



\*Captive Bred Specialties

## Horned (Pacman) Frogs *(Ceratophrys ornata)*

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### **Animated Pacmen with an Appetite!**

Argentine horned frogs are also widely known as “pacman” frogs due to their large jaws, rotund heads and bodies, and of course voracious appetites that of course bear resemblance to the popular arcade and video game character. Pacman frogs can easily be identified as large, rotund frogs with large broad heads and jaws. They may vary in color from green, olive, to brownish with warty skin, and with many lighter brown spots and streaks. They also have a pair of prominent “horns” above each eye, which give them their names of horned frogs. These frogs are highly sedentary, ambush predators of nearly any other smaller animals they can capture and ingest, and will often use their powerful but short hind limbs and plump bodies to burrow and conceal themselves in the moist substrate. They also have very strong jaws, and are unique among frogs in that they possess vestigial teeth on their upper jaw as well that can be used to inflict a painful bite if handled carelessly. Despite this, pacman frogs are easily kept and popular pet frogs.

### **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:** *Ceratophrys*

**Species:** *Ceratophrys ornata*\*

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

### **Lifespan and Longevity**

If provided the proper care, horned frogs can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more in captivity.

### **Distribution and Habitat**

These frogs are range widely across South America including Argentina, Surinam, and surrounding areas. Within this range, pacman frogs can be found in tropical to sub-tropical

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grasslands, savannahs, open forest and woodlands, to semi-desert and scrubland.

### **Conservation Status**

IUCN Red List Near Threatened (NT), but needs updating. *C. cornuta* is IUCN Least Concern (LC).

### **Experience Level Required**

Novice/Beginner.

### **Size**

Argentine horned, or Pacman frogs can be fairly large frogs, typically reaching up to 4 to 8 inches as adults.

### **Housing and Enclosure**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured lid or aquarium hood. Pacman frogs are not overly active frogs and can be kept in a 10 to 15 gallon aquarium with a secured top or lid. Use an absorbent, naturalistic substrate that enables the frog to burrow such as cypress mulch, sphagnum moss, or coconut husk fiber substrates, all of which can work well. Dampened paper towel can also be used as a less naturalistic and aesthetically pleasing substrate. Provide a large, but shallow water pan within the enclosure at all times that these frogs can readily enter and exit from, and be sure to clean and change it 2 to 3 times weekly or whenever fouled. Also be sure to mist daily to help maintain humidity and hydration that these frogs need as well.

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

Argentine horned 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). These frogs are also fairly hardy when it comes to their temperatures, and can be kept within 75 to 85 degrees F. Create a thermal temperature gradient within their enclosure, 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 to Carnivorous***; Horned, or Pacman 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. 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**

Pacman 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 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](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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