Bumblebee Toad *(Melanophryniscus stelzneri)*

Tiny, Black and Yellow Gems

Other common names for these toads can include the redbelly/red bellied toads, bumblebee walking toad, Paraguay walking toad, and black and yellow walking toad. As with dart frogs from the family Dendrobatitdae, bumblebee toads possess bright yellow to orange and black aposematic coloration along with reddish to reddish orange feet, groin regions, and rumps, hence the occasional common name of "red bellied toad". During the non-breeding season, these toads are also reported to seek refuge within and under moist tufts of pampas grass and other moist microclimates that can locate and access in the wild.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities
Domain: Eukaryota
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata
Class: Amphibia
Order: Anura
Suborder: Neobatrachia
Family: Bufonidae
Genus: Melanophryniscus
Species: *Melanophryniscus stelzneri**
**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

Captive longevity of bumblebee toads remains less well studied and understood, but wild caught toads have been recorded to attain longevity of up to 10 or more years under the correct care.

Distribution and Habitat

Although natural history information relating to this species is lacking and not in abundance, the bumblebee toad is reported to be indigenous to the hilly Pampas grasslands with temporary vernal ponds, roadside ditches, rice paddies, and wetlands for breeding and reproduction. They occur in northern South America, including Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay.

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

Legal and Regulatory Status (*Subject to Change)
Consult with your local, municipal, and state ordinances and regulations for any ownership restrictions.

Experience Level Required
Moderate/Intermediate.

Size
Bumblebee toads are a relatively small toad species ranging from ¾ of an inch to 1 inch in males, and up to 1 ½ inches for females, making them a sexually dimorphic species.

Housing and Enclosure

Bumblebee toads do not require large enclosures or amounts of space in order to be kept, and can be housed in groups of communally with other bumblebee toads in an appropriately sized Critter Keeper or a 10 to 15 gallon glass terrarium or other enclosure that is adequately ventilated using a screen top or other ventilation. Several different substrates can work for housing these toads, including naturalistic vivarium substrates such as false bottoms, leaf litter, or sphagnum moss, as well as ground coconut fibers. Furnishings that enable these toads sufficient hiding opportunities should also be provided, and may include items such as flat cork bark, leaf litter, logs, live or artificial foliage and terrarium plants, or other hides. Although these toads are not strong climbers, they will climb some on any furnishings provided in their enclosure. Also provide a large, shallow, sturdy water dish or pan that the toads can readily enter and exit as well.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity
Bumblebee toads do not require any additional UVA/UVB lighting, but it can be provided if maintaining live plants within the enclosure as well as improve the enclosure's visibility and aesthetics and the animal's overall health and wellness. These toads can tolerate a wide range of temperature and humidity ranges, ranging from 40 degrees F to 90 degrees F, but ideally should be kept within 70 to 75 degrees F. They will not tolerate prolonged exposure to too high or low of temperatures, or humidity however. This species best tolerates humidity levels at 50 to 60%. Prolonged, high humidity over 70% should be avoided with this species. Routine misting or spraying, by hand or with a fogger or misting system can help maintain humidity adequately. 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
Microphagous to Insectivorous; In the wild, bumblebee toads are almost entirely microphagous to insectivorous, feeding on tiny, live, moving insects, arthropods, and other invertebrates. In captivity, it is recommended that these toads be provided cultured flightless fruit flies, springtails, isopods, or pinhead crickets. Many of these food items may need supplementation with calcium, vitamin D3, and other multi vitamins, which are commonly available through many commercial and retail outlets. If left as part of a self-sustaining bioactive setup, feeding most bumblebee toads can become very simple and inexpensive, although this still depends to some extent on the setup, size of the enclosure, and number of toads per enclosure, and conditions should still be monitored. Feeding amounts and frequency can also still depends on the age and size of the toads as well. 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 anurans and other amphibians, bumblebee toads are small and fragile, and can be easily injured or damaged due to rough or careless handling. These toads can be handled in moderation, but any efforts in doing so should be made carefully within the cups of one's hands and remembering to avoid wearing any potentially harmful chemicals or lotions which may permeate these amphibian's skin. In general, handling your bumblebee toads is not an essential, and they are perhaps better suited as display animals for an attractive and unique display terrarium or vivarium.
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

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