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POISON DART FROGS

Harlequin Poison Frog

Oophaga histrionica

Oophaga histrionica is a diurnal poison frog of 3-4 cm from the rainforest of western Colombia, brown to black with large orange spots. The tadpoles live exclusively on infertile eggs that the female lays for them, which makes the species one of the most difficult poison frogs to breed. It is critically endangered, and the delimitation of the species was changed in 2018.

Family: Dendrobatidae Former name: *Dendrobates histrionicus* Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**3-4 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**9 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
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	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 50 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**24-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-21 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 1 cm
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles carried to water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Sexually mature	**12 months**
Eggs per clutch	**4-20**
Hatching	**10 days**
Larval period	**90 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Unfertilised eggs from the female**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs, carries the tadpoles and feeds the tadpoles with eggs**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
IUCN	**Critically Endangered (CR)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The figures here apply to the old, broad complex. A pair needs a rainforest enclosure of at least 50 × 50 × 50 cm, and larger is better.
TEMPERATURE	The daytime temperature should be 24-26 °C, and at night it is lowered by 5-6 degrees, to 18-21 °C. The temperature only needs to vary by 1-2 degrees over the year, and there is no winter rest.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should be 70-80 % in the middle of the day and up to 100 % morning and evening. This is easiest to achieve with a rain system and a fogging system on timers.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	A shallow water dish with about 1 cm of water and a ramp of stones or moss is enough for the adults. Use reverse-osmosis water, rain water or dechlorinated tap water, and change the water often.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The lighting is first and foremost for the bromeliads and the other plants. Provide about 12 hours of light a day with LED or fluorescent tubes that do not give off much heat.
FEEDING	*Oophaga histrionica* eats small arthropods, in the wild especially ants, termites, mites and small beetles.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Oophaga histrionica* is diurnal. The male calls from a low perch, and males defend their territories. Therefore keep only one pair in the enclosure. Do not handle the frogs.
NATIVE RANGE	Colombia.