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PIJLGIFKIKKERS

Marañón Poison Frog

Excidobates mysteriosus

Excidobates mysteriosus is a small, diurnal poison frog of about 3 cm from the Cordillera del Cóndor in northern Peru. It is black with white dots, breeds in water-filled bromeliads in old montane forest and is threatened in the wild.

Familie: Dendrobatidae Vroegere naam: *Dendrobates mysteriosus*

KERNGEGEVENS

HET DIER

Volwassen grootte	**3 cm** kop-romplengte
Levensduur	**5-10 jaar**
Actief	**Overdag**
Levenswijze	**Boombewonend en bodembewonend**
Leefgebied	**Regenwoud en bergbos**
Huidgif in het wild	**Mild**
Huidgif in gevangenschap	**Geen** Nakweekdieren. Wildvang kan het gif lang behouden
Moeilijkheidsgraad	**Ervaren**

VERZORGING

Min. terrarium	**45 × 45 × 60 cm** L × B × H voor 2 volwassen dieren
Temperatuur overdag	**21-25 °C**
Temperatuur 's nachts	**17-20 °C**
Luchtvochtigheid	**80-100%**
Water	**Geen waterbak**
UVB	**Optioneel**
Voeding	**Kleine ongewervelden (springstaarten, fruitvliegen)**
Gehouden	**In paren**

KWEEK

Voortplanting	**Eierleggend**
Ontwikkeling	**Kikkervisjes worden naar het water gedragen**
Legplaats	**In bladoksels (bijv. bromelia's)**
Geslachtsrijp	**10-12 maanden**
Eieren per legsel	**4-8**
Larvenperiode	**65-75 dagen** van uitkomen tot metamorfose
Voeding van de larven	**Algen/planten en kant-en-klaar voer**
Broedzorg	**Draagt de kikkervisjes**

BESCHERMING EN PAPIEREN

CITES	**Bijlage II**
IUCN	**Bedreigd (EN)**

Over de soort

Excidobates mysteriosus is a medium-sized poison dart frog of 27-34 mm from snout to vent. The back is black to dark brown with distinct white dots, and there is always a dot under the chin. The number and placement of the dots vary from animal to animal. The genus is recognised by pale, oval spots on the underside of the thighs.

The species was described in 1982 by Charles Myers as *Dendrobates mysteriosus* and was found again in the wild in 1989. In 2008 it was moved to the new genus *Excidobates*, which today has three species: *E. mysteriosus*, *Excidobates captivus* and *Excidobates condor*. *E. captivus* is the closest relative; it is far smaller and lives in the lowlands and foothills around the Marañón and Santiago.

The sexes look alike. The female is slightly plumper, but the difference only becomes clearly visible when the male calls.

In the wild the skin has poison, which the frogs presumably take up from their food. Animals in captivity lose the poison, and captive-bred animals are non-toxic. Wash your hands before and after working in the enclosure all the same.

Verspreiding en leefgebied

Excidobates mysteriosus occurs only in Peru. It is known from the slopes of the Cordillera del Cóndor in the upper Marañón valley in the department of Cajamarca, and there are also records from the neighbouring department of Amazonas. The species lives at about 600-1300 m elevation and is most often reported from 900-1100 m. The total range is under 5000 km². Deforestation, fires and illegal collecting for the terrarium trade in the 1990s have made the populations small, and only a few areas today have stable populations.

> **Natuurlijk verspreidingsgebied:** Peru.

LEEFGEBIED

The species lives in undisturbed, humid premontane forest with many terrestrial bromeliads and cacti. The frogs are found especially at the foot and top of rock faces, where they hunt in the plant cover. They are diurnal and eat ants and small flies, among other things.

All breeding sites are water-filled bromeliads, especially *Aechmea nudicaulis*, which holds water in its funnels all year. The bromeliads the species uses grow only on very old trees, and few of these remain today. The female lays the eggs in the bromeliad, and the male carries the tadpoles to bodies of water in other parts of the plant.

The climate at 600-1300 m elevation on the tropical Andean slopes is humid all year, with warm days and distinctly cooler nights.

Verzorging

HET TERRARIUM

Little is known about the care of *Excidobates mysteriosus*. The animals live in humid montane forest close to bromeliads and rocks, with warm days and cool nights. *Excidobates captivus* is the species' closest relative, and *Ranitomeya variabilis* and *Ranitomeya imitator* are bromeliad-breeding species from the same part of Peru with well-known requirements.

A pair needs an enclosure of at least 45 × 45 × 60 cm. Height is important, because the frogs climb and breed in bromeliads. Use a drainage layer of expanded clay pebbles at the bottom, a damp substrate of coconut and soil and a thick layer of dead leaves. Back and side walls of cork or another moisture-retaining material provide climbing surfaces.

Plant densely with bromeliads, which provide both cover and breeding sites, and add film canisters with water set at an angle at different heights. The enclosure needs fine ventilation openings so that the air is exchanged without drying out. Do not keep other species together with *E. mysteriosus*. Juveniles can stay in the same enclosure until they eat on their own and have clearly grown.

TEMPERATUUR

The temperature at the species' localities has not been measured. 21-25 °C by day and 17-20 °C at night suits the climate in the foothills. The frogs tolerate heat poorly, so avoid longer periods above 27 °C. Place the enclosure somewhere cool, use LED lighting instead of heat bulbs, and cool with a fan if necessary. A true winter rest is not known in the species.

LUCHTVOCHTIGHEID EN SPROEIEN

Humidity should be 80-100 %, and the substrate should be damp all year. Mist with reverse-osmosis or rainwater once or twice a day, or use a rain or fogging system. The bromeliads must always have water in their funnels, otherwise the frogs cannot breed. Make sure the air does not stand still, otherwise fungus and disease easily develop.

WATER EN WATERKWALITEIT

A water dish is not necessary, because the frogs get moisture from the misting and from the water-filled bromeliads. The water in bromeliads and film canisters is replaced with fresh reverse-osmosis or rainwater every week. Avoid hard tap water and chemicals, because amphibians absorb substances through the skin. When there are tadpoles, each bromeliad or canister must have clean water and a couple of withered leaves.

VERLICHTING EN UVB

The species is diurnal and lives in shade under dense foliage, so the lighting should first and foremost support plant growth and a day of 12 hours. UVB is not necessary, but optional. A weak UVB light (Ferguson zone 1) can be used over part of the enclosure, as long as there is shade and plants where the frogs can retreat.

Lees meer: Licht en UVB

VOEDING

Excidobates mysteriosus is large enough to take flightless fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*), springtails and, once the animals are adult, *Drosophila hydei*. In the wild the species eats ants and small flies. Feed adults every second day and juveniles daily, with as much as is eaten. Dust the feeder insects with a vitamin and mineral supplement a few times a week. Your own cultures of fruit flies and springtails provide a stable supply.

GEDRAG EN OMGANG

The species is diurnal, and the male calls loudly and often from the plants and rocks in the enclosure. It is best kept as a pair, because several animals together can cause conflict. The frogs should not be handled, because they are sensitive to stress. Use a plastic cup when they need to be moved.

Kweek

GESLACHTSRIJPHEID EN GESLACHTSONDERSCHEID

The animals reach sexual maturity after 10-12 months. The female is slightly plumper than the male, but the difference is only clearly visible when the male calls. The male has an internal vocal sac and calls loudly and often with a rattling sound reminiscent of a rattlesnake. The safest approach is to let a group of juveniles grow up together and then place a calling pair on its own.

PARING

The male calls, and the female willingly follows him to a suitable bromeliad funnel, where the eggs are laid. Several hours can pass from the first call to egg-laying. The season and rest period are not known. More misting and slightly cooler nights, as in the rainy season, can bring the animals into breeding condition.

EIEREN EN KIKKERVISJES

The female lays 4-8 eggs in a water-filled bromeliad funnel or in a film canister that imitates it. When the tadpoles hatch, the male carries them on his back to other bodies of water in the plant. The tadpoles are black. Give each tadpole its own body of water. The food of the tadpoles in the wild is not known; algae, the natural film in the water and a fine prepared food suit.

METAMORFOSE

Hatching time and larval period are not known for the species. The figures are borrowed from *Ranitomeya variabilis*: at 24 °C the eggs hatch after about two weeks, and the larval period is 65-75 days. When the forelimbs appear, the water must be shallow, and the tadpoles must have easy access to land. When the tail has been absorbed, the froglet is ready for life on land.

OPFOK VAN DE JONGEN

The newly metamorphosed froglets are very small and need fine feeder insects such as springtails and the smallest fruit flies every day. Keep them in a damp enclosure with moss and leaves, dust the food with vitamins and calcium, and keep the temperature at 21-24 °C. They can be moved to a larger enclosure when they eat confidently and have clearly grown. Lifespan is not known; the 5-10 years in the box are borrowed from *Ranitomeya variabilis*.

Lees meer: Calcium, vitaminen en supplementen

Gezondheid en veelgemaakte fouten

There are no known diseases specific to the species. The typical errors are the same as in other poison frogs:

- An enclosure that is too warm or too dry. The frogs become lethargic, lose weight and lose colour.
- Dirty water in bromeliads and canisters, which causes fungus and disease in the tadpoles.
- Food without a vitamin and mineral supplement, which causes bone problems and weak juveniles.
- New animals that bring infection with them. Quarantine new frogs separately.

A healthy frog has intact skin and a round, but not bloated, belly. Seek a vet with amphibian expertise if the frog stops eating, swells up or develops sores or red areas on the skin.

Vraag altijd raad aan iemand die er verstand van heeft

Deze gids is een goed beginpunt, maar kan ervaring niet vervangen. Dieren verschillen, en veel van wat er echt toe doet, leer je van mensen die de soort al jaren houden. Praat met een kweker, een ervaren houder of een dierenarts die reptielen en amfibieën kent voordat je het dier haalt - en opnieuw als er iets niet pluis lijkt.

De volledige gids met kaart en updates: herpy.org/en/poison-dart-frogs/excidobates-mysteriosus