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FROGS

Redbelly Toad

Melanophryniscus stelzneri

Melanophryniscus stelzneri is a small toad, 2-4 cm long, from grassy hills in Argentina, black with yellow spots on the upper side and red markings on the belly and under the feet. It is active by day, walks rather than hops and is hardy, as long as the air is not too humid. The animals in the trade are often the close relative *Melanophryniscus klappenbachi*.

Family: Bufonidae Former name: *Phryniscus stelzneri; Atelopus stelzneri; Bufo stelzneri; Dendrophryniscus stelzneri*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**2-4 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Savanna 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	**50 × 25 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**20-25 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-20 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 1-2 cm
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Winter rest	**13-16 °C** 2-3 weeks
Diet	**Insects and small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**12-24 months**
Eggs per clutch	**200-250**
Hatching	**3-5 days** at 23 °C
Larval period	**40-50 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Complete diet**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about the care of *Melanophryniscus stelzneri* itself.
TEMPERATURE	By day the temperature must be 20-25 °C, and at night it may fall to 15-20 °C. Ordinary room temperature is the best starting point.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity is kept at 50-70 %. This is the most important point in the care: *Melanophryniscus stelzneri* does not tolerate persistent humidity above about 70 %.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	There must always be a shallow, wide water bowl in the enclosure with 1-2 cm of water. The toads swim clumsily and can drown in deeper water, so place stones or cork in the bowl, so that they can easily climb out.
LIGHTING AND UVB	Light is only needed for the plants. There is nothing to show that the species needs UVB, but a weak UVB tube for Ferguson zone 1 (UV index under 1) may be an advantage. The light follows an ordinary day-night rhythm.
FEEDING	*Melanophryniscus stelzneri* eats small live feeder animals, in the wild especially ants, mites and termites.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The toads are peaceful towards each other, are not territorial and can be kept in groups of up to 10. The males call, especially when it is humid, for example after heavy misting.
NATIVE RANGE	Argentina.