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POISON DART FROGS

Mimic Poison Frog

Ranitomeya imitator

Ranitomeya imitator is a small, diurnal poison frog of 16-20 mm from northern Peru. Each local form mimics a different toxic frog in the same area, and the species was the first amphibian in which true monogamy was demonstrated: the pair look after the young together, and the female feeds each tadpole with infertile eggs.

Family: Dendrobatidae Former name: *Dendrobates imitator; Ranitomeya intermedia* Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**16-20 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and 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 carried to water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Sexually mature	**5-8 months**
Eggs per clutch	**1-8**
Hatching	**7-16 days**
Larval period	**60-80 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Complete diet and unfertilised eggs from the female**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs, carries the tadpoles and feeds the tadpoles with eggs**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**21-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 1-2 cm
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In pairs**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A pair of *R. imitator* can be kept in an enclosure of 45 × 45 × 45 cm. That size suits 1-3 animals.
TEMPERATURE	Keep the enclosure at 21-26 °C during the day and 18-22 °C at night. The species tolerates 18-27 °C, but does best at around 21-24 °C, and temperatures above 29 °C are dangerous.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should be 70-100 %. Aim for almost 100 % morning and evening and 70-75 % in the middle of the day, so that the enclosure is allowed to dry out a little between sprayings; other figures give 80-100 %.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	A shallow water dish or a bromeliad with water in the leaf axils is enough.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*R. imitator* is diurnal and lives in the shade under the forest canopy. The lighting is first and foremost for the plants. Give LED light for 12-14 hours a day, for example from 8 to 20 hrs.
FEEDING	The staple food is small arthropods: wingless fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*), springtails and small woodlice. Large adults can also take the larger *D. hydei*.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*R. imitator* is bold and diurnal and is often seen out in the open in the enclosure. The male calls from fixed spots, and both sexes defend the pair's territory against conspecifics.
NATIVE RANGE	Peru.