## **YVCipedia AMPHIBIAN**

Pacman Frog Care Sheet

## **Species Overview**

**Pacman frogs** are **terrestrial, sit-and-wait ambush predators** native to South America. These frogs get their nickname from their large, rounded bodies and oversized mouths resembling the video game character Pac-Man.

Species commonly kept as pets include **Ceratophrys ornata, C. cranwelli, and C. cornuta**. Known for their **vivid colors and voracious appetites**, Pacman frogs are popular with amphibian keepers looking for a **low-activity but fascinating pet**.

They typically grow **4–7 inches** long (females are larger) and can live **6–10+ years** in captivity with proper care.

## **Housing & Environment**

Pacman frogs are **terrestrial burrowers** that prefer **simple but secure enclosures** with **ample substrate**.

**Minimum enclosure size:**

* Juvenile: 5–10 gallons
* Adult: 10–20 gallons recommended
* Floor space is more important than height

**Key enclosure features:**

* Secure lid (they can climb surprisingly well)
* Deep substrate (3–4+ inches) for burrowing
* Few or no sharp items (to avoid skin injuries)
* Hiding spots, cork bark, or half-logs

**Recommended substrates:**

* Coconut fiber (eco earth)
* Organic, pesticide-free topsoil
* Sphagnum moss (for humid hides)
* Avoid gravel or bark chips that can cause impaction

**Cleaning guidelines:**

* Spot-clean feces daily or as needed
* Replace substrate fully every 4–6 weeks
* Disinfect enclosure and décor with amphibian-safe products

## **Heating & Lighting**

Pacman frogs need **warm, stable temperatures** but **do not require intense lighting**.

**Temperature range:**

* **Daytime:** 75–82°F
* **Nighttime:** Can drop to 70–72°F safely
* Avoid prolonged temps >85°F (can cause stress or death)

**Heating:**

* Low-wattage heat mat (mounted on side of tank, not bottom)
* Ceramic heat emitter or low-wattage bulb if needed
* Always use **thermostats** to prevent overheating

**Lighting:**

* No UVB required, but **low-level UVB (2–5%) may benefit health** if used carefully
* Provide a **12-hour light/dark cycle** with timers
* Avoid bright, intense lights that stress nocturnal amphibians

## **Humidity**

Pacman frogs need **high humidity** in the **60–80%** range to stay hydrated and support healthy skin.

**Humidity management tips:**

* Mist the enclosure once or twice daily
* Include moist sphagnum moss in hides
* Use hygrometers to monitor accurately
* Ensure ventilation to prevent mold or bacterial growth

Proper humidity supports **healthy shedding and overall hydration**.

## **Water & Hydration**

Pacman frogs **absorb water through their skin and cloaca**, so maintaining clean, moist conditions is essential.

**Water guidelines:**

* Provide a **shallow, sturdy water dish** large enough for soaking
* Change water daily to avoid bacterial contamination
* Use **dechlorinated or treated water**
* Mist daily to keep substrate damp (but not waterlogged)

## **Diet & Feeding**

Pacman frogs are **ambush predators** with **large appetites**, eating whole prey items.

**Feeding guidelines:**

* Juveniles: Feed **daily or every other day**
* Adults: Feed **every 2–3 days**

**Appropriate prey items:**

* Gut-loaded crickets
* Dubia roaches
* Nightcrawlers (pesticide-free)
* Occasional pinky mice (adults only, sparingly)
* Feeder fish (rarely, and only if safe species are used)

**Feeding tips:**

* Prey size should be **no larger than the width of the frog’s head**
* Use **feeding tongs** to reduce substrate ingestion
* Dust insects with **calcium (with D3) 2–3× weekly** and **multivitamins 1× weekly**
* Avoid overfeeding to prevent obesity

Pacman frogs can **easily become overweight**—portion control is important.

## **Behavior & Handling**

Pacman frogs are **generally sedentary, solitary, and aggressive feeders**.

**Handling recommendations:**

* Minimal handling recommended—they stress easily and have sensitive skin
* Always **wet hands with dechlorinated water** if touching the frog
* Avoid squeezing or restraining firmly
* Watch for **defensive bites** during feeding

They are best **viewed as display animals**.

## **Healthcare & Veterinary Care**

Schedule an **initial exam** after acquisition and plan for **annual wellness checkups** with an experienced exotics veterinarian.

**Common health issues:**

* Skin infections or abrasions (from sharp décor or poor hygiene)
* Shedding problems (dysecdysis) from low humidity
* Impaction (from ingesting substrate or oversized prey)
* Parasites (especially in wild-caught frogs or feeder insects)
* Metabolic bone disease (from poor diet/lack of supplementation)

**Warning signs:**

* Lethargy or refusal to eat
* Abnormal skin color or lesions
* Excessive soaking or avoiding water entirely
* Open-mouth breathing or bloating
* Difficulty shedding

Early veterinary care helps **prevent serious complications**.

## **Enrichment & Habitat Design**

While Pacman frogs are **sedentary**, they benefit from **secure, naturalistic enclosures**.

**Enrichment strategies:**

* Deep, diggable substrate for burrowing
* Moist hides with sphagnum moss
* Naturalistic décor with leaf litter or logs (avoid sharp edges)
* Varied feeding presentations (tongs vs. dish)
* Bioactive setups with clean-up crews for advanced keepers

Proper design **reduces stress** and supports **natural behaviors**.

## **Facts & FAQs**

* Named **“Pacman”** for their large, rounded bodies and big mouths.
* Native to **South American rainforests** with warm, humid climates.
* Nocturnal ambush predators that **wait motionless for prey**.
* Known for **voracious appetites** and impressive feeding responses.
* Lifespan of **6–10+ years** in captivity with good care.

### **Supplies & Care Checklist**

* Escape-proof glass terrarium (≥10 gallons for adults)
* Low-wattage heat mat (side-mounted, with thermostat)
* Digital thermometers and hygrometer
* Shallow, stable water dish
* Appropriate substrate (coconut fiber, organic topsoil)
* Sphagnum moss for humid hides
* Misting bottle for daily humidity
* Feeding tongs
* Gut-loaded feeder insects
* Calcium and multivitamin supplements
* Cleaning supplies and amphibian-safe disinfectants
* Secure carrier for veterinary visits

*Yarmouth Veterinary Center*