

Puerto Rican Crested Toad Species Survival Plan – Husbandry Guidelines

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1.1. NUTRITION

The adults are each fed one mouse pinkie every second week, and 3-4 large crickets (1 gram per toad) twice per week. All food is dusted with vitamin/mineral supplement. Occasionally mealworms, wax worms and dew worms are offered instead of the crickets. The toads are checked on feeding days and removed from their hides. This also ensures each toad gets its share of the food items. Some toads quickly adjust to the feeding regime and readily emerge from their hides on their own, anxious to feed. All the toads are weighed monthly in order to assess general health. They are not fed two weeks prior to and during the pre-breeding conditioning period (up to six weeks). After each breeding attempt, the toads are offered small amounts of food daily for about one week to increase lipid stores and then cut back to the two day per week feeding schedule.



Toads emerging from hides to feed.

1.2. TADPOLES

Recording hatch dates for toads: The **hatch date** is the **date the tadpole emerges from the egg**. Metamorphosis dates can be recorded as separate comments. This is in

accordance with the AZA “Standards for Data Entry and Maintenance of North American Zoo and Aquarium Animal Records Databases”

To maintain the highest water quality, detritus and uneaten food are siphoned off, and measured water changes with dechlorinated water (up to 40%) are done up to three times per day. Successful metamorphosis is more likely if the tadpoles are left in large volume tubs. When food items are placed in the tanks, a few tadpoles begin to feed, starting what appears to be a swarming around the food items. Tadpoles appear to move en masse throughout the tank.

The tadpoles are fed three times daily so that old food can be removed and fresh food is always available. The morning feeding consists of equal parts Sera-san enhancing flakes, Tetra 4 in 1 FD menu, aquaria herbivore diet, and spirulina flakes.

Flake diet Ingredient Composition

Aquarian Herbivore Diet	24.84%
Tetra FD-Menu 4 In 1 Blend	24.84%
Sera-San Color Enhancing Flakes	24.84%
Murex Spirulina Flakes	24.84%
Ascorbic Acid, Coated	00.63%

The food is moistened with a few drops of water to form a firm ball and rolled in ascorbic acid powder. For example, 1/4 teaspoon (approx. 0.6 grams) of food plus supplement feeds 50 tadpoles (10 days old) at one feeding. Three to four feeding stations are provided per tank. The small balls of food are stuck to the tank wall just at the water surface, or are allowed to fall to the bottom of the tanks. The amounts and number of feeding stations are increased as the tadpoles grow. Calcium blocks will slowly dissolve in the water. A new one should be added to the water before the old one has completely dissolved.

Food from the morning feeding is removed in the afternoon prior to the second feeding. The afternoon feeding consists of Sera-viformo tablets. Two tablets (approx. 0.5 grams) are given per 50 tadpoles (at 10 days old).

The third feeding consists of pieces of 4" by 4" frozen or microwaved (to rupture the plant cells) spinach or lettuce per tank. Lettuce and spinach are fed on alternate days and the pieces are left in the tanks overnight. This provides an overnight food source with little risk of fouling the water.

The main food items for toadlets are pinhead crickets. If gravel is used as a substrate, care is required to ensure that the small crickets do not hide or disappear into the substrate. Fruit flies may be fed as well in the first few weeks. From graph 1 below, the appropriate amount of food to offer for a group of toadlets can be determined. For example, a group of 25 toadlets at 5 weeks would require 2.5grams of food.

As the toadlets increase in size, so does the cricket size. At eight to ten weeks they are offered 1/4" crickets, at 16 weeks they are offered 1/2" crickets and at 24 weeks they are offered 3/4" adult crickets. At 18 weeks the toads are reduced to four feedings per week.

As they approach adult size, other food items such as dew worms or new-born mouse pinkies are introduced. At this time they are put on the same feeding schedule as adults, and the amount of crickets offered is slightly reduced.

Graph 1: Average Weight of food offered per toadlet

