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Running/Walking Frogs (*Kassina* sp.)

Coming from Africa with Odd Gaits

The running, or walking frogs as they are occasionally known as, are a genus of sedge and brush frogs indigenous to a wide range of sub-Saharan Africa, with specific ranges being dependent upon the species. These secretive, elusive, and primarily nocturnal to crepuscular frogs derive their names from their locomotive habits of “walking” or “crawling” rather than jumping or leaping as with many other frog species. During the daytime, these frogs remain secretive, burrowed in soil or substrate, or seeking refuge in dense foliage and shrubs. There are approximately 16 recognized species in the genus *Kassina*, with the Red Legged Running Frog (*Kassina maculata*) and Senegal Running Frog (*Kassina senegalensis*) being perhaps the most commonly kept and imported species in the pet trade. These are relatively small frogs with somewhat enlarged toe pads, and can range in bodily color from grayish, tan or yellowish, to grayish brown with darker brown to black, irregular dorsal streaks, blotches, or ocelli. The inner edges of the thighs, groin, and limbs also often has a reddish to reddish-orange wash as well.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Suborder: Neobatrachia

Family: Hyperoliidae

Genus: *Kassina*

Species: *Kassina* sp.*

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, running, or walking frogs can attain longevity of at least to 5 to 6 years or potentially more.

Distribution and Habitat

Running frogs as a genus are widely ranging over much of Sub-Saharan Africa, with the more precise range being dependent upon the species. These frogs may occupy a variety of tropical to sub-tropical habitats, including moist lowland forests, grasslands, savannahs, swamplands, agricultural areas, freshwater to brackish water marshes and other wetlands, and ditches.

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Conservation Status

Conservation status dependent upon the species. Some species are IUCN Least Concern (LC). Some are IUCN Near Threatened (NT), Conservation Dependent (CD), Vulnerable (VU), Endangered (EN), to Critically Endangered (CE). Some Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD).

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Running frogs are relatively small frogs that typically range in size from 2 to 3 inches as adults.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 10 to 20 gallon or other similarly sized glass terrarium or other enclosure is recommended for these frogs. Provide additional live or artificial foliage, logs, cork bark, or other cage furnishings for added security and aesthetic appeal. Running frogs enjoy moderate to high humidity. Substrates that retain some moisture and humidity should be used such as paper towels, or sphagnum moss, cypress mulch, other non-toxic mulches, 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

Running frogs can be maintained at ambient and heated temperatures between 75 and 80 degrees F. Do not exceed 85 degrees F. Mist the enclosure at least once daily and maintain at around 80 to 85% humidity. Also, a 12 to 14 hour light cycle can be provided if overhead lights are used. Most of the running/walking 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). 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; Running frogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. In captivity, running frogs should be fed 2 to 3 times weekly. Feed them crickets, roaches, earthworms, mealworms, and/or other feeder insects of appropriate size. Care should be taken not overfeed these frogs, or obesity and other health issues may become an issue. Feeder insects should be gut loaded, or provided a quality diet containing vitamins and minerals. Dust insects with vitamin D3 and calcium supplements 1 to 2 times weekly for added nutritional value and for these frog's optimal health and well-being. 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

Running frogs may tolerate some level of careful but deliberate handling, but are small and delicate amphibians. Any handling overall should be done sparingly. As with all amphibians, their skin is soft and permeable; Wash hands thoroughly and avoid any lotions, creams, or oils before handling any amphibian.

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****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. MAHS cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety, including any and all MAHS logos and disclaimers.

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