

White's/Dumpy Tree Frog

Litoria caerulea



LIFE SPAN: 16+ years

AVERAGE SIZE: 4-6 inches

CAGE TEMPS: 68-77 degrees

HUMIDITY: 50-70%

* If temp falls below 65° at night, may need supplemental infrared or ceramic heat

WILD HISTORY: Originally native to Australia and New Guinea. They are called green tree frogs in Australia.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: Dumpy tree frogs have a delicate grass green skin with a light cream colored stripe on the side of the body running from the jaw to the flank. They are named for the “dumpy” look they sometimes have when they are overweight and the skin begins to fold.

NORMAL BEHAVIOR & INTERACTION: Nocturnal (most active at night) and arboreal (tree dwelling). These frogs live in groups and will get along fine as long as there is proper space for each frog. A minimum of 4 gallons of tank space per frog is a good measure, but the tank should not be smaller than 10 gallons overall.

Dumpys are calm and gregarious. They do not mind being held by their human friends – even children – however, care must be taken to keep hands clean so they do not transfer toxins to the frog’s skin. Also, humans should wash their hands after handling the frogs to prevent of transmission toxins and zoonotic diseases such as salmonella from frog to human

NOTE: DO NOT house dumpy tree frogs with other species due to the differences in care, temperatures, and the fact that some species can be highly stressed in the presence of other species. Each species may also harbor different parasites/protozoans/bacteria (even a healthy reptile harbors a small amount at all times), which may make each other ill.

FEEDING: Carnivorous - live food.

Dumpy tree frogs eat live protein sources such as: gut-loaded crickets, earthworms and wax worms.

Wild caught insects should never be fed, since they can carry disease. All insects should be gut loaded (fed a nutritious diet about 24-hours before being offered to your frog – see our cricket care sheet).

Be careful to feed the proper size prey for your frog’s size. A good rule of thumb is that a cricket should be never be larger than the distance between the frog's eyes, or the distance from its eyes to its nose.

When feeding larger insects to your pet, try to make sure the insects have recently molted, as an insect with a large, hard exoskeleton is difficult to digest and may cause impactions.

Some reptile/amphibian owners find it easier to feed their pet in a separate enclosure, free of bedding and furniture, this way you can be sure your pet eats all its insects, the prey cannot hide, and the frog will not pick up any bedding when grabbing prey and mistakenly ingest it along with the prey.

SUPPLEMENTS: Dust food with calcium supplement and vitamin supplements. As a rule, a growing juvenile's food (and a pregnant/gravid female's) should be dusted more often than an adult's. Follow your veterinarian's instructions for applying supplements to avoid over-supplementing food.

Our veterinarian recommends dusting insects with a good quality calcium supplement fortified with vitamin D3, 2-3 times a week. (Avoid using a calcium supplement with added phosphorous, unless specifically directed by your veterinarian, since this can promote kidney disease.)

Always consult your veterinarian for specific directions on supplementing your pet's food, since there are many variables that go into determining the best supplementation regimen for each animal.

WATER: All water given to amphibians for bathing, swimming or drinking, as well as water used for misting must be 100% free of chlorine and heavy metals. (Not all home water filtration systems remove 100% of the chlorine and heavy

metals from tap water). We recommend that you use unflavored bottled drinking water or bottled natural spring water; never untreated tap water. If tap water is used, you should treat it with a de-chlorinating treatment. If you do not want to chemically de-chlorinate the water, you can leave an open container of tap water out for at least 24 hours. The chlorine will naturally dissipate.

Do not use distilled water, which can cause severe medical problems, since it lacks minerals that are essential to important body functions.

Change the water in your frog's enclosure every one to two days.

A daily misting or two with chlorine-free water will also be appreciated. However, care should be taken not to allow the enclosure to become damp. Also, do not mist less than two hours before turning the heat lamps off for the day, as the droplets may not have time to dry and may contribute to respiratory disease.

SHEDDING: Frogs do shed their skin. Your frog may crunch his body up into an uncomfortable-looking crouching position. He will puff his body up to try to loosen the skin, then he will convulse as if he is coughing!

As the skin is shed, he will eat it. It has many good nutrients, and your frog knows it!

If the tank humidity is low, your frog may not shed properly.

To create more humidity, the entire tank can be lightly spray misted twice a day, especially during shedding time. Spray once in the morning and once later in the day. Make sure the later spray dries completely before lights go off for the night, as the droplets may not have time to dry and may contribute to respiratory disease.

If your frog still has a hard time getting the shed completely off its toes, tail or head and if the retained shed is severe and cannot be removed easily, see your exotic veterinarian. It is best not to handle the frog yourself to try to remove the shed, as the skin is thin and can tear easily.

Remember to wash your hands thoroughly after handling your frog.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES:

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| *10, 20 High or other taller glass tank. | *Glass cover or aquarium cover w/fluorescent aquarium plant bulb. |
| *Large ceramic crock or plastic container for a water area | *Temperature / humidity gauge – do not stick to side of tank |
| *Several small hide houses | *Coconut fiber substrate, moistened |
| *Live plants – see amphibian safe plants below | *Reptile heat pad |
| *UVB fluorescent bulb & housing | *Dumpy tree frog book |

HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT: Your frog(s) need a warm, humid environment in their enclosure.

A twenty-gallon high glass tank (for two to three frogs) with a metal mesh cover will work fine.

Recent research has shown that low amount of UVB light (2.0 UVB) is necessary for amphibians to ward off issues such as metabolic bone disease and vitamin D toxicity, both caused by the amphibian's inability to process vitamin D without UVB light.

If you lose too much humidity through the metal mesh cover, you can tape plastic sheeting (thick plastic bag, preferably translucent) over part of the mesh. However, be sure NOT to block the UVB light with the plastic, as it will filter out all the important rays before they reach you pet(s).

ENCLOSURE SIZE: A minimum of 4 gallons of tank space per frog (minimum 10 gallons). 10, 20H or other taller tanks are commonly used. Remember that green tree frogs are TREE frogs, they are arboreal, and so a tank that supplies more height than width is always a better choice, such as a 20 High.

HEAT PAD: Reptile heat pads can be adhered directly onto the underside of the glass bottom of the tank. Stick it directly on the glass on one of the very far ends of the tank (opposite the water dish). For safety reasons, make sure to attach the rubber feet (contained in the box) at all four corners of the underside of the tank. This will allow air to circulate underneath the tank and prevent the heat from being trapped under the tank. Leave the heat pad ON 24 hours a day.

Heat pads specifically manufactured for reptiles are safe to leave on 24 hours a day (which should be done for these enclosures). DO NOT use reptile heat rocks. They heat unevenly and have caused severe thermal burns in reptiles. A human-grade heat pad may be used on the low to medium setting. Do be sure to allow for proper ventilation for safety reasons. ***Be sure to purchase a heat pad without automatic shut-off, which are still available.

*** Although your frog will most likely NOT spend much time on the floor of the enclosure, the heat pad will help contribute to the overall humidity and ambient temperature of the enclosure.

HEAT LAMP: A heat lamp is not necessary for your frog enclosure.

UVB LIGHT: Exposure to UVB (ultraviolet B) light is critical in allowing an animal to synthesize vitamin D₃ in their skin and metabolize calcium in their body.

If an animal is not exposed to an adequate level of UVB light, it will gradually develop physical problems from the result of mineral deficiencies such as low blood calcium (hypocalcaemia), soft eggs (females), stunted growth and metabolic bone disorder, which can be fatal if left untreated. In addition, recent studies have linked sub-optimal vitamin D levels with poor immune system function.

All day-active (diurnal) indoor reptiles, amphibians, birds and hermit crabs should be allowed self-selected exposure to UVB lighting for up to 8-12 hours a day. This means they should be able to bask in the light but also get away if desired, much as they might in the wild. Many twilight-active (crepuscular) and night-active (nocturnal) species do get some exposure to the sun and may also benefit from low levels of UVB, which helps regulate their photoperiod and vitamin D levels as well.

Please see our additional “UVB Lighting for Companion Birds and Reptiles” for specific instructions for your particular pet and the UVB bulb that we recommend for him or her.

HIDING PLACES: Dumpy tree frogs appreciate hiding places within their enclosure. Small huts, crevices and planted areas will give your frog a place to hide when it is nervous.

SUBSTRATE FOR LAND AREA: We recommend a loose coconut fiber substrate, available in the reptile department and made by several companies. It is made from the husks of coconuts. This substrate is ideal for your frog, as it will help hold humidity in and is also a perfect substrate for plants. Keep the substrate slightly damp, but not watery. Plant your live plants right into the substrate.

Small patches of reptile moss can also be dispersed along the surface of the substrate.

WATER AREA: For the water area, you can use a heavy ceramic crock or a plastic water dish. Place some smooth rocks into the dish that the frogs can sit on, they don't swim very often, they mostly just like to sit in the water. Push the water container snugly into the substrate. Arrange the substrate so it will not spill into the water container, and push some smooth rocks and moss around the bowl to make it easy to climb into.

BRANCHES & PLANTS: Branches must be included in the enclosure. Again, these are tree frogs! Sand blasted grape vine branches are available in the pet store; these serve as good sturdy climbing branches. Also available are reptile vines and plastic plants. Be careful of bringing in branches from outside, as they can house parasites.

Live plants can help increase the humidity in your toad enclosure. Be sure to include only amphibian safe plants such as pothos, aloe, philodendrons, spider plants, ficus, and dracena. They can be planted directly into the enclosure substrate and lightly water a few times a week.

TEMPERATURES: Cage temperatures should be monitored daily and kept at the temperatures listed at the top of this page. Use your reptile thermometer to check the temperatures in different places in the cage regularly to make sure they continually match the listed proper temperatures.

* If the room temperature falls below 65 degrees at night, a supplemental infrared or ceramic heat fixture may be necessary. (These fixtures do not emit a light spectrum that is visible to the frog, so it will not disturb him at night, but they WILL provide the necessary supplemental heat.)

If your toad does not receive the proper heat at the proper temperatures along with UVB light, he may become sick with issues such as respiratory disease and will probably stop eating, as frogs have a hard time digesting their food without proper heat and light.

DAY/NIGHT LIGHT CYCLES AND HEATING: All amphibians must have distinct day and night periods in their enclosure to maintain their biological rhythms. Dumpy tree frogs need 8-12 hours of daytime and 8-12 hours of nighttime. However, as the daylight hours change seasonally outside, daylight hours inside the tank should reflect the same.

The day period must be light, and the night period must be dark.

A timer should be used to set day/night periods.

HABITAT MAINTENANCE: Daily maintenance should consist of spot cleaning by removing soiled substrate, cleaning water bowl thoroughly and wiping glass clean.

The entire tank should be cleaned thoroughly at least once every couple months with:

- A mild dishwashing liquid (a weak dilution) in warm water,
THEN
- Vinegar & water (1:8)
OR bleach and warm water (1:32)
- Cage “furniture” should also be scrubbed clean with the same dilution.
- RINSE OFF ALL SOAP AND BLEACH THOROUGHLY WITH PLAIN WATER BEFORE RE-INTRODUCING YOUR PET TO ITS ENCLOSURE!!
- NEVER MIX VINEGAR AND BLEACH – IT CREATES A TOXIC SOLUTION
- NOTE: water used for cleaning does not need to be de-chlorinated, as your pet will not be drinking it or bathing in it.

GROOMING & HYGIENE: To reduce the risk of contracting and spreading salmonella poisoning, all handlers should wash their hands after handling any reptile.

SIGNS OF A HEALTHY ANIMAL: smooth, even skin; no traces of mites (small, reddish brown spots around nostrils, near ears and eyes); clear eyes, rounded, full body; strong, even, smooth jaw line; bright eyes.

It is very important to keep a journal for each animal that records feeding, refusal, shedding, unusual behavior, changes in behavior and dates of bulb changes. This will help your veterinarian trouble-shoot any health issues.

SIGNS OF ILLNESS: Irregular skin; small reddish brown spots (mites) around mouth, eye area, ear area; irregular jaw line, ‘dents’ in mouth with or without cottage cheese-like material (mouth rot); cloudy eyes or dull colored body when not in a shed; bloating or thinned body; irregular feeding and defecating habits. Limp, thin body, lethargy, sunken eyes, pinkish patches or spots on belly or sides; obvious wounds from cage mates or prey.

SOME COMMON PROBLEMS INCLUDE:

HEALTH ISSUE:	SYMPTOMS:	TREATMENT:
Mites, parasites	Small reddish-brown spots around eyes, mouth & on body or in substrate. However, pet may show no signs of harboring parasites besides declining health.	See exotic pet veterinarian (fecal parasite evaluation and appropriate medication)
Skin issues – bacterial, fungal, abrasions	Ulcers, patches or wounds visible on skin, lethargy or loss of appetite. Red discoloration of skin; abnormally sloughing skin.	Call exotic pet veterinarian. Optimizing cage set-up, topical and systemic medications
Bloating disease	Bacterial disease - Accumulation of fluid under the skin gives a bloated look to the frog.	See an exotic pet veterinarian immediately for antibiotic therapy.