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FROGS

African Bullfrog

Pyxicephalus adspersus

Pyxicephalus adspersus is one of the largest frogs in the world: a heavy, olive-green burrowing frog from southern and eastern Africa, where the males can reach 25 cm and guard their tadpoles. It eats almost anything it can overpower, bites hard and can live 20-30 years in captivity. It suits the keeper who wants a large, striking animal and has respect for the mouth.

Family: Pyxicephalidae Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**9-25 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**15-30 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert, savanna and wetland**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**90 × 45 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water section**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Eggs per clutch	**3,000-4,000**
Hatching	**2-3 days** at 24-27 °C
Larval period	**14-35 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants, complete diet and other tadpoles**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult male needs an enclosure of at least 90 × 45 × 45 cm, while females and juveniles can make do with slightly less. Floor area matters more than height, because the species does not climb.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the enclosure should sit at 24-28 °C with a warm side of 29-32 °C, and at night it may drop to 20-24 °C. The cool side may be slightly above room temperature, so the animal can choose for itself.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

Humidity is kept at 60-80%. It comes mostly from the damp substrate and the water section, and the whole enclosure can be misted with dechlorinated water as needed.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

The frog bathes and swims readily and must always have access to water. A permanent water section or a large, shallow tub where the whole animal can lie with water up to its chin and easily climb out again is the minimum.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is most active at dusk and at night and does not need strong light, but it must have a clear difference between day and night: 12-13 hours of light in summer and about 11 hours in winter.

FEEDING

Pyxicephalus adspersus is a predator and eats almost anything that fits in its mouth: insects, worms, snails and, in the wild, also rodents, reptiles, birds and other frogs.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The animal often lies buried with only its eyes and nostrils above the substrate, waiting for prey, but comes out at night to hunt and swim. It is not an animal for handling: stress is unhealthy, and the bite is hard.

NATIVE RANGE

Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.