



*UF University of Florida-Wildlife

Cuban Tree Frog (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*)

Large and Variable Colonizers

Cuban treefrogs are large, arboreal treefrogs with large, distinctive toe pads and somewhat warty skin. They can vary considerably in color from yellowish, to grayish, tan, whitish, light brown, to pale greenish. They also have some degree of color changing abilities, depending on their temperatures and environment. Yellow blotches are also present around their groin regions, which startle and confuse potential predators once the frog moves or jumps. These large frogs have a wide range throughout the world, from the Caribbean including Cuba, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and surrounding territories. It has also been accidentally introduced as cargo, plant, and shipment hitchhikers, or through accidental or intentional pet releases and escapes widely in other areas as well including Florida, the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Lesser Antilles.

Cuban treefrogs are the largest (non-native) species of treefrog in North America, and they have highly variable diet, and tolerance for living near humans in residential areas. During warm, humid, wet nights, these large treefrogs can also often be seen hunting for insects around window and street lights as well. These factors make them a successful frog, and oftentimes an invasive in some areas of the United States and elsewhere in the world. In captivity and the terraria, Cuban treefrogs can be a hardy and easily maintained species provided their care and husbandry requirements are met.

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: *Osteopilus*

Species: *Osteopilus septentrionalis**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, Cuban treefrogs can attain longevity of 10 to 15 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

Cuban treefrogs are native to the Caribbean including Cuba, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and surrounding territories. It has also been accidentally introduced as cargo, plant, and shipment hitchhikers, or through accidental or intentional pet releases and escapes widely in other areas as well including Florida, the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Lesser Antilles. Cuban treefrogs can occupy a variety of habitats including residential areas, lowland swamplands and forests, and agricultural areas.

Origin/History

Osteopilus septentrionalis (A.M.C. Duméril & Bibron, 1841).

The Cuban Treefrog (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*) is native to Cuba, the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas. These large treefrogs were accidentally brought to Florida in the 1920s, probably as hitchhikers in cargo containers on ships. By the mid-1950s, they had spread through the Florida Keys and had also been found on the mainland and by the mid-1970s they had spread throughout most of southern Florida.

Cuban treefrogs have since spread throughout the peninsula of Florida, likely largely due to their tendency to hitchhike in ornamental plants and on vehicles, although this species is also found in the pet trade and pet releases or escapes may have also facilitated their spread (Texas Invasive Species Institute).

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Adult Cuban treefrogs are large treefrogs typically reaching up to 3 to 5 ½ inches.

Housing and Enclosure

Enclosure System: Primarily Moist-Arboreal. Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 15 to 20 gallon tall glass aquarium or terrarium is suitable for a single Cuban tree frog. Cuban treefrogs are highly cannibalistic, and should therefore not be housed together, particularly with smaller frogs. 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

Cuban 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 Cuban tree frogs at higher humidity at around 70 to 80%, and be sure to mist the enclosure at least once daily. These large treefrogs can be maintained at around 70 to 85 degrees F while providing a 12 to 14 hour light cycle if overhead lights are used. 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; In the wild, Cuban tree frogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. They will also occasionally catch and consume smaller vertebrates as well. In captivity, feed Cuban treefrogs a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. They can also be fed microfauna including springtails, isopods, and fruit fly cultures. Cuban treefrogs can also become large enough to be given small, pre-killed rodents on occasion, but give these sparingly, if at all. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Cuban 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

Cuban tree frogs will tolerate some level of careful but deliberate handling and can often become fairly accustomed to being handled. 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.

****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

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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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