



*Photo Credit: Michael Burger

Malayan Leaf Frog (*Pelobatrachus nasuta*)

Leaf Mimic Frogs!

Also known by many other different common, or vernacular names including the long-nosed horned frog, Malayan/Malaysian horned frog, or leaf frog, the Malayan leaf frog is a relatively medium sized to large, terrestrial frog indigenous to southern and southeastern Asia with a highly unusual appearance! As their names may imply, these frogs display a very high degree of crypsis, with their bodies often resembling dead leaves or other vegetation on the forest floor. These frogs have dorsoventrally flattened bodies with two prominent rows of dorsolateral skin folds ranging from the shoulders to the groin, and a variable amount of tubercles to help further break up their outlines. Perhaps the most noticeable characteristics of these frogs are their long, triangular projections at the ends of their snouts and eye-lids that also help to conceal these frogs. Malayan leaf frogs can range in color from light or dark brown, reddish brown, to yellowish-brown, with dark reddish or brown lateral stripes and rectangular vein-like markings, throats, and ventral surfaces. These frogs are sedentary ambush predators, and can lay motionless in the forest floor leaf litter for days until smaller prey passes by. Malayan leaf frogs can make for very unique and rewarding captives, but are perhaps best suited for the more advanced or experienced amphibian enthusiast, as this species is still seldom bred in captivity.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Suborder: Mesobatrachia

Family: Megophryidae

Genus: *Pelobatrachus*

Species: *Pelobatrachus nasuta**

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

Captive longevity for the species is uncertain, but these unusual frogs can potentially reach up to

5 years or more under the correct care.

Distribution and Habitat

This species ranges across southern and southeastern Asia, including southern Thailand, peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Sumatra, and Borneo. Malayan leaf frogs are primarily terrestrial frogs which live among the moist, damp, and cool leaf litter and debris of lowland and sub-mountain to mountain tropical rainforests and woodlands within this range.

Origin/History

Pelobatrachus nasutus (Schlegel, 1858).

The Malayan horned frog has been a staple in the herp trade for more than 50 years.

Unfortunately, wild-caught specimens are still frequently imported, as this frog has proved to be rather difficult to reproduce in captivity with any regularity (R. Michael Burger 2017).

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate to Advanced.

Size

Malayan leaf frogs are a highly dimorphic species, with females reaching up to 7 ½ to 8 inches, while males are much smaller at 3 ½ to 4 inches.

Housing and Enclosure

Enclosure System: Primarily Moist-Terrestrial. Housing and enclosures for Malayan leaf frogs should be sturdy and secure, as well as escape proof, but be adequately ventilated and be able to retain sufficient humidity that these frogs require. Both simple and more naturalistic setups can work for housing these frogs, and can be a 15 to 20 gallon long terrarium or similar sized glass enclosure. Floor space is more important than height, since these frogs are more terrestrial than arboreal. Trios of one male to two females can be accommodated together, with roughly 5 gallons added per additional frog. For substrate, a 2 to 3 inch layer false bottom can then be created using egg-crates, foam rubber, or similar fiberglass material for one half of the enclosure in order to create an adequate drainage layer. Substrates that work well for retaining humidity and moisture can include crushed coconut fibers, orchid bark mix, peat moss mixture, or moist paper towels as the simplest substrate. A large, shallow water dish or pan about 1" in depth in which the frogs may readily enter and exist in order to soak can be provided, or in more natural setups, a 3" glass panel or substrate dam can be used to separate the wet from dry sections, and the water can be 1 to 2 ¾ inches deep. Water should also be dechlorinated, and otherwise be free of chemicals and pesticides and also be regularly cleaned, filtered, and maintained at all times. Additional furnishings in the enclosure should also be provided, and can include live, potted or artificial plants, vines, and foliage, log or cork bark hides, upturned clay pot hides, or similar hides and furnishings for added security.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Malayan leaf frogs prefer moderate enclosure temperatures of 70 to 78 degrees F, and 60 to 80% humidity. Malayan leaf frogs have fairly simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and greatly benefit from additional UVA/UVB lighting. Providing it in moderated amounts of a 10 to 12 hour photoperiod cycle 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). 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 to Carnivorous; In the wild, Malayan leaf frogs are cryptic ambush predators that are primarily insectivorous to carnivorous, feeding on a variety of insects, and other invertebrates. They may also occasionally catch and consume smaller vertebrates as well. These frogs in captivity should be fed 2 to 3 times weekly. They are very sight oriented feeders, and will eat feeder crickets, roaches, earthworms, redworms, bloodworms, or mealworms as well as feeder fish and occasionally pre-killed rodents of appropriate size, although these prey items should be given only sparingly. They can also be given many commercially available pelleted diets, or freeze dried foods, but these must be animated. Do not overfeed these frogs, or obesity and other health issues can become concerns. Feeder insects should be gut loaded by provided them a quality diet containing vitamins and minerals. Gutloading and dusting insects with vitamin D3 and calcium supplements 1 to 2 times weekly for added nutritional value will greatly benefit the health and well-being of these frogs. Feed them using tongs, forceps, or otherwise in the enclosure or in a dish and not by hand, as they can become acclimated enough to mistake a moving hand or finger as food during feeding. 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' horn-like projections are also delicate, and prone to abrasion as well. For these reasons, handling Malayan leaf frogs should be minimized to small amounts of gentle, careful handling to prevent injury or damage to the frog. These frogs can make for interesting captives, but are not often bred in captivity, and many may already be stressed as wild caught or as imported animals as well.

****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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