



CONCISE CARE SHEETS

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YUCATAN CASQUE HEADED FROG

INTRO

This unusual treefrog from Mexico's Yucatan peninsula has a large head in the form of a bony casque, with skin completely attached to the skull. Their unique head structure, and a facial appearance that includes a bony beak-like mouth, has led some to call them "duck-billed frogs." *Tripidon petasatus* (commonly known as the Yucatan or Yucatecan Casque-headed Frog) is a fairly large frog with a snout-vent length of 2-2.25 inches in males, and 2.5-3 inches in females. The body is somewhat slender, but the head is large and distinct. Males are generally an olive-green whereas females are tan or olive-brown, with dark brown or black markings on the back, sides, and forearms, but not the head. In some individuals there are silvery gray flecks or gold speckling on the upper surfaces, especially the head.

GENERAL CARE & FEEDING

This frog is known to seek refuges in tree holes in forests with karst limestone. Its habitat in the Yucatan and adjacent Guatemala has been referred to as "sub-humid" and during dry seasons it will remain in the moist microenvironment of these tree refuges. During breeding season it utilizes small basins and pools formed in limestone depressions to lay its eggs. The males call resembles a duck-like quack.

The diet of these treefrogs presumably consists mostly of a variety of arthropods, and captives will accept a selection of appropriately-sized insects.

HOUSING

This nocturnal frog is fairly new to the hobby and keepers are experimenting with both housing and environment. A spacious vertically-oriented rainforest terrarium that would be used for other treefrogs should suffice. Any efforts to provide cover that simulates the treeholes they would sleep in by day and use as moist refuges during dry conditions should be undertaken. Vertical cork tubes could be used, as could two-inch diameter cut lengths of bamboo that have holes drilled into them using a hole-saw.

Radiant heaters or nocturnal incandescent bulbs could be used to maintain subtropical temperatures of perhaps 70-75°F at night and 75-82°F during the day.

HUMIDITY

Scientific papers describing this frog's habitat note the "subhumid" climate. Moderate to moderately-high humidity should be maintained, and a large shallow pool should be provided in case the frogs desire moister conditions. Adding damp sphagnum moss to their treehole retreats and damper areas in the terrarium would be wise.

HANDLING & ACTIVITY

Like all amphibians, frogs of any kind should not be handled. Their sensitive skins can be damaged by abrasions from your skin, and they absorb toxins such as oils and household chemicals from your skin. Captive dart frogs lose their own poisonous skin toxins, but they still should never be handled. They are fragile terrarium pets that should be observed and not interacted with.

HEALTH

Properly maintained Yucatecan Casque-headed Treefrogs rarely encounter health problems, and any that might occur would be very difficult to treat. It is important that adequate ventilation is maintained so that Borneo Eared frogs do not develop bacterial conditions caused by stagnant conditions. The most important thing with any amphibian is using dechlorinated water that is clean and pure. Reverse osmosis water is popular with many keepers.

QUICK TIPS

- » 70-82°F, with ideal temps in the high 70s
- » Must avoid temps above 85°F!
- » Requires well-planted tropical terrarium with good ventilation