



*Patrick Charles

Tomato frogs (*Dyscophus* sp.)

Plump, Red, and Great for Picking!

Tomato frogs consist of about 3 species of primarily terrestrial frogs, including *D. antongilii*, *D. insularis*, and *D. guineti*. Tomato frogs are medium to large pudgy bodied frogs that range in color from reddish, reddish orange, to reddish brown with a paler yellowish underside, and one dark stripe running from behind each eye. When threatened, these frogs will inflate their bodies, making them more difficult to ingest, and may secrete an irritating, potentially toxic secretion from their skin to further make them distasteful to predators. As with most amphibians, they breed and reproduce in the wetter rainy seasons, and are primarily crepuscular. Juvenile and newly formed adult frogs develop their bright reddish-orange coloration as they mature.

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

Subfamily: Dyscophinae

Genus: *Dyscophus*

Species: *Dyscophus* sp.*

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

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

Distribution and Habitat

Tomato frogs are indigenous to the rainforests and woodlands of the island of Madagascar near Africa.

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

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Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Adult tomato frogs usually range in size from 2 ½ to 4 inches.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 10 to 15 gallon long glass aquarium or terrarium is suitable for these frogs. 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 coconut fibers, sphagnum moss, cypress mulch, or potting soil for more naturalistic enclosures. Tomato frogs will burrow into their substrate, which should be provided. Substrate should also be pesticide free. Provide a large, shallow water dish in the enclosure and change at least 2 to 3 times weekly. Spot clean daily. Also mist the enclosure at least once every day to 3 days.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Tomato 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). Tomato frogs can be maintained at ambient temperatures of between 75 and 80 degrees F, but do not allow for temperatures to drop below or rise above this range. A 12 to 14 hour light cycle can also be provided if overhead lighting is used. 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, tomato frogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. They will occasionally catch and consume other smaller vertebrates as well. In captivity, feed tomato frogs a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. They can also be fed microfauna as well; such as springtails, isopods, or fruit fly cultures as well if small enough. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Tomato frogs 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 most amphibians, tomato frogs do not enjoy excessive amounts of handling, and can secrete a sticky, potentially irritating skin secretion when handled roughly. As with all amphibians, their skin is soft and permeable; Wash hands thoroughly and avoid any lotions, creams, or oils before handling any amphibian. Handling overall should be minimized with most amphibians.

****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

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