herpy

FROGS

Blue-legged Mantella

Mantella expectata

Mantella expectata is a small, diurnal frog from the dry rocky gorges of the Isalo massif in south-western Madagascar: lemon-yellow on the back, with sky-blue legs and black flanks. It grows to 2-3 cm, feeds on ants and other small arthropods and is short-lived: in the wild it lives for three years at most. It must be kept drier and slightly warmer than most other species in the genus.

Family: Mantellidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**2-3 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**3-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and rocky terrain**
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	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**20-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-20 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
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**
Eggs per clutch	**25-30**
Hatching	**3-12 days**
Larval period	**42-56 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	Only limited knowledge exists on the care of *Mantella expectata*. The species is only occasionally bred in captivity.
TEMPERATURE	During the day the temperature should be 20-26 °C, and at night 16-20 °C. The frog tolerates more heat than most other species in the genus, and a day at 28 °C does no harm.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	The species comes from a dry area and needs lower humidity than the rainforest species. Keep it at 50-70 % day to day.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	Place a shallow water bowl in the enclosure, and keep it full at all times. Mantella frogs are poor swimmers, so the bowl must be so shallow that they can easily get out, and it must not take up much of the floor.
LIGHTING AND UVB	No UVB requirement is documented for the species. It does, however, live in open, sunlit terrain, so a weak UVB light (Ferguson zone 1) is probably an advantage, provided there is shade and cover so the animals can choose.
FEEDING	The frog is an eager hunter. In the wild it feeds on ants, mites and other small arthropods. In the enclosure it takes prey up to crickets 2-3 weeks old and prefers them to fruit flies.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Mantella expectata* is diurnal and keeps to crevices and shade during the day. The males call and defend small territories. Outside the breeding season the animals are largely peaceful towards each other.
NATIVE RANGE	Madagascar.