



Husbandry Handbook

AFRICAN CLAWED FROGS

(Genus: Xenopus)

The Underwater Symphony

Few animals are known for being able to vocalize underwater, but even less common are reptiles or amphibians that do it. When a frog calls from the shores of a pond, it's pushing air back and forth from its vocal sack to its lungs and through its vocal cords. Doing that underwater would be incredibly difficult and muffled. African Clawed Frogs, however, have developed a way to produce sounds underwater without the use of vocal cords. Instead, these frogs use a combination of vocal components including movable rods with discs on the end. When the disks are separated it excites the larynx and causes it and the surrounding tissues to create noise. It's only recently discovered and was a mystery in science until 2019. Before then it was assumed that they snapped small bubbles between the disks to make noise, but they were never able to observe the mechanisms in use. Using this, African Clawed Frogs are able to communicate a large range of information to each other underwater.

Habitat

African Clawed Frogs can be found throughout southern Africa along the African Rift Valley, but are also found invasively in the United States, Chile, France, and many other countries. Due to how quickly they out compete the native species, they have caused large problems for many species, especially those that are threatened or endangered. African Clawed Frogs tend to be found in warm stagnant bodies of water between 60°F - 80°F. Should you end up in a situation where you need to re-home your pet, contact your local Humane Society, Reptile Rescue, or Herpetological Society. You can find more information at <https://www.habitattitude.net/>

Housing

African Clawed Frogs are small at up to 3" and fully aquatic which makes their housing fairly simple. An Aqueon® 10 Gallon Aquarium is enough room for one frog throughout its life. If you decide to keep more than one frog, add 10 gallons to the tank size per frog. Make sure to use a secure and sealed lid, such as a Zilla® Fresh Air Screen Cover for the aquarium to make sure your pet frog doesn't climb out. For the substrate in the aquarium, use medium to large gravel that can't fit in the frog's mouth. Small pieces of sand or gravel can get ingested and cause a blockage resulting in death. Add pieces of décor with holes or crevices to hide in such as Zilla® Bark Bends or Zilla® Herp Hotels. African Clawed Frogs can handle a wide range of water parameters, but you'll want to keep the water as clean as possible. Chemical and physical filtration will be necessary and can easily be achieved with the Zilla® Aquatic Reptile Internal Filter. When adding water to your aquarium, make sure to add Zilla® Water Conditioner before adding your frogs.

Temperature and Lighting

African Clawed Frogs have very few husbandry needs when it comes to lighting. Water filters out any UV lighting and their body temperature is controlled by the water temperature. Luckily, there are plenty of options for general aquarium lighting. For a low profile option, check out the Aqueon® LED OptiBright® Light Fixtures. While they don't need any special lighting, they do have a preferred temperature between 68°F - 78°F. For most homes, that is the temperature of the home year round and no additional heating is needed. If your house gets cooler than that, make sure to get a Zilla® Aquatic Reptile Heater to raise the temperature.

Feeding and Diet

In the wild African Clawed Frogs eat a variety of invertebrates such as insects, worms, and crustaceans, along with small fish and tadpoles. African Clawed Frogs are voracious eaters so it's incredibly important to not over feed them. In captivity they can be fed a diet of frozen blood worms, feeder fish, earthworms, and commercial foods such as Aqueon® Pro Carnivore Formula. Only feed your frog as much as it can eat in 15 minutes. If you're able to, clear out any uneaten food after that time.

Handling

It's not advised to hold African Clawed Frogs unless necessary. While they make incredible pets, they can kick and scratch a lot when pulled out of the water. As amphibians, their skin can transfer chemicals across it causing them to get sick, so make sure to only handle them when necessary and with clean, wet hands.

Always be sure to wash your hands after handling or cleaning the enclosure of any animal.

