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FROGS

Budgett's Frog

Lepidobatrachus laevis

Lepidobatrachus laevis is a broad, flat aquatic frog from the Gran Chaco in South America with a mouth that fills almost the whole head. It lies in ambush in shallow water with only the eyes and nostrils above the surface and swallows anything it can overpower. The species reaches 8-15 cm, must live alone and bites hard enough to draw blood, so it is an animal to look at, not to pick up.

Family: Ceratophryidae Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**8-15 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-20 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Savanna, dry forest and wetland**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 30 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-23 °C**
Humidity	**60-70%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 5-23 cm
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**12 months**
Eggs per clutch	**1,400**
Larval period	**14 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

Despite its size the species does not require a large enclosure. An adult manages in an aquarium of about 60 × 30 × 40 cm, and a young frog of 4-6 cm in about 30 × 25 × 25 cm.

TEMPERATURE

By day, water and air are kept at 24-28 °C and at night at 20-23 °C. In cold water the frog eats poorly and falls ill more easily, so a thermostat-controlled aquarium heater is necessary in most living rooms.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

Humidity is kept at 60-70 %, and the large water surface manages that almost by itself. More important is good ventilation, because stagnant, humid air quickly causes bacterial skin infections.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

The water is the frog's home, and water quality is the most important thing in the whole care. Young animals need 5-8 cm of water, adults 15-23 cm, or about three times the frog's body height.

LIGHTING AND UVB

UVB is not necessary for *Lepidobatrachus laevis*. Light is not strictly necessary either, but an ordinary aquarium tube for 12 hours a day gives a clear daily rhythm and keeps the plants alive.

FEEDING

Lepidobatrachus laevis is a predator and eats anything it can overpower. The staple diet is earthworms, crickets, locusts, cockroaches and wax moth larvae, preferably varied with shelled snails.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Lepidobatrachus laevis is a loner that lies still for hours and then strikes. It is most active at night. The males call with a loud, croaking sound from a spot where they can stand with the head just above the water.

NATIVE RANGE

Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.