

# Large Frogs

## An Introductory Information Leaflet

from

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**EUROREP**  
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Europe's Premier  
Reptile Product Company

### Optional Hot Spot

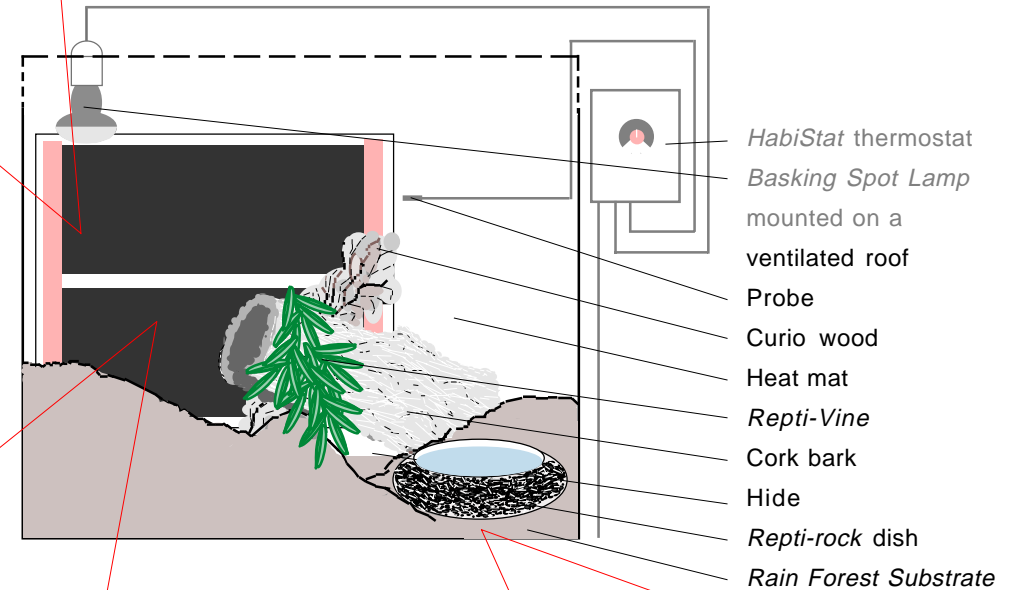
A local area of higher temperature may be created, if needed, with a Spot lamp. The *Spot Lamp* should be used in conjunction with a *HabiStat Dimming thermostat* for precise control. Hot spots should be maintained for the same day length as the lights, fourteen in summer, ten in winter. Small cages will not need a hot spot.

**Cleanliness and Hygiene:** The cage will need cleaning out fairly regularly. A routine cleaner for all nonporous surfaces would be *Vetaclene*, followed by a very thorough rinse. All other materials should be replaced when soiled. As far as human hygiene is concerned, *Vetasept Surgical Scrub* will clean hands and surfaces while *Vetasept Hand Rub* will allow adequate cleansing and disinfection even in cases when water is unavailable. No cleaner or disinfectant, however dilute, must come into contact with the frog. The exception is *Vetadine* which can be used to give any first aid the frogs may be need by dabbing the wound with a drop of the liquid.

### Lighting

Many frogs shun bright lights, so artificial light in the cage should be subdued. Often, just the daylight filtering in will be enough. If more light is needed, a small fluorescent tube could be installed. If a *Spot Lamp* is used to provide a hot spot this will supply all the light that is needed

**Cage Decor:** Use *Rain Forest Substrate* as it will stand up to the periodic spraying with water frogs need. A large *Repti-rock* or *HabiStat* water dish could be used to provide a bath. Cork bark and *Curio wood* could be used to make an interesting three dimensional display. While draping *Repti-Vines* in the cage will provide refuges under which the frogs can hide. *Repti-rock* caves would lend even more functionality and security.



A cage suitable for large frogs

### Background Heat

Use a *HabiStat* heat mat between half and two thirds the size of the cage to provide background heating. The hottest spot in the cage should not be above 35°C while the coolest should not be below 20°C. Use a *HabiStat Mat-Stat* if the temperature is too hot but put the whole cage in a cooler place if the temperature is not cool enough.

**Food:** Crickets, Locusts and Mealworms of an appropriate size. Supplement livefoods by feeding *Cricket Diet Plus* or *Mealworm Diet Plus*. Once the animal is tame dead food may be taken by moving the food in front of the frog. Defrosted rodents and 'snake steak' sausages are eaten like this. Water should be fresh and changed every couple of days.

### Cage Set Up

The cage should be set up to allow an active frog plenty of scope to climb, burrow, warm in a hot spot, move to a cooler place and hunt for food. The frogs should also be able to secrete themselves into refuges and soak in fresh water if they choose.

## Shopping List

Not every thing is needed to begin with, usually one item from each of the categories marked •. As a basic starting point the following essentials are considered the minimum needed:

**Plastic Cage**  
**Heat Mat**  
**Rain Forest Substrate**  
**Repti-rock dish**  
**Thermometer**  
**Repti-Vine**  
**Piece of Cork Bark**  
**or all these items are available in a Starter Kit**

After a while as your collection and experience grows other alternatives and extras can be used.

- **HabiStat, Heat Mats** (6x11/7w, 11x11/12w, 17x11/20w, 23x11/28w, 29x11/35w, 35x11/42w & 49x11/55w) & **Strips** (17x6/10w, 23x6/15w, 35x6/22w & 47x6/30w) or **Dinosaur Fossil Hot Rock**
- **Thermometers** (Alcohol, dial, minimum - maximum & electronic digital)
- **Hygrometers** (Dial & electronic digital)
- **HabiStat Thermostats** (Mat-Stat/100w, Temperature/300w, Twin/2x300, Pulse Proportional/600w, Dimming/600w & Night Time Drop Function)
- **Night Eye, sun & Moon Switches**
- **Repti-rock Dishes, Hides & Caves**
- **Repti-Vine**
- **Rain Forest Substrate**
- **Cork Bark**
- **Curio Wood**
- **Lights** e.g. Reptile D<sub>3</sub> or Activa Professional
- **Arcadia Control Units** (15w, 2x15w, 18w, 2x18w, 20w & 2x20w)
- **Basking Spot Lamp**
- **Crickets**
- **Locusts**
- **Mealworms**
- **Waxworms**
- **Mealworm Diet Plus**
- **Snake Steak Sausages**
- **Frozen Rodent Pups**
- **Repton**
- **Vetaclean**
- **Vetasept Surgical Scrub**
- **Vetasept Hand Rub**
- **Books & Leaflets**

### Large Frogs...

Frogs are amphibians and the large species that are commonly kept as pets include:

Horned Frogs *Ceratophrys spp.*  
African Bull Frogs *Ptychocheilus adspersus*  
Marine Toads *Bufo marinus*  
Tomato Frogs *Dyscophus guineti*  
Chilean Helmeted Bull Frogs *Craugastor caudiverbera*  
White's treefrog *Litoria caerulea*

### ...Housing

The permanent cage need not be large, about 60 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm being a suitable size for an animal with a body length of 10 cm. Many types of cage can be used to house frogs. For juveniles, the moulded clear plastic tanks with fitted lids are very useful. For larger animals the purpose made vivaria are probably more appropriate. The types with sliding glass doors to the front are very popular. Another often used cage is a converted aquarium. A special adapting lid is used to contain the amphibians and house any equipment that may be used.

Specimens of this type of frog seem to thrive in quite small cages, although they must be kept scrupulously clean. Smaller, more active species prefer proportionately larger enclosures. The reason seems to be that most of the large species that thrive as pets are rather sluggish and tend not to jump. Of course, the cage could be larger as this would allow the animal room to grow and make it easier for the owner to manage the environment. The cage should be set up in a manner similar to the diagram overleaf. A heater should be installed to provide a background temperature of between 22°C and 28°C. This is best done with a HabiStat heat mat or strip taped to the inside of the back wall. Make sure the mat acts like a radiator, so very little of it should be below the line of the substrate. A local hot spot of 30°C may be added as an optional extra. In which case, a Dinosaur Fossil Hot Rock or a HabiStat controlled Basking Spot Lamp would provide heat for smaller and larger cages respectively. The hot spot should warm an area in front of the heat mat. The coolest part of the cage should be nearer 25°C. All heat sources should be comparatively low powered to protect the animals from being burnt. The hot spot, if present, should only operate during the day for about fourteen hours in summer dropping to twelve in winter.

Much of the success achieved in keeping frogs will come from the skilful manipulation of ventilation. Some of these animals require very high humidity, while others like it a little dryer but none can stand stagnant conditions. Fresh air moving into the cage is essential. Use the upward draughts caused by heated air rising to flush out the cage and drag fresh air in. A light daily misting with a hand sprayer will provide most of the humidity required. Some species will require the substrate to be damp but not wringing wet. Look in the literature for details of the particular species being kept.

### ...Husbandry

Most species are best kept singly but some, like the Marine Toad and Tomato Frog may be kept in groups in proportionally larger cages. Be careful when mixing frogs as many of these large species are cannibalistic and will tackle another frog almost as big as itself.

These animals do not really like being handled, so if it is necessary to move them, scoop them into a container like a bowl and move them in this. Be prepared, however, for the animal to attempt an escape by jumping. Use a hand as a lid to restrain the frog in case of mishap.

In time the cage will begin to look scruffy and as soon as any faeces or debris appears it should be removed. As everything recommended for the cage is washable or disposable, a good clean out is easily done. The cage set up advised in this leaflet is practicable and can be made to look pleasing to the eye. It can be made to look quite natural even without using live plants which are best left until some experience is gained. In any case, some of the very informative books on amphibians in general and frogs in particular could be investigated.

### ...Food & Feeding

Insects like crickets and locusts form the staple diet in captivity for small specimens. Mealworms can also be fed. Insects should be dusted with *Repton*, a vitamin and mineral supplement. Most of these frogs will, however, eat dead food. This is one of their advantages and attracts some people who may be put off by the thought of having live insects in their homes. Frozen rodents or specially prepared 'sausages' that have been thoroughly defrosted are the usual food in such cases. Both these foods are available in a range of sizes and one should be chosen that the frog can be comfortably swallow.

Food is sensed by movement and then grabbed with the mouth. If it puts up too much of a struggle or is particularly bulky, it is pushed in with the fore limbs. These large frogs can take enormous meals compared to their size. Meals that are over half the size of the frog have been eaten. Despite this, it is not recommended that such gargantuan feasts be offered. Indeed, many juvenile specimens may have died prematurely due to their owners misguided attempts to indulge them.

Feed the frogs about once every week with enough food that equals no more than one quarter of the animal's total mass. Do not leave an excess of uneaten insects in the cage as these will only annoy the frogs.

A water dish kept full of fresh water should always be available. Frogs do not drink but soak up water through the skin. All of them like to immerse themselves occasionally, so a bath is essential. The problem is that the animal may use the bath as a loo. This will need cleaning out as soon as possible, as frogs are particularly sensitive to the combination of wetness and dirt.

### ...Reproduction

To sex a frog an adult specimen is usually required. The males often have vocal sacs and darker coloured throats. Many also have rough dark pads on the fingers and thumb. These are used to grip the female and ensure the male is present when the spawn is laid.

Mating and spawning may not be at all easy to induce in captivity. If breeding is contemplated, a good deal of research will be necessary and some of the many excellent books should be consulted.

### ...Health & Disease

Frogs live for many years in nature and may be expected to live even longer in captivity. They do not suffer from many diseases and veterinary attention is rarely needed. An environment and diet as described in this leaflet will preclude most problems. Good practice, hygiene and first aid will probably deal with rest. If real disease or injury is discovered, a vet must of course, be consulted. Pet frogs do not pose a real threat to human health. All the normal hygiene precautions regarding humans and animals should, however, be observed.