



***The PetFish.Net Guide To Amphibians In The Aquarium***

Part Of The PetFish.Net Guide Series

## ***The Axolotl – Mexican Walking Fish***

By KimmyM



Albino Mexican Walking Fish - Axolotl © KimmyM

Common name: Mexican Walking Fish or Axolotl

Scientific name *Ambystoma mexicanum*

Origin: Lake Xochimilco, Mexico

Temperature: 14 and 20°C (57-68°F)

Ease of keeping: Medium

Aggressiveness: Highly Aggressive

Lighting: No specific needs

Adult Size: Up to 30cm - 12 Inches

Minimum Tank Size: 15 Gallons

Feeding: Beef Heart, Liver, Any kind of meat

Extra Comments:

As the name "Mexican Walking Fish" suggests that the Axolotl is a fish, it is not, it is an Amphibian and is actually the larval stage of the Salamander, which has not developed into a salamander because of the water conditions it has been kept in. Axolotls are relatively easy to keep, as the temperature, filtration and lighting specifications are close to the Goldfish. To feed the Axolotl you must thread meat onto some cotton and move the meat around its mouth using the cotton to

imitate live food as the Axolotl will not eat meat if it is not moving, which is why you should not place an Axolotl with any other fish, if the fish around the Axolotl are small, they will end up in the Axolotl's stomach, and if the fish are large, the Axolotl will nip at the other fish's fins, and in the end, killing it. The Axolotl is available in a variety of colours including albino, brown and black.

Axolotls can be bred, but as I have no knowledge on this I can't say anything about it. I highly recommend a gravel vacuum to take out the Axolotls feces because, if you don't it can get out of hand very very very quickly resulting in poisoning from high ammonia levels if there has been no water change.

***Dwarf African Frog Tadpole Pictures***



Up! Puff...puff... Up!



Here's looking at you,,,baby.



I am sooo outta here. See ya!



Did I hear food drop?



Whoaaaaa....BUMP



Im hungry, please feed me!



## ***Raising Dwarf African Frog Tadpoles***

By : bgkast, petfish.net Aquatic Frog Forum Moderator



Tadpoles pointed out.



The finished product.

The tadpoles should be raised separately from the adult frogs. I raise tadpoles in a 2 gallon tank. The tank has an air powered "small world" filter from Malwart. I have a valve on the pump so I can turn it way down.

There are plants in the tank to encourage the growth of infusoria (a micro organism that the tadpoles will eat during the first stage of their development). I use Elodea, Water Sprite, and Java Moss in my tank.

After the tadpoles first hatch I add a drop or two of liqui-fry #1 2 times a day to help the infusoria to grow. The tadpoles will eat infusoria for the first few days.

When they are a bit larger I begin feeding baby brine shrimp and micro-worms. I also had success feeding crushed "frog and tadpole bites" During metamorphosis I fed frozen and live daphnia, and live tubifex worms.

The tank is unheated, and is about 24 C in the day, dropping to about 23 C at night.

Don't use gravel in the tadpole tank. The tadpoles swim into the gaps between the gravel and become trapped.

After metamorphosis is complete, continue to house the baby frogs away from the adult frogs until they are too large to be eaten.



## ***Bull Frogs And Tadpoles***

By: Logan DeBorde

Common Name: Bull Frogs And Tadpoles

Latin Name: *Rana catesbeiana* Origin: America

Temperature: 65-75°F +, 18-24°C

Ease Of Keeping: Easy

Aggressivness: Very Easy Going/Peaceful

Lighting: All - only 8 hours a day

Adult Size: up to around 8 inches, 20cm

Minimum Tank Size: 20 Long for Adults, 2 1/2 for tadpoles

Feeding: Flakes and small Sinking Pellets for tadpoles, Flies and insects for adults

Spawning Method: Egglayer, but captive breeding can only be done under laboratory conditions and will require hormone injections.

Comments: The adult Bullfrog must have a half water half land tank. The Tadpole is very hardy and must have all water, it can live in the adult tank as long as there is enough water. I have found that the Bullfrog tadpole can acquire Ich and it will not respond to conventional chemicals treatments. You must raise the temperature and wait.

## ***Axolotl Or Mexican Walking Fish***

By : Mr. Tristan B. Duggan

Common Name: Axolotl or Mexican Walking Fish

Latin Name: Ambystoma Mexicanum

Origin: Lake Xochimilco, Mexico

Temperature: 14 - 20 Degrees Celcius

pH - 7.4 - 8.2

Ease Of Keeping: Medium - Hard

Aggressivness: Fairly Aggressive

Lighting: No Specific Requirements dark 'cave' must be provided

Adult Size: 18 - 30 Centimeters

Minimum Tank Size: 20 gallon - but the bigger the better

Feeding: Beef heart, beef liver, (only use meat that is lean / low fat) axolotl pellets, live food (if small). Feeder guppies or 'mosquito' fish often used.

Comments: The Axolotl spends much of its time motionless, especially during the day. But from early evening to early morning they are very active.

Axolotls may be kept alone - they aren't specifically social. But groups do well too, assuming you provide plenty of room because if they have no means of keeping to themselves when they want to, they may show aggression.

Also, if kept in pairs or groups, they must be fed adequately - a starving axolotl will eat a limb of a tank-mate. Interestingly, they can re-generate lings, tail and even parts of the head and some organs. But this is no excuse to over-crowd, as they take some time and may suffer from disease due to the wound. Axolotls must be fed every 2 - 3 nights, never more as digestion is slow. Sinking pellets designed for them are usually taken, and should be their staple. But this must also be supplemented with beef heart or perhaps even live food (but beware of internal parasites, etc) The occasional earth worm can be hand fed occasionally too, just beware of pesticides in the ground where you found it.

Axolotls tend to swallow gravel when feeding from the bottom. To avoid this, use larger 'river stones'. But many find that the larger substrate won't let natural, healthy bacteria grow, so they go back to gravel. This is fine, but it must be overcome by either dropping the food directly in front of each axolotl's mouth until it catches it. Or, a less time-consuming method, use gravel, but place a terra-cotta dish on the bottom and drop food onto this.

Axolotls must not be kept with other animals. Small fish will be eaten, and those too large to be swallowed tend to 'nip' at an axolotl's fluffy gill crest, causing respiratory problems or death. Even aquatic snails have been known to damage an axolotl's skin while 'sucking'.

Axolotls should not be kept in a dark room, but neither should they be in direct, full sunlight. If you wish to use an aquarium lamp (for the benefit of aquarium plants) be sure it is a fluorescent globe. Also you **MUST** have plenty of places for the axolotls to get their heads or even whole bodies away from light as they stress if there is no dark refuge.

Driftwood or plastic decorative 'caves' do fine. Axolotls tend to uproot most plants while swimming, so be sure to use simple, hardy plants like elodea, which must be wedged underneath a heavy object (terra-cotta pot, stone, etc). It is often said that axolotls don't need water to be any deeper than they are long. This is true, as they spend most of their time 'walking' low to the ground and even stall in the lower half of a tank while swimming. However, they do swim to the top and back now and then, which provides good exercise.

An Axolotl must **NEVER** be removed from the water and forced to 'walk' on land. Their limbs cannot support them fully and they cannot breathe when out of water. If you have cats, remember they can easily pull an axolotl out of its tank.

## ***African Dwarf Frogs – FAQ***

By : [bgkast](#), petfish.net [Aquatic Frog Forum](#) Moderator



An African Dwarf Frog © Clint Norwood

One frog per gallon is a good rule of thumb.

Dwarf Frogs can get along with other fish such as non aggressive betas, tetras, and other such peaceful fish, but in my opinion do best when in a species only environment.

Filtration is a good idea, but use a filter that doesn't disturb the water too much.

Dwarf frogs are nocturnal and often shy. They need places to hide in the tank such as flower pots, artificial caves, or drift wood.

Dwarf Frogs come from Africa (duh) so they like the water temp to be in the high 70s

Partial water changes should be done once a week or so

Contrary to what the pet store told you when you bought them they will not eat flake food or "frog bites". It is best to use frozen or live food. I feed frozen blood worms, frozen daphnia, live tubifex worms, and chopped earthworm

Dwarf frogs are delicate and have sensitive skin so they should not be handled

Dwarf frogs, like all other frogs, will shed so don't be too alarmed if you see your frog kicking it's self. It is just shedding. Usually the frogs will eat their skin after they have shed it.

When buying your Dwarf frog check the front feet for webbing. If there is no webbing then it is a baby African Clawed Frog, which grow up to about 6 inches.

Sexing Dwarf frogs can be difficult. Males are usually slightly smaller and have a pinkish bump on their sides behind the front legs. Males will also call. Females are slightly larger and more "pear" shaped. They also have a larger "tail bump".

During mating the male frog will grab the female in front of her back legs with his front legs. IF eggs are laid the pair will swim to the surface and flip upside down to deposit the eggs. The eggs are small and will stick to plants and the glass of the tank.

## ***African Clawed Frogs - FAQ***

By: [Phoenixx\\_Flame](#), petfish.net Aquatic Frog Forum Moderator

There are many articles out there about ACF's... many are right and some are dreadfully wrong. I have been keeping ACF's for 7 years and have found out many practical rules through trial and error. I have also bred ACF's for a few years and will post details about rearing tadpoles in another topic.

That said... here are the basics... remember these are the very basics and are based on my experiences with ACF's

### **Housing**

ACF's grow to be roughly 6 inches from nose to backside. They should be kept in no less than a 10 gal. aquarium. I keep my breeding pair in a 20 tall tank just fine.

ACF's come from still pools in Africa (obviously), and therefore are irritated by filters that disturb the water too drastically. Hang-on-the-back waterfall type filters are just fine, but should be kept on the lowest flow setting if possible.

Originating in Africa, ACF's prefer temperatures in the mid to high 70's. In most areas, room temperature is just fine, but they will require a heater in areas where the winter is particularly cold... or in areas where it is cold most of the time.

I cannot stress enough how important a tight fitting lid is. ACF's are notorious for escaping their tanks and catching them can be difficult and stressful work. To avoid having a fuzz-covered frog, make sure that you have a tight fitting hood without big gaps. You may even find it useful to use a bit of tape to hold the hood closed if you have one of those ones that has a little feeding hatch.

They don't have any specific lighting needs, a typical day/night light cycle is just fine.

Substrate should be of a suitable size... ACF's go into feeding frenzies and aren't above ingesting gravel. I use larger sized gravel for my younger ACF's and river rocks for the adults.

Live plants WILL be torn up, possibly half eaten, and dislodged from your lovely planting configuration. Silk or plastic plants will end up floating at the top of the water. I don't recommend using any plants in ACF tanks unless they are securely anchored and don't have pieces that can be torn off by the frogs. ACF's can grow to be very strong and are adamant about attacking things they think would taste good. Use your judgement on this one but bear in mind that I've raised ACF's without any kind of plants in the tank with great success.

ACF's like to have a place to hide. If you have a particularly strong filter that you can't foil by arranging decor under its flow, this is essential. You can build caves of appropriate size using aquarium safe rocks, or buy a hideout type decoration for the ACF's. Just make sure that there are

no excessively sharp edges and that the frog has no way of getting stuck inside of the hideout.

Make sure that there is NO METAL in the tank. ACF's are particularly sensitive to metallic ions in the water due to their permeable skin. Do not put them into metal containers when cleaning the tank. Plastic or glass are just fine.

## **Feeding**

ACF's are naturally carnivores but they will scavenge if necessary.

As with all aquatic animals that are kept in captivity a varied diet is important for proper nutrition and health, although no major cases of ACF malnutrition have been documented. I feed my ACF's on a varied diet of adult brine shrimp... both live and frozen (they somehow miss the baby brine shrimp), frozen bloodworms, and floating reptile food sticks (available by several different companies such as Tetra <repto-min> and Wardley <Reptile Diet>) My breeders were originally wild-caught and have even taken to eating the prepared food sticks quite well. Though it is important to feed a richer diet if you plan on breeding them.

Be careful that you don't overfeed... ACF's are bottomless pits when it comes to eating and will often act hungry long after you've fed them. Once a day is just fine, and every other day is just fine as well. Sometimes its good to skip a day between feedings every now and then.

Of course as with all creatures, portions should be sized appropriately. I'll get into more discussion about this when I talk about raising tadpoles.

## **General Care**

ACF's have very sensitive, semi-permeable skin. This means that you must be absolutely sure that the water you use for their tanks is dechlorinated and contains no harmful chemicals.

If you must handle them, try to avoid using a fish net as their fingers are small and not webbed like their dwarf cousins. Fingers can get caught in the holes in a fish net and be amputated. Large brine shrimp nets work wonderfully and so does hand catching them.

Should you choose to hand-catch your ACF's... be aware that there are certain ways you should and shouldn't try to move them. ( see <http://fluffyfrog.com/FrogPondCareF.html#Handling> for photos) Make sure your hands are clean and have no lotions, oils, or soap residues on them when you move your frog.

As with any other aquatic pet, tank cleaning is essential, particularly if you choose to feed live or frozen foods which can foul the water quickly. Doing a 25-50% water change once every two to four weeks is usually sufficient. Should you need to do a full tank change, be sure to keep your frog(s) in a container with a tight fitting lid, I've heard plenty of horror stories about frogs jumping down sink drains accidentally.



## **Tankmates**

I do NOT recommend tankmates for ACF's. These frogs are better kept by themselves for a variety of reasons. Some may argue over this topic, but it is generally a better idea to house ACF's alone.

ACF's will eat any fish that are small enough to fit in their mouths. When the ACF's are full grown, this comes to include most varieties of fishes.

Very large snails such as large mystery snails and apple snails are just fine and help to keep the tank clean. Just make sure the snail is big enough to avoid being ingested.

Newts do NOT make good tankmates for ACF's by any means. I also keep newts and think that they are best kept in a strictly species tank as well. Most newts are poisonous... if an ACF were to try to eat one, not only would you have a dead newt, but a dead frog as well.

Some people have been able to keep large plecos with their ACF's... this is a case by case situation... I don't recommend it, but it has been done.

If you plan on keeping more than one frog, make sure that they are similarly sized. Smaller, younger frogs will become snacks to the bigger frogs should you try to house them together.

Should you decide to keep tankmates with your ACF's, it is best to introduce the tankmate while the ACF is young, this gets them used to the new creature from a period when they are vulnerable themselves.

If you introduce some tankmates be sure that you feed the ACF's BEFORE you add the tankmate. This will prevent the ACF from thinking his new friend is a snack. Although just knocking on the hood of the tank sets my breeders into a feeding frenzy.

Again, I just want to stress that ACF's really do better if housed alone.

## **Sexing**

ACF's are much easier to sex than ADF's are... mostly because they are much bigger and the signs of gender are more outwardly visible.

Mature male ACF's will be much smaller than females... by about 1/4 to 1/3 the size. They also develop dark markings on the insides of their arms called Nuptual Pads. Basically it will look like someone took a black marker and drew a line down the insides of his arms and fingers. They will also have a smooth backside.

Females will be markedly larger than males. They will lack the Nuptual pads, but will have a bump on their butt called a cloaca.

For pictures and more information on sexing see: <http://www.xlaevis.com/sexing.html>

## **Interesting Facts**

ACF's have been to outer space

Some have been genetically altered to have glow in the dark eyes (for laboratory experiments only, these can NOT be found in the pet trade)

They have been used to determine if a woman is pregnant

ACF's were the first vertebrate creature to be cloned (and we all thought it was a sheep!)

And they have been used to test the toxicity of certain chemicals. (all done with embryo development, not with full grown frogs of course)

## ***The African Dwarf Frog***

By Clint Norwood

### **Hymenochirus boettgeri or Hymenochirus curtipes**



An extreme close-up of our goggle-eyed friend, larger than life size

This is the "Dwarf" African frog, not to be confused with the African Clawed Frog which can get pretty big. Dwarfs usually get to a maximum of about 1 and a half inches. You can know you have a real Dwarf if you look at it's foot, it should be webbed, if not then it might be a African Clawed Frog.

Dwarfs are totally aquatic and very easy to care for, they are not too particular about their water, and as long as the temperature is somewhere between 68 and 85°F (20-30° C) they are happy.

African Dwarf Frogs do need a covered aquarium or bowl, they will attempt to escape otherwise.

Dwarfs might eventually learn to accept flakes but usually you'll have to feed them frozen foods such as bloodworms or brine shrimp. Live foods are even better, they will eagerly accept any live worms small enough to swallow along with adult or baby brineshrimp, daphnia, tiny fish and aquatic insects.

Dwarf frogs are usually quite disease free, and they are peaceful occupants in an aquarium with similar sized fish. They will eat small fry, and they are sometimes picked on by larger fish. Dwarf frogs are considered by some to be very good companions for Bettas.



The classic spawning embrace.

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