

**Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society**  
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**Common Name:** African Clawed Frog

**Scientific name:** *Xenopus laevis*

**Native to:** Southern Africa

**Size:** Up to five inches

**Life span:** African clawed frogs usually live 10 to 15 years in captivity but have been known to live up to 30 years.

**General appearance:** This frog is wedge shaped, with the head being smaller than the rest of the body. The eyes are positioned on the top of the head and lack eyelids. This aquatic frog's color ranges from grayish to brownish with marbled and darker shades with a creamy white underside. Albino morphs are becoming more popular and are commonly found.

**Housing requirements:**

**Enclosure:** These frogs are exclusively aquatic and should be maintained in an aquarium. Ten gallons of dechlorinated water per frog with a minimum of 20 gallons should be adequate. The water level should not exceed 12 inches to allow the frog to easily reach the surface to breathe. There should also be some hide places in the enclosure. There also should not be anything metal in the enclosure since the metal ions can be toxic to the frog. Most people believe that waterfall filters can be beneficial to the frog. Filters such as under-gravel filter or anything with an air stone can create problems with the frog.

**Temperature:** Water temperatures in the enclosure should be maintained at 70° to 75° F. Water PH should be maintained at 6.5-7.5. Water should be tested to ensure the optimal water condition.

**Heat/Light:** The African clawed frog requires a 12-hour photoperiod and can be provided with a standard aquarium hood and a household timer. A standard aquarium heater can be used to maintain water temperatures in the aquarium.

**Substrate:** This species can easily have nothing at the bottom of the tank, gravel has been known to cause impaction.

**Environment:** This species comes from freshwater ponds and lakes and is strictly aquatic. They do not require any portion of land.

**Diet:** These frogs are scavengers and will eat anything that they can put in their mouth. Items such as brine shrimp, bloodworms, krill, shrimp pellets, wax worms, tubifex worms, mealworms, guppies, silversides, water fleas, or many commercially available foods such as Reptomin™ and HBH Frog and Tadpole Bites can all be offered as food.

**Maintenance:** In addition to a filtration system a 25% water change should be performed every two to four weeks with a gravel siphon.

**Other references or recommended reading:**

Sarre, Robert. "African Clawed Frog" Reptile and Amphibian Hobbyist August 2001

Staniszewski, Marc. Amphibians in Captivity TFH Publications 1995

Breen, John F. Encyclopedia of Reptiles and Amphibians TFH Publications 1974

Halliday, Tim R. & Adler, Kraig eds The Encyclopedia of Reptiles and Amphibians Facts On File 1986

Mattison, Chris. Frogs & Toads of the World, Facts On File 1987.