

Cyclura cyclura inornata

Allen Cays Rock Iguana / Northern Exuma Rock Iguana

Species-specific annual husbandry and breeding protocol anchored to Allen Cays field data, long-term nesting research and the IUCN West Indian Iguana Husbandry Manual.

Core profile Critically Endangered northern Exuma rock iguana of the Allen Cays region, Bahamas. Large, primarily herbivorous Cyclura of xeric scrub, limestone and sandy nesting areas.	Thermal target Strong gradient. General Cyclura guidance supports warm ambient air with cooler retreats; wild rock iguanas use intense sun and maintain high active body temperatures.	Breeding anchor Mating early to mid-May; females migrate to nest sites in mid to late June. Nests are completed from mid-June into mid-July.	Nest / clutch evidence Burrows average about 149 cm long; egg chambers about 28 cm deep and 31.4 C. Clutches 1-10 eggs, mean 4.6; hatching late Sep-Oct.
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Annual keeper schedule

Month	Day air	Night	Bask	UVI*	Light	RH day/night*	Rain / mist	Food d/wk	Seasonal management
January	25-27 C	20-22 C	42-46 C	4-6	10.8 h	55-68 / 68-80%	Dry phase; light AM mist 2-3x/wk	5-6	Cooler dry-season maintenance
February	25-28 C	20-22 C	42-46 C	4-6	11.3 h	55-68 / 68-80%	Dry phase; light AM mist 2-3x/wk	5-6	Condition adults; monitor body condition
March	26-29 C	21-23 C	43-47 C	4-6	12.0 h	58-70 / 70-82%	Dry-to-wet transition; 3x/wk	6	Increase browse / breeder conditioning
April	27-30 C	22-24 C	43-48 C	4-6	12.7 h	60-74 / 72-84%	Rain pulses increase	6-7	Courtship conditioning; nest zone prepared
May	28-31 C	24-26 C	44-48 C	4-6	13.3 h	64-78 / 76-88%	Wet phase; regular rain pulses	7	Main mating: early to mid-May
June	29-31 C	25-27 C	44-48 C	4-6	13.6 h	66-80 / 78-90%	Wet phase; regular rain	7	Nest migration / digging from mid-late June
July	29-32 C	26-27 C	44-48 C	4-6	13.4 h	64-78 / 76-88%	Warm wet phase	7	Late nests; incubation; female recovery
August	29-32 C	26-27 C	44-48 C	4-6	12.9 h	64-80 / 78-90%	Warm; storm rain pulses	7	Incubation
September	29-31 C	25-27 C	43-47 C	4-6	12.3 h	68-82 / 80-92%	Wet / storm season	7	Late incubation; hatching begins late month
October	28-30 C	24-26 C	43-47 C	4-6	11.7 h	66-80 / 78-90%	Wet phase easing	6-7	Main hatchling emergence / growth
November	27-29 C	23-25 C	42-46 C	4-6	11.1 h	60-74 / 72-84%	Rain reduces	6	Transition to dry season
December	25-28 C	21-23 C	42-46 C	4-6	10.7 h	56-70 / 70-82%	Dry phase; light AM mist	5-6	Seasonal reset; no brumation

* UVI 5-7 and monthly RH are practical operational targets, not published physiological thresholds for this subspecies. Basking values are surface temperatures. There is no cold brumation; reproduce a modestly cooler, drier northern-Exuma winter while maintaining year-round basking.

Housing, climate and nutrition

Taxonomy and conservation

The Reptile Database recognizes *Cyclura cyclura inornata* Barbour & Noble, 1916 as the northern Exuma Cays subspecies of *C. cyclura*. The IUCN SSC Iguana Specialist Group lists it as Critically Endangered. Preserve exact island/cay provenance and pedigree in any breeding collection.

Natural habitat

A xeric island rock iguana of the northern Exuma Cays, using limestone, coastal scrub, open basking areas and limited sandy nesting sites. The Bahamas has a warm wet season roughly May-October and a drier, somewhat cooler winter. Low rainfall does not mean chronic dehydration is appropriate.

Enclosure

Large terrestrial enclosure with very high usable floor area, broad basking platforms, limestone-like rockwork, deep retreats and multiple visual barriers. Provide several independent basking and feeding stations. Support heavy rockwork from the enclosure base, not from loose substrate.

Heat and UVB

Maintain a strong thermal gradient: warm seasonal ambient air with cooler shaded retreats and a broad 42-48 C basking surface. UVI 4-6 at the principal basking zone is a conservative high-UV operational target, with immediate access to deep zero-UV shade. Basking surface temperature is not target body temperature.

Humidity and rainfall

Model the Exuma dry/wet cycle mainly through rainfall frequency. Winter surfaces can dry strongly between light mists; from May through October use more regular rain pulses. Always retain buffered-humidity refuges and clean drinking water.

Diet

Primarily herbivorous. Feed diverse calcium-rich leafy greens, edible browse, weeds, flowers and fibrous vegetables with modest seasonal fruit. Nutrient-rich island vegetation influenced by seabird guano is thought to contribute to large body size on some cays; do not imitate this with animal protein or tourist foods.

Body condition

Tourist-fed northern Exuma iguanas can develop altered nutrition and physiology. In captivity, prevent obesity with fibrous plant diversity, large enclosures and exercise. Weigh adults monthly and reproductive females more frequently from April through July.

Social management

Cyclura can inflict serious bite and tail injuries. Introductions must be supervised closely with multiple escape routes and sight breaks. Separate incompatible adults immediately; never force a breeding pair to remain together after repeated aggression.

Breeding, nesting and evidence notes

Annual breeding cycle

Long-term field studies place mating in early to mid-May. Females move 30-173 m to suitable nest sites in mid to late June, and completed nests occur from mid-June into mid-July. Have a full nesting area ready by April, before obvious gravidity.

Nesting

Published Allen Cays nests averaged about 149 cm of burrow length, with the terminal egg chamber usually angled from the main tunnel. Mean chamber depth was about 28 cm and mean nest temperature about 31.4 C. Provide at least 60 cm - preferably more - of deep compactable sand/soil so females can construct long tunnels and choose chamber depth.

Clutch size and frequency

Clutch size ranges from 1-10 eggs, averaging about 4.6, and increases with female size. Only about one in three adult females nests in a given year, but the largest females usually reproduce annually. Do not interpret a skipped breeding year as failure if body condition is otherwise normal.

Incubation and hatching

Natural nest temperatures in the long-term study averaged about 31.4 C. Hatching generally occurs in late September to early October after roughly 80-85 days. For artificial incubation, avoid assuming a single fixed temperature is optimal; use stable moisture, conservative upper-20s to low-30s C settings and record egg mass, substrate water balance and temperature carefully.

Maturity and longevity

Females reach sexual maturity at about 26-27 cm SVL, roughly 750 g and around 12 years of age in the wild - exceptionally late for a lizard. Female longevity apparently exceeds 40 years. Captive breeding plans should therefore emphasize decades-long pedigree and reproductive records.

Nest defense

Females may defend the nest area for at least 3-4 weeks after oviposition. In captivity, allow visual security around nesting females and separate cage mates if defense escalates. Do not repeatedly excavate or disturb a newly completed nest tunnel.

Keeper priorities

Key risks are obesity, dehydration, reproductive obstruction from inadequate nest depth, burns from undersized basking spots, UVB failure and social trauma. For this critically endangered lineage, record parent IDs, cay provenance, mating dates, nest dates, clutch/egg masses, incubation conditions and hatchling metrics.

Evidence anchors

Primary sources: Iverson, Hines & Valiulis (2004) nesting ecology of the Allen Cays Rock Iguana; IUCN/SSC West Indian Iguana Husbandry Manual; Conservation Physiology Exuma seasonal-breeding work; current Reptile Database taxonomy and IUCN SSC Iguana Specialist Group assessment.

Keeper interpretation

Monthly RH, UVI and basking-surface values are practical captive settings built from general *Cyclura* husbandry and Exuma climate, not experimentally defined inornata thresholds. Exact cay provenance, age, body condition and reproductive history should override this generic northern-Exuma schedule where known.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Cyclura cychlura inornata

Your measuring point

Measure UVI at normal back height directly beneath the brightest accessible part of the optional T5 strip. Place the strip toward the middle/back with free access to and away from it; preserve a gradient into fully covered refuges near UVI 0. These numbers describe the exposure area, not the whole enclosure or a daily average.

Measure and adjust

- 1. Use a UV Index meter.** A Solarmeter 6.5/6.5R or equivalent UVI meter is suitable. Broadband UVB readings in microwatts/cm2 cannot be substituted for UVI.
- 2. Measure the installed arrangement.** Warm the tube for about 30 minutes. Keep the reflector, guards and mesh in their normal positions. With the animal elsewhere, hold the sensor at its normal back height, aimed toward the tube.
- 3. Adjust the fixture.** Begin near the lower part of a newly selected working range and adjust gradually. Respect the lamp manufacturer's minimum distance. Recheck after each change and check every higher accessible branch, rock or platform.
- 4. Keep a full gradient.** Provide usable exposure across the animal's body, lower-UVI areas and fully covered refuges near UVI 0. For daytime baskers, overlap the UV area with visible light and appropriate basking warmth while retaining cooler shade.
- 5. Record and recheck.** Log UVI, measuring point, tube-to-back distance, tube age and lamp-on time. Recheck through the year and after changes to the tube, reflector, mesh or furnishings. Exposure duration and behaviour also determine dose.

A T5 range is a working exposure target, not a whole-cage setting, measured wild monthly average, guaranteed optimum or proven safety ceiling. The animal must be able to enter and leave freely.

Monthly target at normal back height

Month	UVI under T5 when on
January	4-6
February	4-6
March	4-6
April	4-6
May	4-6
June	4-6
July	4-6
August	4-6
September	4-6
October	4-6
November	4-6
December	4-6

Refine numerical target

Replace the blanket UVI 5-7 default with an optional adult T5 patch at UVI 4-6, aiming initially around 5. This is a moderate working choice within published exposure guidance, not proof that 5-7 is harmful or a measured optimum for every Cyclura. Published UV-Tool assignments vary even within the genus; no trial was found that makes UVI 7 a necessary default.

Evidence level: Inferred genus-level working range. The seasonal schedule is a captive operating plan; it is not measured wild monthly UV. Off means the existing planned UVB-off/rest phase is preserved. Any staged Off/1 entry still means gradual reintroduction.

UV references: Baines et al. (2016), UV-Tool; Muryn, Baines and Dishman (2026), Reptile Lighting Guide V10. Full rationale and monthly comparison: [UVI_Audit_Report.html](#).