



## Vietnamese Bird Poop Tree frog (*Theloderma asperum*)

### **Bird Poop or Not!?**

Also known as the Pied Warty Frog, the Vietnamese Bird Poop Treefrog is a close relative of the unusual appearing Vietnamese Mossy Frog of the same genus, *Theloderma*. They are also sometimes known as the Hill Garden Bug-Eyed frogs, due to their reddish colored eyes. As with that frog species, the Pied Warty frog is an unusual frog species in that they are heavily cryptic in their coloration and appearance, having a reddish-brown to brownish-yellow coloration, and ranging to a muddy white along the sides, coloration highly resembling bark or, as their name might imply, bird droppings. These unusual frogs are found from northeastern India, Burma, China (Tibet, possibly more widely), Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam as well as Sumatra in Indonesia. Relatively little more is currently known about the biology or natural history of these frogs, although they are known to breed and reproduce in small water pools within the cavities of trees or bamboos.

This species, although not a treefrog, also has large, sticky toe pads as well. Pied warty frogs are primarily nocturnal and aquatic, spending much of their time hidden beneath or within rocks, plants, or other debris. In addition to their cryptic coloration used for camouflage, these frogs may also curl into a ball and feign death as well. Although uncommon in the pet trade, the Pied Warty frog still makes for a unique frog species to maintain in captivity, provided their overall care, husbandry, and environmental 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:** Rhacophoridae

**Genus:** *Theloderma*

**Species:** *Theloderma asperum*\*

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

### **Lifespan and Longevity**

Vietnamese bird poop frogs can be expected to live for at least 5 to 8 years or more in captivity.

## **Distribution and Habitat**

The Pied Warty frog occurs from northeastern India, Burma, China (Tibet, possibly more widely), Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam as well as Sumatra in Indonesia. Within this range, these arboreal frogs occupy moist, lowland evergreen tropical to sub-tropical or monotonous rainforests, forests, plantations, and woodlands, and their adjacent caves and steep, rocky cliffs.

## **Experience Level Required**

Intermediate/Moderate.

## **Size**

Adult female Pied warty frogs are larger than males, measuring in at approximately 1.75 inches. Males average about 1.25-1.5 inches at maturity.

## **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 (or 20) gallon tall glass aquarium, terrarium, or other enclosure is more than suitable for housing one, or a pair of these frogs. Being semi aquatic, Pied warty frogs will also require a semi aquatic setup, with about 3 inches of clean fresh water filtered with an appropriate submersible filtration system that can be biological and/or mechanical. Substrate is option for these frogs, but if it is used, appropriate sized gravel or river stones can be used. Additional furnishings, foraging, and hiding opportunities should also be provided in the enclosure, including rocks and logs, live or artificial plants and other foliage, clay flower pots, driftwood, vines, and/or caves. There should also be opportunities for the frog(s) to be able to bask or completely emerge from the water.

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

Pied warty 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 higher humidity from around 70 to 100%, and be sure to mist the enclosure at least once daily. Also provide a 12 to 14 hour light cycle if overhead lights are used. Overall, this species can tolerate temperatures between 65 and the high 70's degrees F, but temperatures and humidity levels should not be allowed to exceed or fall below 50 degrees F or 80 degrees F of these ranges. 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, Pied warty frogs are insectivorous, and will eat insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch. In captivity, feed these frogs 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. These frogs 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**

Pied warty frogs are a shy and delicate amphibian species that should be handled sparingly, or only 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. They are, however, a fairly easily kept species for both the beginning and advanced enthusiast, and can make for very intriguing display animals as a result.

**\*\*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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