



\*Photo Credit: Houston Zoo

# Mission Golden eyed or Amazon Milk Treefrog

(*Trachycephalus resinifictrix*)

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## The “Milky Way” of the Amphibian World

Also commonly called the “Amazon milk frog”, or blue milk frog, the mission golden eyed treefrog is a chubby, medium to large sized tree frog with warty or lumpy skin ranging in color from grayish to pale bluish or greenish-gray with 2 to 3 wider darker brown bands. These treefrogs have a wide distribution over the Amazonian basin of Northern South America. More specifically, this species ranges from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. Within this range, these arboreal to semi-arboreal frogs occupy the humid rainforests and tropical forests amongst the damp and humid vegetation of the forest’s lower canopy, often near slow moving bodies of water such as ditches, slow rivers, streams and their basins, seasonally flooded wetlands, marshes, swamplands, ponds, and inlets of lakes.

They earn one of their common names of milk frog from their defensive tendencies of secreting a milky fluid or substance when threatened or handled. Mission golden eyed treefrogs are a large, arboreal treefrog species that is popular, and does well in captivity overall if they are provided the correct enclosures, temperatures and humidity, and other aspects of proper care and husbandry.

## Taxonomy

**Life:** All living, physical, and animate entities

**Domain:** Eukaryota

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum/Sub Phylum:** Chordata/Vertebrata

**Class:** Amphibia

**Order:** Anura

**Suborder:** Neobatrachia

**Family:** Hylidae

**Genus:** *Trachycephalus*

**Species:** *Trachycephalus resinifictrix*\*

\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

## Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, mission golden eyed tree frogs can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more.

## **Distribution and Habitat**

The mission golden eyed treefrog, or Amazon milk frog is a species of treefrog which has a wide distribution over the Amazonian basin of Northern South America. More specifically, this species ranges from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. Within this range, these arboreal to semi-arboreal frogs occupy the humid rainforests and tropical forests amongst the damp and humid vegetation of the forest's lower canopy, often near slow moving bodies of water such as ditches, slow rivers, streams and their basins, seasonally flooded wetlands, marshes, swamplands, ponds, and inlets of lakes.

## **Origin/History**

*Trachycephalus resinifictrix* (Goeldi, 1907).

It is unclear as to when Mission golden-eyed treefrogs were first imported, although they would often be imported under the name of "Amazon Milk Frog" for the pet trade, and may have been as far back as at least the 1970's or 1980's. Currently, nearly all milk frogs in the trade are captive-bred animals, as most countries in the Amazon, where these frogs naturally occur, no longer regularly export wild-caught amphibians. The first successful captive breeding of this species was not so long ago; in fact, it was described earliest in the April 1998 edition of REPTILES magazine. Given that captive-bred stock is regularly available, many common problems associated with obtaining wild-caught animals can be avoided (Devin Edmonds 2014).

## **Experience Level Required**

Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

## **Size**

Adult mission golden eyed treefrogs typically reach up to 2 to 5 inches.

## **Housing and Enclosure**

***Enclosure System: Primarily Moist-Arboreal.*** Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 10 to 20 gallon tall aquarium or glass terrarium is suitable for a single or pair of Mission golden eyed tree frogs. They can be housed communally in accordingly larger housing as well. Provide several horizontal perches for the frog to climb and rest on. Provide additional live or artificial foliage, logs, cork bark, or other cage furnishings for added security and aesthetic appeal. Substrates that retain some moisture and humidity should be used such as paper towels, or sphagnum moss, cypress mulch, or potting soil for more naturalistic enclosures. Substrate should be pesticide free. Provide a large, shallow water dish in the enclosure and change at least 2 to 3 times weekly. Spot clean daily.

## **Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity**

Mission golden eyed treefrogs have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). Maintain these frogs at higher humidity at 70 to 80%, and be sure to mist the enclosure at least once daily. Maintain these frogs at ambient temperatures of between 75 and 80 degrees F, but do not allow for temperatures to drop below or rise above this range. A misting or other commercially available fogging system can be used to help maintain humidity. A 12 to 14 hour light cycle can also be provided. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as

well.

### **Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition**

***Insectivorous***; Mission golden eyed, or Amazon milk tree frogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. They will occasionally catch and consume other smaller vertebrates as well. In captivity, feed Amazonian milk treefrogs a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. They can also be fed microfauna as well such as springtails, isopods, or fruit fly cultures as well if small enough. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Mission golden eyed treefrogs also require additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation 1 to 2 times weekly or as otherwise directed for optimal health and development. This is in order to prevent Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD) and other growth and nutritional deficiencies. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed them, as obesity and other health related issues can become an issue. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

### **Handling**

All amphibians breathe and respire through their skin, as well as absorb water through this means. It is therefore important to avoid wearing any chemicals or lotions on your hands, which can be potentially harmful or even fatal to amphibians. It is also important to wash or rinse hands thoroughly, and ensure they are adequately moistened before and after handling any amphibians in order to prevent them from drying out. This species will tolerate some level of careful but deliberate handling when they are larger adults, but prolonged handling in general may unnecessarily stress these frogs.

**\*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\***

### **Contact**

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact:

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*Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility. We cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety.*

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