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FROGS

Chacoan Horned Frog

Ceratophrys cranwelli

Ceratophrys cranwelli is a broad, nocturnal ambush hunter from the Gran Chaco in South America. It lies buried with only its eyes and mouth showing and snaps up anything that fits into its mouth. The species grows to 8-13 cm, must live alone and is robust enough to be a good first frog, provided you can live with the fact that it is not to be picked up and bites hard.

Family: Ceratophryidae Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**8-13 cm** snout-vent length
Weight	**117-202 g**
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Savanna and dry forest**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-24 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Winter rest	**16-20 °C** 6-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**18-24 months**
Eggs per clutch	**900-2,000**
Hatching	**2-4 days** at 24-26 °C
Larval period	**21-41 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Other tadpoles**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs a horizontal enclosure of at least 45 × 45 × 30 cm. The rule of thumb is a floor area of 8-10 times the animal's size, and height matters less, because *Ceratophrys cranwelli* sits on the ground and does not climb.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the enclosure is kept at 24-28 °C and at night at 22-24 °C. Young frogs eat poorly if it is much below 25 °C.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

Humidity is kept at 50-70 %, lower than for most other South American frogs, because the Gran Chaco is a dry region. *C. cranwelli* tolerates humidity falling during the day, as long as the substrate is moist.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

Always provide fresh water in a shallow, heavy bowl that the frog cannot tip over when it digs and that is large enough for the whole animal to lie in.

LIGHTING AND UVB

UVB is not necessary for *Ceratophrys cranwelli*, but the frog does get a little UV in the wild, and a weak UVB tube (Ferguson zone 1) can be an advantage.

FEEDING

Ceratophrys cranwelli eats almost anything that moves and fits into its mouth. In the wild it eats other frogs, among other things.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Ceratophrys cranwelli is a calm, sedentary frog that can lie in the same place for weeks. It is nocturnal and rests with its eyes open.

NATIVE RANGE

Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil.