

Hop To It!

The World's Frogs, From Delightful to Deadly

Sure, it looks harmless and cute sitting on a plant in its glass case. But don't be fooled. That tiny gold frog on display at the National Geographic Museum has enough toxins in its little body to kill 10 people — or 20,000 mice!

For that reason alone, it's the star of the awesome exhibit "Frogs — A Chorus of Colors," in Washington through mid-May.

But it's not the only crowd-pleaser. There are 15 types of live frogs hopping around in the museum's rainforest-like enclosures. That's barely a fraction of the more than

5,600 known species of frogs, but this small sampling doesn't disappoint.

Whether your tastes lean toward smooth or bumpy, colorful or camouflaged, humongous or dainty, gliders or diggers, clawed or horned — there's a frog here for you.

Several of them are potentially dangerous, including the dyeing poison frog, a bit of a dandy with its neon-blue legs and yellow-and-black back.

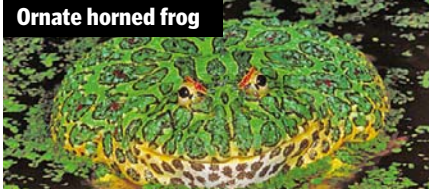
But the others take a back seat to Colombia's golden poison frog, *Phyllobates terribilis*, probably the most toxic animal on Earth, according to its museum write-up. Its poison is used on blowgun darts by native hunters in the rainforest. One swipe across its back makes a dart lethal for a year!

See the Show

WHEN Through May 11.

WHERE National Geographic, 1145 17th St. NW. www.nationalgeographic.com/museum or 202-857-7588.

ETC. Free. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays.



Ornate horned frog

Five Froggy Facts

■ Frogs have been around about 200 million years. They are on every continent except Antarctica.

■ The biggest frog is the West African goliath; it can grow to 15 inches and weigh more than 7 pounds. The smallest is thought to be the Cuban tree toad; adults are less than 1/2-inch long.

■ Frogs were the first land animals with vocal cords. The croaking of some frogs can be heard a mile away.

■ When frogs swallow, they pull in their bulging eyes to help push the food down.

■ Some frogs can leap 20 times their body length.

SOURCE: National Geographic

In addition to the 150 live specimens, the exhibit has videos of frogs croaking and dining, information on how these amphibians help the environment, and what people can do to keep them from disappearing. Also check out the companion exhibit, "Face to Face With Frogs," a stunning photo show by award-winning photographer and explorer Mark Moffett.

— Marylou Tousignant

Don't kiss this guy. He's not called a golden poison frog for nothing.



Leap at the Chance!

This Friday the museum has special Leap Day events, including show-and-tells at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. with the exhibit's frog handler. "The Last Frog," a movie about why frogs are disappearing, will be shown, there will be a leaping contest and visitors can take a virtual tour of a frog's insides.