



**Photo Credit: Josh's Frogs*

Dart Frogs (Family Dendrobatidae)

Tiny Gems of the Amazonian Rainforest

Dart frogs are small, diurnal frogs which display what is known as brightly colored aposematic coloration that warns predators of their potential toxicity. They earn their names of poison dart or arrow frogs due to the Amerindian tendency to use the secretions from these frogs to line the tips of their hunting arrows and darts with. Depending on the species, some can be very brightly colored to warn of their toxicity, while others can be more cryptic in appearance. Depending on the species, they may be brightly colored with reds, oranges, yellows, blues, and greens. In order to obtain their toxicity, many dart frog species will consume specific prey items in the wild, and derive their toxins from them, including certain termites, ants, and other tiny invertebrates. Many species of dart frogs also have specialized reproductive biology, and may lay their eggs in tiny vernal pools, tree cavities, and standing water in bromeliads/other plants, and many will also carry their tadpoles on their backs. There are over 200 different species of dart frogs in at least 16 different genera, many of which are commonly available in captivity.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Suborder: Neobatrachia

Superfamily: Dendrobatoidea

Family: Dendrobatidae

Genera: Adelphobates, Andinobates, Ameerega, Colostethus, Dendrobates, Epipedobates, Excidobates, Hyloxalus, Minyobates, Oophaga, Phyllobates, Ranitomeya, and Silverstoneia

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, dart frogs can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

Depending on the species, dart frogs are found in the humid, tropical climates of central and South America. Specifically, they may be found in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Suriname, Peru, Panama, Guyana, and Nicaragua. Different species of dart frogs may occupy different environments, including tropical to sub-tropical forests, lowland forests, freshwater marshes, lakes, and swamplands, to seasonally flooded grasslands and other areas, savannahs, to higher mountaine/altitude forests.

Origin/History

Dendrobatidae Cope, 1865. Each specific species would have other authors first describing them during other years.

Dart frogs have an extremely diverse array of origins and histories, depending on each specific or individual species available in herpetoculture/the pet trade. For more detailed and specific information about each of the many different species of dart frogs, see the Josh's Frogs webpage with profiles of each individual species: [Poison Dart Frogs \(joshsfrogs.com\)](http://joshsfrogs.com)

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate to Advanced (depending on species).

Size

Dart frogs are generally small frogs, although their size varies depending on the species. Dart frog species range from about less than ½ an inch to about 2 ½ inches.

Housing and Enclosure Plus Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Enclosure System: Primarily Moist-Terrestrial to Semi-Arboreal. Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured lid or aquarium hood. Housing for dart frogs should be naturalistic and mimic their natural environment as much as possible. Live plants should be used whenever possible to help maintain oxygen and humidity levels inside the vivarium. A 10 to 30 gallon planted glass terrarium, vivarium, or even custom made enclosure with ample hiding and climbing areas should be provided. Humidity should fall between 80 to 100%, but provide minimal ventilation. Maintain most dart frogs at temperatures from 70 to 80 degrees F, rarely above or below these temperature ranges. Many commercially available hydrometers can monitor humidity levels inside the enclosure. Dart frog enclosures can be maintained at around room temperature or sometimes with under tank heating pads in some cases. Covering 80 to 90% of the enclosure or vivarium with a sheet of glass can achieve the desired humidity levels. Also provide a “false bottom” constructed of quartz gravel, PVC, or charcoal to enable proper drainage from the vivarium. Substrates that are acceptable should retain humidity well and can include peat moss, fir bark, and sphagnum moss. Dart frogs also benefit from misting, and should be misted every 1 to 3 days. Many commercially available automatic and manual homemade misting systems are available for use. UVA/UVB lighting is not required for dart frogs, but can improve aesthetics and fluorescent bulbs can help mimic a 12 hour light cycle to promote optimal live plant growth by using full spectrum terrarium or aquarium bulbs. Providing UVA/UVB in moderated amounts can also be greatly beneficial for your frog's 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). 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

Microphagous to Insectivorous; In the wild, dart frogs are almost entirely microphagous to insectivorous, feeding on tiny, live, moving insects, arthropods, and other invertebrates. In

captivity, it is recommended that dart frogs be provided cultured flightless fruit flies, springtails, isopods, or pinhead crickets. Many of these food items may need supplementation with calcium, vitamin D3, and other multi vitamins, which are commonly available through many commercial and retail outlets. If left as part of a self-sustaining bioactive setup, feeding most dart frogs can become very simple and inexpensive, although this still depends to some extent on the setup, size of the enclosure, and number of frogs per enclosure, and conditions should still be monitored. Feeding amounts and frequency can also still depends on the age and size of the frogs as well. 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

Dart frogs are small and fragile amphibians, and handling them should thus be reduced or eliminated as much as possible. In most cases, there is very little to no risk of ingesting toxic secretions from captive bred/born dart frogs, most of which derive their toxins from invertebrates consumed in the wild. 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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Full List of Dendrobatidae Genera and Species:

Adelphobates- 3 Species:

Adelphobates castaneoticus-Brazilian Nut Poison Frog

Adelphobates galactonotus-Splash-Backed Poison Frog

Adelphobates quinquevittatus-Amazonian/Rio Madeira Poison Frog

Andinobates-19 Species:

Andinobates abditus

Andinobates altobueyensis

Andinobates bombetes

Andinobates cassidyhornae

Andinobates claudiae

Andinobates daleswansonii

Andinobates dorisswansonae

Andinobates fulguritus

Andinobates geminisae

Andinobates minutus

Andinobates opisthomelas

Andinobates tolimensis

Andinobates victimatus

Andinobates viridis

Andinobates virolinensis

sp. Supata

sp. Colombia

sp. Columbia

aff. fulgaritus

Ameerega-34 Species:

Ameerega altamazonica

Ameerega bassleri

Ameerega berohoka

Ameerega bilineatus

Ameerega boehmei

Ameerega boliviana

Ameerega braccata

Ameerega cainarachi

Ameerega flavopicta

Ameerega hahneli

Ameerega ignipedis

Ameerega imasmari

Ameerega ingeri

Ameerega labialis

Ameerega macero

Ameerega maculata

Ameerega munduruku

Ameerega panguana

Ameerega parvula

Ameerega pepperi

Ameerega peruviridis
Ameerega petersi
Ameerega picta
Ameerega planipaleae
Ameerega pongoensis
Ameerega pulchripecta
Ameerega rubriventris
Ameerega shihuemoy
Ameerega silverstonei
Ameerega simulans
Ameerega smaragdina
Ameerega trivittata
Ameerega yoshina
Ameerega yungicola

Colostethus-18 Species:

Colostethus agilis
Colostethus alacris
Colostethus dysprosim
Colostethus furviventris
Colostethus imbricolus
Colostethus inguinalis
Colostethus jacobuspetersi
Colostethus latinasus
Colostethus lynchi
Colostethus mertensi
Colostethus panamansis
Colostethus poecilonotus
Colostethus pratti
Colostethus ruthveni
Colostethus thornstoni
Colostethus ucumari
Colostethus yaguara
sp. 1. Santander

Dendrobates-5 Species:

Dendrobates auratus-Green and Black Poison Dart Frog
Dendrobates leucomelas-Yellow Banded Poison Dart Frog
Dendrobates nubeculosus-Rockstone Poison Dart Frog
Dendrobates tinctorius- Dyeing Poison Dart Frog
Dendrobates truncatus-Yellow Striped Poison Dart Frog

Ectopoglossus-7 Species:

Ectopoglossus absconditus
Ectopoglossus astralogaster
Ectopoglossus atopoglossus
Ectopoglossus confuscus
Ectopoglossus isthminus

Ectopoglossus lacrimosus
Ectopoglossus saxatilis

Epipedobates-7 Species:

Epipedobates anthonyi-Anthony's Poison Arrow Frog
Epipedobates boulengeri-Marbled Poison Arrow Frog
Epipedobates darwinwallacei-Darwin Wallace Poison Arrow Frog
Epipedobates espinosai
Epipedobates machalilla
Epipedobates narinensis
Epipedobates tricolor

Excidobates-3 Species:

Excidobates captivus-Santiago Poison Frog
Excidobates condor
Excidobates mysteriosus- Maronon Poison Frog

Leucostethus-6 Species

Leucostethus argyrogaster
Leucostethus ramirezi
Leucostethus fugax
Leucostethus fraterdanieli
Leucostethus brachistriatus
Leucostethus jota

Hyloxalus-69 Species:

Hyloxalus abditaurantius
Hyloxalus aeruginosus
Hyloxalus anthracinus
Hyloxalus arliensis
Hyloxalus awa
Hyloxalus azureiventris-Sky-Blue Poison Frog
Hyloxalus betancuri
Hyloxalus bocagei
Hyloxalus borjai
Hyloxalus brevipartus
Hyloxalus cepedai
Hyloxalus cevallosi
Hyloxalus chlorocraspedus
Hyloxalus chocoensis
Hyloxalus craspedocephalus
Hyloxalus delatorreae
Hyloxalus edwardsi
Hyloxalus elachyhistus
Hyloxalus eleutherodactylus
Hyloxalus exasperatus
Hyloxalus excisus

Hyloxalus faciopunctulatus
Hyloxalus fallax
Hyloxalus fascianigrus
Hyloxalus felixcoperari
Hyloxalus fuliginosus
Hyloxalus idiomelus
Hyloxalus infraguttatus
Hyloxalus insulatus
Hyloxalus italo
Hyloxalus jacobuspetersi
Hyloxalus lehmanni
Hyloxalus leucophaeus
Hyloxalus littoralis
Hyloxalus maculosus
Hyloxalus maquipucuna
Hyloxalus marmoreoventris
Hyloxalus mittermeieri
Hyloxalus mystax
Hyloxalus nexipus
Hyloxalus parvus
Hyloxalus patitae
Hyloxalus peculiaris
Hyloxalus peruvianus
Hyloxalus picachos
Hyloxalus pinguis
Hyloxalus pulchellus
Hyloxalus pulcherrimus
Hyloxalus pumilus
Hyloxalus ramosi
Hyloxalus ruizi
Hyloxalus saltuarius
Hyloxalus sanctamariensis
Hyloxalus sauli
Hyloxalus shuar
Hyloxalus sordidatus
Hyloxalus spilotogaster
Hyloxalus subpunctatus-Cream-Backed Poison Frog
Hyloxalus sylvaticus
Hyloxalus toachi
Hyloxalus utubambensis
Hyloxalus vergeli
Hyloxalus vertebralis
Hyloxalus whymperi
Hyloxalus yasuni
sp. 1. Supata
sp. 2. Bilsa
sp. 3. Ibaque
sp. 4. Santander

Minobytes-1 Species:

Minobates steyermarki-Demonic/Yapacana's Little Red Poison Dart Frog

Oophaga-9 Species:

Oophaga arborea-Polkadot Poison Frog
Oophaga granulifera- Granular Poison Frog
Oophaga histrionica-Harlequin Poison Frog
Oophaga lehmanni-Lehmann's Poison Frog
Oophaga occultator- La Brea Poison Frog
Oophaga pumilio-Strawberry Poison Frog
Oophaga speciosa- Splendid Poison Frog
Oophaga sylvatica- Diablito Poison Frog
Oophaga vicentei- Vicente's Poison Frog

Paruwrobates-3 Species:

Paruwrobates erythromos-Palenque Poison Frog
Paruwrobates andinus-La Planada Poison Frog
Paruwrobates whymperi

Phyllobates-6 Species:

Phyllobates lugubris-Lovely Poison Frog
Phyllobates vittatus- Golfodulcean Poison Frog
Phyllobates bicolor-Black Legged Poison Frog
Phyllobates aurotaenia- Kokoe Poison Frog
Phyllobates terribilis- Golden Poison Frog
Phyllobates spec. aff. aurotaenia

Ranitomeya-16 Species:

Ranitomeya amazonica
Ranitomeya benedicta
Ranitomeya cyanovittata
Ranitomeya defleri
Ranitomeya fantastica
Ranitomeya flavovittata
Ranitomeya imitator
Ranitomeya reticulata
Ranitomeya sirensis
Ranitomeya summersi
Ranitomeya toraro
Ranitomeya uakarii
Ranitomeya vanzolinii
Ranitomeya variabilis
Ranitomeya ventrimaculata
Ranitomeya yavaricola

Silverstoneia-9 Species:

Silverstoneia dalyi

Silverstoneia erasmios
Silverstoneia flotator
Silverstoneia gutturalis
Silverstoneia minima
Silverstoneia minutissima
Silverstoneia nubicola
Silverstoneia punctiventris

Allobates (Aromobatitidae, Sister Taxa)-58 Species:

Allobates alessandroi
Allobates algorei
Allobates amissibilis
Allobates bacurau
Allobates bromelicola
Allobates brunneus
Allobates caeruleodactylus
Allobates carajas
Allobates caribe
Allobates chalcopis
Allobates conspicuus
Allobates crombiei
Allobates femoralis
Allobates flaviventris
Allobates fratisenescus
Allobates fuscillus
Allobates gasconi
Allobates goianus
Allobates granti
Allobates grillismilis
Allobates hodli
Allobates humilis
Allobates ignotus
Allobates insperatus
Allobates juami
Allobates juanii
Allobates kingsbury
Allobates magnussoni
Allobates mandelorum
Allobates marchesianus
Allobates masniger
Allobates mcdiarmidi
Allobates melanolaemus
Allobates myersi
Allobates nidicola
Allobates niputidea
Allobates nunciatus
Allobates olfersioides
Allobates ornatus
Allobates pacaas
Allobates paleovarzensis

Allobates pittieri
Allobates ranoides
Allobates sanmartini
Allobates spumaponens
Allobates subfolionidificans
Allobates sumtuosus
Allobates talamancae
Allobates tapajos
Allobates tinae
Allobates trilineatus
Allobates undulatus
Allobates vanzolinius
Allobates wayuu
Allobates zaparo
Allobates sp. 1. Colombia
Allobates sp. 2. Peru
Allobates sp. 3. Peru

Anomaloglossus (Aromobatidae, Sister Taxa)-32 Species:

Anomaloglossus apiau
Anomaloglossus ayarzaguenai
Anomaloglossus baeobatrachus
Anomaloglossus beebei
Anomaloglossus blanci
Anomaloglossus breweri
Anomaloglossus degranvillei
Anomaloglossus dewynteri
Anomaloglossus guanayensis
Anomaloglossus kaiei
Anomaloglossus leopardus
Anomaloglossus meansi
Anomaloglossus megacephalus
Anomaloglossus mitaraka
Anomaloglossus moffetti
Anomaloglossus murisipanensis
Anomaloglossus parimae
Anomaloglossus parkerae
Anomaloglossus praderioi
Anomaloglossus roraima
Anomaloglossus rufulus
Anomaloglossus saramaka
Anomaloglossus shrevei
Anomaloglossus stepheni
Anomaloglossus surinamensis
Anomaloglossus tamacuarensis
Anomaloglossus tepequem
Anomaloglossus tepuyensis
Anomaloglossus triunfo
Anomaloglossus vacheri
Anomaloglossus verbeeksnyderorum

Anomaloglossus wothuja

Aromobates (Aromobatidae, Sister Taxa)-21 Species:

Aromobates alboguttatus

Aromobates cannatellai

Aromobates capurinensis

Aromobates duranti

Aromobates ericksonae

Aromobates haydeae

Aromobates leopardalis

Aromobates mayorgai

Aromobates meridensis

Aromobates molinarii

Aromobates nocturnus

Aromobates ornatissimus

Aromobates orostoma

Aromobates saltuensis

Aromobates serranus

Aromobates tokuko

Aromobates walterarpi

Aromobates zippeli

Sp. Venezuela

Sp. aff. cannatellai

Sp. aff. saluensis

Mannophryne (Aromobatidae, Sister Taxa)- 22 Species:

Mannophryne caquetio

Mannophryne collaris

Mannophryne cordilleriana

Mannophryne herminae

Mannophryne lamarcai

Mannophryne larandina

Mannophryne leonardo

Mannophryne molinai

Mannophryne neblina

Mannophryne oblitterata

Mannophryne olmonae

Mannophryne orellana

Mannophryne riveroi

Mannophryne speeri

Mannophryne trinitatis

Mannophryne trujillensis

Mannophryne urticans

Mannophryne venezuelensis

Mannophryne vulcano

Mannophryne yustizi

Sp. 1. Aff. caquetio

Sp. 1. Aff. trinitatus

Rheobates (Aromobatidae, Sister Taxa)- 2 Species:

Rheobates palmatus

Rheobates pseudopalmatus