



\*Mike Novy/Rainforest Junkies

## Red Eyed Tree frog (*Agalychnis callidryas*)

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### **An Iconic Amazonian Rainforest Gem**

The Red eyed treefrog is a highly arboreal species of hylid frog (the family in which most species of treefrogs belong to) found in Mexico, Central America, and into northern South America. They may specifically be found from Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras, to Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. They are typically a bright green in dorsal and bodily color with large, red eyes, enlarged orange toe pads and digits with webbed feet, and an intricate patterning of blues, whites, and yellows along the laterals (sides). Red eyed treefrogs have several different defensive behaviors, one of which entails their large, red eyes serving as a defensive adaptation known as deimatic behavior, or otherwise startling a potential predator with their sudden opening and appearance.

Despite their bright and contrasting colors, red eyed treefrogs can be very cryptic when resting on leaves or other vegetation with their eyes closed and bodily colors not exposed. During the daytime, this behavior makes red eyed treefrogs very cryptic and well hidden. Red eyed treefrogs also utilize a deimatic defensive behavior of suddenly opening their large, reddish eyes as a sudden defense to startle potential predators. They are also strong and active jumpers as well, which aid in their defense and avoidance of predators as well. In captivity, red eyed treefrogs are a widely popular and sought after species of amphibian, which can be kept and does well in the vivarium provided their overall 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:** *Agalychnis*

**Species:** *Agalychnis callidryas*\*

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

### **Lifespan and Longevity**

If provided the proper care, red eyed treefrogs can attain longevity of 10 to 15 years or more in captivity.

### **Distribution and Habitat**

Red eyed treefrogs are an iconic hylid frog species of the tropical, humid lowlands, tropical forests, and rainforests, often near rivers, ponds, and other wetlands of Mexico, Central America, and into northern South America. They may specifically be found from Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras, to Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama within this range.

### **Origin/History**

*Agalychnis callidryas* (Cope, 1862).

Red-eyed treefrogs have long been a popular and iconic frog species in the pet trade, and may have first been imported for the pet trade in the U.S. some-time during the late 1960's or 1970's. Most of the specimens for the pet trade are exported through Nicaragua (Chicago Exotics Animal Hospital).

### **Experience Level Required**

Intermediate/Moderate.

### **Size**

Adult red eyed tree frogs typically reach up to 3 to 3 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 10 to 15 gallon tall glass aquarium or terrarium is suitable for a pair red eyed tree 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. Any enclosures and substrates used should retain higher levels of humidity for this species.

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

Red eyed Tree Frogs have fairly 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 ambient temperatures of between 75 and 80 degrees F, but do not allow for temperatures to drop below or rise above this range except for nighttime temperatures, which can be 65 to 72 degrees F. Also be sure to provide a 12 to 14 hour light cycle if overhead lights are used. This species requires moderate to higher humidity levels of 70 to 80% using a misting or fogging system, as well as a large shallow water dish, although conditions should not become too dry or too wet. 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, red eyed treefrogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. In captivity, feed red eyed 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. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Red 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**

Red eyed treefrogs are rather delicate and fragile amphibians that should only be handled when necessary. 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**

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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