

Cyclura nubila

Cuban Rock Iguana

Protocol for the nominate Cuban Rock Iguana (*Cyclura nubila nubila*), not the Sister Isles Rock Iguana (*C. n. caymanensis*). The published evidence anchors mating, laying, nest architecture and incubation; monthly climate, UVI and humidity values are conservative operational targets that must be adjusted to locality, lineage and animal response.

Core profile Vulnerable, CITES Appendix I, large terrestrial heliotherm. Males average about 40.5 cm SVL and may exceed 8 kg; females average about 32 cm SVL. Primarily herbivorous, with opportunistic crabs or carrion in the wild.	Breeding anchor The IUCN husbandry manual places mating mainly in May and oviposition in June. Guanahacabibes observations also documented active nesting in late May and June.	Nest / clutch evidence Wild nests occur in soil or sand, often beneath rocks or plants. Isla Magueyes tunnels averaged 153 cm with one or two turns; chambers averaged 43 cm deep. Clutches average 8.6 eggs and may reach 30.	Incubation evidence The IUCN manual reports 31-32 C and approximately 70-78 days for Isla Magueyes. Treat these as a strong starting range, then prioritize lineage records, stable temperature and careful moisture control.
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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	25-28 C	19-22 C	42-46 C	4-6	11.0 h	50-65 / 65-80%	Dry maintenance; light AM mist 2-3x/wk	5	Cooler drier phase; maintain lean adults
February	25-28 C	19-22 C	42-46 C	4-6	11.5 h	50-65 / 65-80%	Dry; localized moist refuge	5	Dry-season conditioning; varied browse
March	26-29 C	20-23 C	42-47 C	4-6	12.0 h	52-68 / 68-82%	Dry; exposed surfaces fully dry	5-6	Seasonal warm-up; no brumation
April	27-30 C	21-24 C	43-48 C	4-6	12.7 h	55-70 / 70-84%	Dry-to-wet transition	5-6	Increase food quality; nest zone ready
May	28-31 C	23-25 C	44-48 C	4-6	13.2 h	60-75 / 74-87%	Wet-season onset; regular rain pulses	6	Primary courtship / mating; monitor aggression
June	29-32 C	24-26 C	44-48 C	4-6	13.5 h	64-80 / 78-90%	Wet; regular rain pulses	6-7	Primary oviposition; inspect nest area daily
July	29-32 C	24-26 C	44-48 C	4-6	13.4 h	62-78 / 76-89%	Warm wet phase; possible rain lull	6-7	Incubation / female recovery
August	29-32 C	24-26 C	44-48 C	4-6	12.9 h	62-80 / 78-90%	Warm wet / storm phase	6-7	Incubation; expected hatch window begins
September	29-32 C	24-26 C	43-48 C	4-6	12.2 h	66-82 / 80-92%	Wet / storm peak; strong ventilation	6-7	Hatching / emergence; juvenile growth
October	28-31 C	23-25 C	43-47 C	4-6	11.6 h	64-80 / 78-90%	Wet / storm season easing	6	Hatchlings / recovery; dry exposed surfaces
November	27-30 C	22-24 C	42-46 C	4-6	11.1 h	58-72 / 72-85%	Rain reduces	5-6	Transition toward dry season
December	26-29 C	20-23 C	42-46 C	4-6	10.8 h	52-68 / 68-82%	Drier phase; light AM mist	5	Seasonal reset; reduce rain, not water

* UVI, RH, monthly climate, rain and feeding frequencies are practical facility targets, not experimentally determined species thresholds. Cuba spans several local climates: known provenance and proven lineage records override this generic wet-dry calendar. Basking values are surface temperatures; provide cooler air and immediate deep shade.

Housing, climate and nutrition

Taxonomy and scope

This sheet uses *Cyclura nubila* as requested but is written for the nominate Cuban taxon *C. n. nubila*. Do not apply it unchanged to the Sister Isles Rock Iguana, *C. n. caymanensis*. Preserve exact locality and pedigree records.

Range and habitat

Native to Cuba and offshore cays, with isolated protected mainland populations; an introduced population occurs on Isla Magueyes, Puerto Rico. Habitats include xeric coastal scrub, dry tropical forest, limestone country and sandy or earthen nesting areas. The species uses burrows, rock cavities and dense cover for refuge.

Seasonality

Use a warm tropical wet-dry cycle rather than brumation. The default calendar gives a cooler, drier November-April phase and a warmer, wetter May-October phase, with high rainfall and storm exposure late in the wet season. Local Cuban provenance can shift both rainfall and breeding cues.

Enclosure

The IUCN husbandry manual gives approximately 3.0 x 1.8 x 1.8 m as a minimum for a compatible adult pair and recommends larger housing where possible. Provide substantial floor area, multiple basking zones, deep retreats, diggable substrate, robust rock and log structure, visual barriers, and a large nesting area. Never co-house adult males.

Heat and UVB

Provide a broad 42-48 C basking surface seasonally, with warm air in the upper 20s to low 30s and substantially cooler shade and retreats. UVI 4-6 at the principal basking zone is a conservative open-habitat working target, not a species-specific experimental threshold; animals must be able to leave UV and heat immediately.

Humidity and ventilation

Use strong cross-ventilation and allow exposed surfaces to dry between rain events. Preserve buffered deeper substrate, a humid retreat and drinking water year-round. Wet-season humidity must not become stagnant saturation, especially after heavy misting or simulated storms.

Diet

Base the diet on calcium-rich leafy weeds, browse, flowers, fibrous vegetables and cactus pads, with limited seasonal fruit. Wild Cuban Rock Iguanas are primarily herbivorous but may take crabs or carrion opportunistically; this does not justify routine high-protein captive feeding. Use supplements according to diet, growth stage and measured UVB.

Social management

Adults become strongly territorial during reproductive activity. Duplicate basking, feeding and refuge access and keep immediate separation capacity. Separate for persistent chasing, biting, resource exclusion, inability to retreat, suppressed feeding or declining mass.

Monitoring

Record body mass, appetite, faeces, basking, refuge use, shedding, courtship and digging. Increase checks through May-June and during incubation and hatching. Verify basking surfaces with an infrared thermometer, ambient gradients with independent probes and UVI at animal-back height with a UV meter.

Evidence note

Primary anchors include the IUCN SSC West Indian Iguana husbandry manual, the IUCN SSC Guanahacabibes nesting report, Christian and Lawrence's nest-microclimate study, and controlled Cuban Rock Iguana incubation research. Values labelled operational remain facility starting points rather than proven physiological limits.

Breeding, nesting and incubation

Sexual maturity

The husbandry manual reports sexual maturity at about two to four years. The smallest breeding females reported were about 300 mm SVL and 1.6 kg. Breed by skeletal maturity, condition, veterinary assessment and individual history rather than age alone.

Courtship and mating

Mating is reported mainly in May. Increase rainfall and food quality gradually during spring while maintaining intense basking and UV. Courtship can become forceful; supervise introductions and separate if the female cannot feed, bask or retreat normally.

Nesting timing

The husbandry manual places oviposition mainly in June. At Guanahacabibes, active nest excavation and completed nests were observed from late May into June. Repeated digging, roaming or appetite change in this period requires immediate access to a suitable nest zone and close observation.

Nest provision

Wild nests occur in soil or sand, often under rocks or plants. On Isla Magueyes, tunnels averaged about 153 cm with one or two turns and chambers averaged about 43 cm deep. In captivity, provide at least 60-80 cm of compactable soil/sand plus generous horizontal tunnelling space, privacy, warmth and a moisture gradient. The 60-80 cm provision is a conservative captive allowance, not a measured universal wild depth.

Clutch data

Published husbandry summaries report up to 30 eggs, with an average clutch of about 8.6. Do not treat the average as a normal maximum; enclosure and incubator plans must accommodate substantially larger clutches.

Incubation

For the Isla Magueyes population, the IUCN manual reports 31-32 C and approximately 70-78 days. Use this as the strongest published starting point while respecting lineage history. Avoid temperature spikes, maintain oxygen exchange, and keep the incubation medium humid but never waterlogged or in direct contact with free water.

Expected hatchlings

The husbandry manual reports hatchlings averaging about 9.9 cm SVL and 48.2 g. Prepare secure low retreats, scaled basking choices, measured UVB, finely presented plant foods and shallow safe water before the expected hatch window.

Female recovery / hatchlings

After laying, provide privacy, fresh water, calcium-rich browse and unrestricted normal basking. Persistent digging with lethargy, anorexia, swelling or abdominal fullness requires urgent reptile-veterinary assessment. Record hatch date, mass, SVL, yolk status, feeding, shedding and weekly growth.

Conservation and records

The IUCN SSC Iguana Specialist Group lists the Cuban Rock Iguana as Vulnerable and CITES Appendix I applies. Maintain exact identification, parentage and locality. Do not mix nominate Cuban animals with Sister Isles stock, and retain complete breeding, incubation and transfer records.

Locality caution

Cuba has substantial geographic climate variation. If collection locality or multi-generation breeding records are known, shift temperature, rainfall and reproductive timing to those data rather than forcing this generic annual calendar.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

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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](#).