herpy

POISON DART FROGS

Red-backed Poison Frog

Ranitomeya reticulata

Ranitomeya reticulata is one of the smallest poison frogs: only 13-17 mm, with a coppery red to orange back and blue-grey legs with a black net pattern. It lives in the lowland forest of the Amazon in north-eastern Peru and eastern Ecuador. In the terrarium it is bold and lively, but demanding, because the eggs are hard to find and the juveniles are hard to raise.

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

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**13-17 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and 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	**Experienced**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles carried to water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Eggs per clutch	**1-8**
Hatching	**10-14 days**
Larval period	**60-80 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants and complete diet**
Parental care	**Carries the tadpoles**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**30 × 30 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**22-26 °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. reticulata* can be kept in an enclosure of 30 × 30 × 45 cm, which will also hold 2-3 animals. Figures go up to 40 × 40 × 40 cm for a pair or a trio, and a pair has also been kept successfully in 40 × 50 × 40 cm.

TEMPERATURE

Keep the enclosure at 22-26 °C during the day and 18-22 °C at night. The species does best at around 21-24 °C and tolerates 18-27 °C, while temperatures above 29 °C can be fatal.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

Humidity should be 70-100 %. A good rhythm is almost 100 % morning and evening and 70-75 % in the middle of the day, so the enclosure dries out a little between sprayings.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

A shallow water dish or a bromeliad with water in the leaf axils is enough.

LIGHTING AND UVB

R. reticulata is diurnal, and the lighting is first and foremost for the plants. Give 12-14 hours of light a day, e.g. LED from 8 to 20 hrs, and darkness at night. It is not documented that the species needs UVB.

FEEDING

The staple diet is small arthropods. Juveniles and most adults take wingless fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*), and large adults can also take the larger *D. hydei*.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

R. reticulata is lightning fast and bold and is often seen out in the open, as if it has no idea how small it is. Males call from fixed spots with a high, short buzz.

NATIVE RANGE

Peru and Ecuador.