

# Golden Mantella

*Mantella aurantiaca*

Amphibian

## Scientific Name

*Mantella aurantiaca*

## Other Names

Golden Frog

## Range

Central, eastern Madagascar

## Habitat

Rainforest and pandanus forests

## Description

A small, poisonous frog with bright yellow, orange or red on the upper surface of the hind legs, black eyes and short legs. Young froglets are olive green in color with dark marks on the back and the hind limbs feature dark bands.

## Average Size

Length: 20 – 26 mm.

Weight: 2 oz.

## Lifespan

In the wild: 8 years

In captivity: Up to 25 years

## Diet

In the wild: Ants, termites and other insects

In captivity: Fruit flies

## Incubation

2 weeks

## Sexual Maturity

12 – 14 months

## Clutch Size

20 – 60 eggs

## Predators

Small mammals, snakes and birds

## Population Status

Critically endangered



## Behavior

The Golden Mantella is diurnal (active during the daytime) and lives in small groups consisting of twice as many females as males. They spend their days searching for insect prey in the trees (arboreal) and lower bushes of the forest and thus have no need for webbed feet. Instead, their short legs are perfect for climbing and holding tightly onto branches.

Like all mantella frogs, this species is poisonous with the alkaloid toxins coming from their diet of ants, termites, and fruit flies. Although not the loudest frogs by far, their call is composed of a series of short notes, each of which includes three short clicks. Males do not call as often as other species of mantella frogs.

## Reproduction and Breeding

Breeding in the wild tends to start after the first heavy rains of the year when there is plenty of food. The male begins by calling to attract a female, and then rapidly moves himself to the females back without amplexus (grasping the female). During this spring breeding season, males claim and protect territories, calling out to the females with a series of short, very rapid clicks. If another male frog wanders into guarded territory, the owner wrestles with him and pushes him back out.

Unlike most other frogs, females do not lay their eggs in water. Instead, they find damp leaf litter, moss or crevices under bark and rocks next to a water source. The eggs are fertilized by the male immediately after laying. The tadpoles hatch without any parental supervision and either wriggle into the nearby water or are washed into small pools by the heavy rains. After about 70 days, the tadpoles metamorphose into froglets.

## Conservation

The Golden Mantella is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN (International Union on the Conservation of Nature) due to many factors: its area of occupancy is estimated at less than 10km<sup>2</sup>, its distribution is severely fragmented, and the extent of its forest habitat is declining due to deforestation and human encroachment. They are also listed on Appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) which controls and regulates their international trade.

Despite these regulations, the number of mature individuals is thought to be declining because of over collecting for the pet trade; the overall population must be carefully monitored to assure the survival of the species.



Sacramento Zoological Society  
3930 West Land Park Dr., Sacramento, CA 95822  
T: 916-808-5888 F: 916-264-5887 E: info@saczoo.org

[www.saczoo.org](http://www.saczoo.org)

**Amazing Facts**

This frog is a member of the Madagascan genus *Mantella*, the members of which have evolved to be very similar in appearance and behavior to the very distantly related Poison Dart Frogs of South America.

The tadpoles of the Golden Mantella do not have external gills, and the eyes are located on the top of the head.

These frogs can live as high as 2900 feet in altitude.

## Golden Mantella



Sacramento Zoological Society  
3930 West Land Park Dr., Sacramento, CA 95822  
T: 916-808-5888 F: 916-264-5887 E: info@saczoo.org

**[www.saczoo.org](http://www.saczoo.org)**