

# Ornate Horned Frog

**Scientific Name:** *Ceratophrys ornata*

**Class:** Amphibia

**Order:** Anura

**Family:** Leptodactylidae



Ornate Horned Frogs can reach up to 10 inches in length. They are strong and pugnacious, with a huge mouth, large teeth, and a wide body. It is covered with bumpy warts and is intricately colored with geometric patterns of yellow, red and green on a dark background. The underside ranges from pink to yellow and the throat is mottled in gray. The powerful limbs are short, the digits blunt and an enlarged metatarsal tubercle or spade is present on each hind leg. The colors attract attention when the frog is out of its natural habitat and helps to serve as a warning to predators. Its eyelids are drawn up into small 'horns.' The eyes are set as much as three times higher from the lower jaw than in most frogs, enabling this frog to completely hide in loose substrate with just the eyes exposed. Females are slightly longer than males.

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## Range

Pampas region of Argentina, Uruguay, and the Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

## Habitat

Usually near rivers and swamps, and occasionally in some arid regions

**Gestation** Incubation: 18 hours

## Litter

Clutch size: 200 to 1,000 eggs

## Behavior

It lies in ambush in mud or under leaves, concealed by camouflage, and will snap at any prey as it approaches. Even the tadpoles are predatory from the start, attacking other small animals. It likes to fight, and if disturbed will attack larger animals, and will even snap at humans if they try to handle it. It can resist droughts by burrowing in mud and forming a cocoon around its body by shedding several layers of its outer skin. The loose skin will still surround the frog, helping it to keep damp until the drought ends.

## Reproduction

Amplexus lasts from 1 to 4 hours, with the female depositing a tennis-ball-sized clump of 200 to 1,000 1.3-millimeter eggs, which hatch in about 18 hours. The tadpoles grow quickly, and are carnivorous from the start, moving in swarms to overwhelm other aquatic creatures. After 20 to 32 days the first 2-centimeter froglets begin to emerge.

## Wild Diet

Birds, small mammals, frogs, insects, lizards, snakes