herpy

FROGS

Madagascan Mantella

Mantella madagascariensis

Mantella madagascariensis is a small, diurnal frog from the rainforests of east-central Madagascar: black with red-orange, black-spotted hind legs, pale green spots at the forelegs and a sky-blue, horseshoe-shaped marking on the throat. It grows to only 21-25 mm, feeds on ants and other small arthropods and needs a cool, humid enclosure. The species is vulnerable in the wild, so preferably choose captive-bred animals.

Family: Mantellidae Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**21-25 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**4-8 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
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**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Sexually mature	**12-18 months**
Eggs per clutch	**12-30**
Hatching	**3-12 days**
Larval period	**56-112 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants and complete diet**
Parental care	**None**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 4 adults
Temperature, day	**20-23 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-18 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In groups**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
A low, flat enclosure of at least 60 × 30 × 30 cm (length × width × height) holds a group of four adults. The frog lives on the ground, so floor area is more important than height.

TEMPERATURE
Mantella madagascariensis thrives cool. During the day it should be 20-23 °C, and at night the temperature may fall to 16-18 °C.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING
Humidity should be high most of the time, 70-100 %, especially when it is warm. Mist the enclosure with dechlorinated water every day, heavily in warm weather and a little less when it is cold.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY
Place a shallow water bowl in the enclosure, and keep it full at all times. The frogs are poor swimmers, so the bowl must be so shallow that they can easily get out, and it must not take up much of the floor.

LIGHTING AND UVB
No UVB requirement is documented for the species, and the frogs manage without. A weak UVB light (Ferguson zone 1) can be used as an optional extra, provided there is shade and plants so the animals can choose.

FEEDING
The frog is an eager hunter and can eat relatively large prey for its size. In the wild it feeds mostly on ants and mites.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
Mantella madagascariensis is diurnal and can be seen patrolling its area and hunting for food for most of the day. The males call from the leaf litter to defend the area and attract females, and they may wrestle with one another.

NATIVE RANGE
Madagascar.