herpy

FROGS

Cowan's Mantella

Mantella cowanii

Mantella cowanii is a small, diurnal frog from the highlands of central Madagascar, glossy black with bright red to orange limbs. It grows to about 2-3 cm and is one of the most heat-sensitive in the genus: the enclosure must be kept cool all year round. The species is threatened in the wild, so only captive-bred animals should be considered.

Family: Mantellidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**2-3 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Montane forest and wetland**
Skin toxins in the wild	**Mild**
Skin toxins in captivity	**None** Captive-bred animals. Wild-caught animals can keep their toxins for a long time
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**18-21 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-18 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Sexually mature	**12-18 months**
Eggs per clutch	**50-130**
Hatching	**3-12 days**
Larval period	**56-98 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants and complete diet**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
IUCN	**Endangered (EN)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about keeping *Mantella cowanii*. The species is rare in captivity and is mostly kept without breeding.
TEMPERATURE	The temperature should be 18-21 °C during the day and 16-18 °C at night. This is cooler than for other species in the genus, because the species comes from the highlands at 1,300-2,140 metres above sea level.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should be 60-80 % (borrowed from *M. baroni*), and the substrate damp but not waterlogged. Mist the enclosure daily with decalcified water.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	Place a shallow water dish in the enclosure, and keep it full. The frogs are poor swimmers, so the dish must be so shallow that they can easily get out. The depth is not documented; a couple of centimetres is plenty.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The UVB requirement is not documented for the species, but it is diurnal, so a weak UVB light (Ferguson zone 1) is probably an advantage, provided there is shade and plants so the animals can choose.
FEEDING	In the wild the species feeds on ants, millipedes and mites.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Mantella cowanii* is diurnal and can be seen patrolling and hunting for food for most of the day. The males call with short, single clicks and defend their territory.
NATIVE RANGE	Madagascar.