, or otherwise in the enclosure or in a dish and not by hand, as they can become acclimated enough to mistake a moving hand or finger as food during feeding. 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**

Budgett's frogs are soft skinned amphibians with permeable skin and should avoid being handled if it is not necessary. These frogs can be aggressive and inflict a painful bite to a careless finger as well. 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

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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](mailto: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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