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POISON DART FROGS

## Red-headed Poison Frog

# *Ranitomeya fantastica*

*Ranitomeya fantastica* is a diurnal poison frog of 20-25 mm from northern Peru and one of the largest in the genus. It is unusually variable, and many forms have a bright orange, red or yellow head above a black body with light markings. The frogs are lightning-fast and often shy, the eggs are hard to find, and the species is best suited to a keeper who already has experience with poison frogs.

Family: Dendrobatidae  Former name: *Dendrobates fantasticus*

KEY FACTS

### THE ANIMAL

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|---|---|
| Adult size | **20-25 mm**<br>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**<br>Captive-bred animals. Wild-caught animals can keep their toxins for a long time |
| Difficulty | **Intermediate** |

### CARE

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|---|---|
| Min. enclosure | **40 × 40 × 40 cm**<br>L × W × H for 3 adults |
| Temperature, day | **21-26 °C** |
| Temperature, night | **18-22 °C** |
| Humidity | **70-100%** |
| Water | **Water dish**<br>depth 1-2 cm |
| UVB | **Optional** |
| Diet | **Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)** |
| Kept | **In pairs or in groups** |

### BREEDING

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|---|---|
| Reproduction | **Egg-laying** |
| Development | **Tadpoles carried to water** |
| Egg-laying site | **On the ground** |
| Eggs per clutch | **3-8** |
| Hatching | **10-14 days** |
| Larval period | **60-80 days**<br>from hatching to metamorphosis |
| Larval diet | **Algae/plants and complete diet** |
| Parental care | **Guards the eggs and carries the tadpoles** |

### PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

## Care at a glance

**THE ENCLOSURE**
A pair or trio of *R. fantastica* can be kept in an enclosure of 40 × 40 × 40 cm. Bigger is better. Many forms are arboreal and use the height.

**TEMPERATURE**
Keep the enclosure at 21-26 °C by day and 18-22 °C at night. The temperature must not exceed 27 °C for long periods, and above 29 °C can be fatal. Heat is more dangerous than cold.

**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 is allowed to dry 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. fantastica* is diurnal, and the lighting is first and foremost for the plants. Give 12-14 hours of light a day and darkness at night. It is not documented that the species needs UVB.

**FEEDING**
The staple food is small arthropods. Juveniles and adults take wingless fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*), and large adults can also take the larger *D. hydei*.

**BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING**
*R. fantastica* is diurnal, lightning-fast and often shy, but many animals become bolder when they breed. You see most of them in a densely planted enclosure with hiding places.

**NATIVE RANGE**
Peru.