

DID YOU KNOW?

Lovely Poison Dart Frog

As one of the least vividly colored poison dart frogs, the common name for the lovely poison dart frog (*Phylllobates lugubris*) is a bit of a misnomer. However, despite its comparatively nondescript appearance, this intriguing little frog is worth a second look.

See that bump on this frog's back? That's a tadpole catching a ride. After fertilizing a female's eggs in a nest of dry leaf litter, the male frog of this species will stand guard over his brood for nine to 14 days until the tadpoles hatch, periodically urinating on the eggs to keep them moist and viable. Once the tadpoles emerge, he transports them on his back to nearby forest streams where they continue their development into legged froglets. This metamorphosis takes another two months, and the father frog continues to watch over his young until they reach this stage of independence and self-sufficiency.

Lovely poison dart frogs secrete a toxin from their skin that can cause cardiac arrest and respiratory failure in humans, so don't touch if you see one in the field! They can be found along the Caribbean side of Central America from the southern tip of Nicaragua to central Panama.

— Danielle Taylor

