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FROGS

Red-eyed Green Treefrog

Ranoidea chloris

Ranoidea chloris is a beautiful, vivid green tree frog of 5-7 cm from rainforest and humid forest along Australia's east coast. It has a yellow belly, purple thighs and red eyes and lives high up in the tree canopy, so it is only rarely seen outside the breeding season. Little is known about its care, so the guide is based on related Australian tree frogs.

Family: Pelodryadidae Former name: *Litoria chloris; Chlorohyla chloris* **Mild skin toxins**

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**5-7 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest and temperate woodland and meadow**
Skin toxins	**Mild** Wash your hands after contact and keep your fingers away from your eyes and mouth
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**22-27 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-20 °C**
Humidity	**70-90%**
Water	**Water section** depth 5-10 cm
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Eggs per clutch	**50-500**
Clutches per year	**1-5**
Larval period	**41-90 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants and complete diet**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

About the species

Ranoidea chloris is a large, slender tree frog. Males measure 5-6 cm from snout to vent, and females are slightly larger, reaching 6-7 cm. The back is smooth and bright green, the belly lemon yellow and granular in the skin, and the backs of the thighs are deep purple to blue-black. Arms and legs are largely yellow; green occurs only on the upper side of the forearm and on the lower leg. The eyes are golden in the middle and shade to red or orange towards the edge, and the pupil is horizontal. The eardrum is distinct, and fingers and toes have large adhesive discs. The fingers are webbed to three quarters and the toes almost to the tips.

The tadpoles are greyish brown to dark brown, sometimes with a gold stripe along the side, and grow to 5 cm.

The species was described in 1892 as *Hyla chloris*. It has since been moved between several genera and appears in older literature and in the hobby as *Litoria chloris*; more recent works place it in the genus *Chlorohyla*. *Ranoidea xanthomera* north of Proserpine is so similar that the two were formerly regarded as one species; the difference is that *R. xanthomera* has orange instead of purple on the backs of the thighs.

Skin toxicity: The skin secretion contains peptides (caerins) with antibacterial action. The species is not known to be toxic to humans, but the secretion is biologically active. Wash your hands after contact, and do not touch your eyes and mouth afterwards.

Read more: Rearing tadpoles

Distribution and habitat

Ranoidea chloris is found along Australia's east coast and in the nearby hinterland, from the area around Sydney in New South Wales north to Mackay and Proserpine in mid-northern Queensland. North of Proserpine it is replaced by the closely related *Ranoidea xanthomera*. The range is narrow and follows the coastal zone, where rainforest and humid forest reach right down to the sea.

> **Native range:** Australia.

HABITAT

Ranoidea chloris lives in subtropical rainforest, wet sclerophyll forest (tall eucalypt forest with dense understorey) and forest edges. It is also found in flooded grassland along watercourses, in regrowth forest and on nearby farmland. For most of the year it spends its time high up in the tree canopy, and that is precisely why so little is known about its daily life and what it eats. It must be assumed that, like other tree frogs, it lives on insects.

It is seen mostly in the breeding season, which falls in spring and summer, from October to February, during and after heavy rain. The males call from shallow, still water: temporary ponds, roadside ditches, farm dams, lakes and quiet backwaters by creeks. The call is a series of long, groaning "aaa-rk" sounds ending in a soft trill. The climate is warm and humid with a rainy summer and a cool, drier winter. Precise temperatures and humidity figures for the species are not documented.

Read more: Humidity, misting and ventilation

Care

THE ENCLOSURE

Little is known about the care of *Ranoidea chloris*. The recommendations here are based on the climate of the range and on experience with the related Australian tree frogs *Ranoidea caerulea* and *Ranoidea splendida*. The figures are borrowed from them.

A pair needs a terrarium of at least 45 × 45 × 60 cm. A small group of 3-4 animals needs at least 60 × 45 × 60 cm. Height is more important than floor area, because the species lives in the tree canopy and climbs. The lid must close tightly and have good ventilation, because the frogs are good at escaping.

Furnish the terrarium with sturdy, smooth-leaved and non-toxic plants such as *Philodendron*, *Monstera*, bromeliads and pothos, and lay out branches and cork bark as perches and climbing places. The substrate can be coconut fibre, fine soil or a bare glass floor; avoid gravel and pebbles, which the frog can swallow. Provide a few shaded spots high up. Keep only animals of the same size together, because large frogs eat smaller ones.

TEMPERATURE

By day the temperature should be 22-27 °C and at night 16-20 °C. A cool night is natural, because the range has cooler nights than northern Australia. The figures are an estimate based on the climate of the range.

Warm with a weak heat bulb at one end, or a thermostat-controlled heat mat on the side. The frog must not be able to sit directly on a heat source. Have one thermometer high up and one down by the floor, because heat collects at the top. The temperature must not exceed 30 °C for any length of time, and stagnant, warm air must be avoided. A true cool rest period is not documented.

Read more: Heat and temperature

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

Humidity should be 70-90 %. Mist the terrarium once a day, preferably in the evening when the frog wakes, and let the substrate dry out a little in between. A large, permanent water section holds the moisture, and then misting every 3-4 days is enough.

Use rainwater or tap water that has stood for a couple of days or been treated against chlorine. Good ventilation is just as important as humidity: stagnant, humid air causes skin infections and respiratory problems.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

Ranoidea chloris breeds in shallow water, so a permanent water section or a large, shallow water dish suits the species. The water depth should be 5-10 cm, and it should be easy to climb out, for example by branches or flat stones, because the frog does not swim very well. The water must be changed often, because the frog fouls it, and a small filter can keep a larger water section clean.

Use rainwater or dechlorinated tap water, and never use soap or cleaning products in the terrarium, because amphibians absorb substances through the skin.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species needs light for the plants and a fixed daily rhythm with a 12-14 hour day and dark nights. Fluorescent tubes or LEDs give off less heat than incandescent bulbs. UVB is optional; if used, the source should be weak (Ferguson zone 1) with plenty of shade, and the tube replaced every six months. Since the species lives high in the tree canopy, it should be able to sit in shade under the uppermost leaves.

Read more: Lighting and UVB

FEEDING

The food is live insects: crickets, locusts, flies, moths, dubia roaches and a smaller number of mealworms. The prey must not be longer than the distance between the frog's eyes. Choose mealworms that have just shed, because they are easiest to digest. The feeder insects must be fed well before they are given to the frog, and dusted with calcium and vitamin powder.

Juveniles are fed daily with fruit flies, small crickets and houseflies. Adults are fed two to three times a week with as much as they eat in 10-15 minutes. The frogs can become too fat; a fold of fat over the eardrum is a sign of overfeeding.

Read more: Feeder animals: keeping and breeding Read more: Calcium, vitamins and supplements

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is nocturnal and adapts to captivity without problems. It often becomes calm with regular contact, but tolerates a lot of handling poorly, because the skin is delicate. Handle the frog only when necessary, with wet hands free of soap residue, or use a clean, transparent tub. Wash your hands afterwards.

The frogs can be kept singly, in pairs or in a small group of animals of similar size. The males call loudly at night, especially when humidity rises, so the terrarium does not belong in a bedroom.

Breeding

SEXUAL MATURITY AND SEXING

Females are larger than males: females measure 6-7 cm and males 5-6 cm. Males have a vocal sac and call at night. Age and size at sexual maturity are not documented. Young animals cannot be sexed, so a small group gives the best chance of a pair.

MATING

In the wild the species breeds after heavy rain in spring and summer, from October to February. The breeding mood can be triggered as in *Ranoidea caerulea* and *Ranoidea splendida*: stop misting for 5-6 weeks, lower the temperature to about 22 °C and the light to 10 hours a day, and provide 10 cm of water. Then gradually return to normal conditions, and mist heavily. A female can lay up to five times in a season.

EGGS AND TADPOLES

The males call, and the pair clasp each other in the shallow water. The eggs are laid in clumps or singly, wound into vegetation at the water surface. A laying is up to 500 eggs. The lowest number is not documented; 50 in the box is an estimate.

The tadpoles are greyish brown and grow to 5 cm. They often lie down by the bottom and live on algae and on dry food for aquarium fish. Feed daily, change the water often, and spread them over several tubs if there are many.

METAMORPHOSIS

How long the eggs take to hatch is not documented. At about 27 °C the tadpoles metamorphose after about 41 days; in the wild it takes at least two months.

When the forelegs appear, the tadpole must be able to climb out of the water easily. Lower the water level, and add sloping stones, cork or floating plants, so that it can crawl out and not drown.

REARING THE YOUNG

The newly metamorphosed froglets are small and should be fed daily with fruit flies and tiny crickets, dusted with calcium. Keep them humid in a rearing terrarium with plants and a shallow water dish, and sort them by size, because larger animals eat smaller ones. Growth rate and age at adult size are not documented.

Health and common mistakes

There is no species-specific knowledge of diseases. The problems that recur in the related Australian tree frogs are:

- Overweight: too much food causes fat folds over the eyes and eardrum. Feed sparingly.
- Skin infections: red or bluish discolouration and white, cottony areas on the belly and hind legs are caused by bacteria and fungi and need rapid treatment.
- Respiratory problems from poor ventilation and stagnant, humid air.
- Calcium and vitamin deficiency: cramps or tremors in the legs are a warning sign.
- Chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*) is found in wild Australian frog populations. Never release frogs or tadpoles into the wild.

Seek a vet with knowledge of amphibians, and isolate the animal if it is not thriving.

Read more: Quarantine and hygiene

Always ask someone who knows

This guide is a good place to start, but it cannot replace experience. Animals differ, and much of what matters most is learned from people who have kept the species for years. Talk to a breeder, an experienced keeper or a vet who knows reptiles and amphibians before you get the animal - and again if anything looks wrong.