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POISON DART FROGS

Blessed Poison Frog

Ranitomeya benedicta

Ranitomeya benedicta is a small, diurnal poison frog of 16-20 mm from the lowland forest of northern Peru. The bright red head and the black body with a blue net pattern make it one of the most colourful in the genus. Until 2008 it was regarded as a subspecies of *Ranitomeya fantastica*. In the wild it is vulnerable, but captive-bred animals breed willingly in a well-furnished enclosure.

Family: Dendrobatidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**16-20 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
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	**40 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**21-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 1-2 cm
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles carried to water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Eggs per clutch	**2-6**
Hatching	**10-14 days**
Larval period	**60-114 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants and complete diet**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs and carries the tadpoles**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
IUCN	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
A pair of *R. benedicta* can be kept in an enclosure of 40 × 40 × 40 cm. Two pairs need a horizontal enclosure of about 75 litres, and bigger is always better, because a large enclosure keeps the climate more stable.

TEMPERATURE
Keep the enclosure at 21-26 °C by day and 18-22 °C at night. The species thrives best at about 21-24 °C, and the temperature must not exceed 27 °C for long periods.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING
Humidity should be 70-100 %. A good rhythm is almost 100 % morning and evening and 70-75 % in the middle of the day, so the enclosure dries out a little between mistings.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY
A shallow water dish or a bromeliad with water in the leaf axils is enough.

LIGHTING AND UVB
R. benedicta is diurnal, and the lighting is first and foremost for the plants. Give 12-14 hours of light a day with fluorescent tubes or LED on a timer, all year round, and darkness at night.

FEEDING
The staple food is small live arthropods. Animals of all ages take flightless fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*), and adults can also take the larger *D. hydei*.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
R. benedicta is diurnal and can be a little shy, especially as a juvenile, but in a densely planted enclosure with hiding places adult animals are seen a lot. The male sits openly and calls.

NATIVE RANGE
Peru.