

Recommended Annual Breeding Schedule

Egernia depressa - Southern pygmy spiny-tailed skink

Habitat basis A small, live-bearing Western Australian skink associated especially with fallen timber and tree hollows in woodland, while some populations also use rock crevices.	Thermal principle Native weather can be cold in winter, but outdoor air minima do not establish safe captive body temperatures. Retain a short daily basking opportunity and a monitored refuge gradient.	Breeding anchor Published reviews report a small litter, typically two and ranging from two to three young, but do not establish precise mating or birth months. Treat the calendar below as a working cycle.
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Month	Day ambient	Night	Basking surface	UVI at bask	Photoperiod	Heat / UV hours	Feeding	Seasonal management
Jan	17-19 C	11-13 C	28-31 C	0.5-1	10 h	3 h	None or 1 small feed	Cool rest - healthy adults only
Feb	19-21 C	12-14 C	30-33 C	1	10 h 30 m	4 h	1-2 small feeds	Staged spring increase
Mar	22-24 C	14-16 C	33-35 C	1-2	11 h 30 m	6 h	2-3 feeds weekly	Emergence / conditioning
Apr	25-27 C	16-18 C	35-38 C	2-3	12 h 30 m	8 h	3 feeds weekly	Conditioning / courtship watch
May	27-29 C	18-20 C	38-40 C	2-3	13 h 15 m	9 h	3-4 feeds weekly	Primary courtship window
Jun	28-30 C	19-21 C	39-41 C	2-3	14 h	10 h	3-4 feeds weekly	Mating / gestation watch
Jul	29-31 C	20-22 C	40-42 C	3	14 h	10 h	4 feeds weekly	Peak activity / gestation
Aug	29-31 C	20-22 C	40-42 C	3	13 h 30 m	9-10 h	4 feeds weekly	Late gestation / births possible
Sep	27-29 C	18-20 C	38-40 C	2-3	13 h	9 h	3 feeds weekly	Births possible / recovery
Oct	24-26 C	16-18 C	35-37 C	2	12 h	7 h	2-3 feeds weekly	Autumn transition
Nov	21-23 C	14-16 C	32-34 C	1-2	11 h	5 h	1-2 feeds weekly	Taper heat and feeding
Dec	18-20 C	11-13 C	29-31 C	0.5-1	10 h	3 h	None or 1 small feed	Cool rest - monitor body mass

Humidity: use a dry, ventilated enclosure with a practical background near 30-45% RH during the active season, normally rising overnight. In winter a moderate rise is acceptable, but keep shelters clean and avoid cold, wet substrate. Maintain one localized humid shedding retreat.

Gradient caution: the day figures are warm-side air targets, not enclosure-wide temperatures. Maintain a cooler retreat around 23-26 C during peak months. Winter cooling must be gradual and is for healthy, well-conditioned adults only.

Practical Husbandry and Pair Management

This revision separates published natural history from cautious captive settings and avoids treating outdoor weather records as direct enclosure instructions.

Enclosure and pair management

For an established pair, use approximately **120 x 60 x 60 cm as a working minimum**, with **150 x 75 x 60 cm or larger preferred**. A family group requires substantially more floor area, several equivalent refuges and more than one basking and feeding position. These are practical captive targets, not published legal minima.

The genus includes strongly social species, and young *E. depressa* may remain with adults, but group compatibility must be demonstrated rather than assumed. Separate for persistent chasing, refuge or basking exclusion, bite wounds, food suppression or declining body mass.

Rockwork and substrate

Provide several secure, tight refuges using hollow cork tubes, fixed deadwood and anchored slab crevices. Western Australian Museum accounts emphasize fallen timber and tree hollows, while historical records also include rock use. Refuges must span warm, intermediate and cool positions.

Use **5-10 cm** of well-drained sandy loam with leaf litter around fixed furnishings. Keep exposed surfaces mostly dry. Provide a localized slightly humid retreat for shedding, but prevent damp pockets beneath logs or rock stacks during cooling.

Basking, light and UVB

During full activity provide a broad surface around **38-42 C**, with warm-side air near 28-31 C and a cooler retreat around 23-26 C. No reliable species-specific preferred-body-temperature or basking-surface study was located, so begin conservatively and adjust from measured behaviour and body condition.

A measured **UVI 2-3** at the main basking position is a cautious working target, with crevices below UVI 1. Provide bright visible light and measure UVB with a meter; lamp percentage alone does not establish exposure.

Diet and supplementation

Published genus-level information describes *Egernia* as omnivorous and historical accounts call *E. depressa* partly vegetarian. Use varied, appropriately sized gut-loaded roaches, crickets, locusts and other safe invertebrates as the active-season base.

Offer safe leafy greens and flowers once or twice weekly and let actual intake guide the amount; keep sweet fruit rare. Avoid relying on mealworms or other fatty larvae as staples. Record plant intake because a precise species-specific ratio has not been established.

Dust most growing-season insect feeds lightly with plain calcium and use a low-frequency multivitamin according to product strength. Avoid routine high-dose vitamin D3 when effective measured UVB is available. Adjust feeding to body condition and activity.

Period	Feeding management
Dec-Jan	No food if inactive; one small meal only if regular basking and digestion continue
Feb-Mar	Increase gradually as heat, light and activity rise
Apr-Sep	Adults 3-4 insect feeds weekly; support reproductive females
Oct	Reduce portions with shortening heat hours
November	Taper to the cool-maintenance level; monitor body mass

Winter management

Use a gradual autumn reduction rather than an abrupt shutdown. The table retains a short daily basking opportunity and a cautious **11-13 C night range** at the coolest point. Kalgoorlie weather records confirm cold winter nights outdoors, but they do not prove that captive animals should be held at 5-7 C without basking.

Continue small meals only while animals are actively basking and digesting. Weigh adults weekly or fortnightly under consistent conditions. Review the cycle for sustained hiding without basking, dehydration, respiratory noise, abnormal faeces or material weight loss.

Water and routine records

Keep a shallow stable bowl of fresh water available and replace it daily. Record basking use, retreat choice, food intake, faeces, body mass and pair interactions separately for every enclosure. These records are especially important because captive biology for this species is poorly documented.

Breeding, Neonates and Accuracy Review

Use the schedule as a controlled starting point and let recorded activity, courtship, gestation and birth dates establish the facility-specific cycle.

Reproductive management

Egernia depressa is live-bearing. Chapple's review reports a mean litter of **two** and a documented range of **two to three young**. Published sources do not establish reliable mating, gestation or parturition months for this species, so the shifted Netherlands windows remain working hypotheses.

Monitor courtship most closely from April through June and females for late gestation from July through September, but record every actual event and revise the calendar accordingly. No fixed age or SVL threshold is used here; breed only full-sized, well-conditioned adults with stable pair behaviour.

Females and neonates

Provide several quiet warm crevices and minimize handling if a female becomes visibly distended or changes retreat use. After birth, add narrow neonatal refuges and low, safely accessible basking ledges. Confirm that every youngster feeds and gains weight; separate any neonate that is bitten, excluded or unable to thermoregulate.

Document pairing history, maternal mass, observed courtship, birth date, litter size, neonatal mass and SVL. Those records will provide a stronger facility-specific basis than extrapolating from climate or other *Egernia* species.

Key references

1. Doughty, P., Kealley, L. & Donnellan, S.C. (2011). Revision of the pygmy spiny-tailed skinks, with descriptions of three new species. Records of the Western Australian Museum 26:115-137. doi.org/10.18195/issn.0312-3162.26(2).2011.115-137
2. Chapple, D.G. (2003). Ecology, life-history, and behavior in the Australian scincid genus *Egernia*. Herpetological Monographs 17:145-180. biology-assets.anu.edu.au/hosted_sites/Scott/2003chapplehm.pdf
3. Storr, G.M. (1978). The genus *Egernia* in Western Australia. Records of the Western Australian Museum 6:147-187. Western Australian Museum PDF
4. Western Australian Museum. Southern pygmy spiny-tailed skink profile: woodland distribution, body size and use of fallen timber and tree hollows. museum.wa.gov.au species profile
5. Australian Bureau of Meteorology. Kalgoorlie climate averages, used only as broad seasonal context rather than direct enclosure targets. bom.gov.au climate statistics

Important: This is a practical evidence-informed protocol, not a controlled experimental standard. Use thermostatic control, independent thermometers, an infrared surface thermometer and a UV meter. Change seasonal parameters gradually and revise the schedule from your own breeding and health records.

What was corrected from the supplied file

Supplied point	Review and revision
Three-month hard brumation at 6-7 C with basking off	Replaced by gradual cooling to 11-13 C nights with a short daily basking opportunity; outdoor weather is not a direct captive prescription.
43-49 C basking surface	Reduced to a cautious 38-42 C because no species-specific preferred-temperature or basking-surface study was located.
Fixed 15-20% summer humidity	Reframed as a dry, ventilated active season with one humid shedding refuge rather than a rigid room-wide target.
Confirmed family-group housing	Softened: sociality is plausible, but compatibility must be demonstrated for each captive group and monitored by weight and access.
Births assigned to June and August	Retained only as a working seasonal window because published timing for this species was not located.
Minimum enclosure from body-length formula	Replaced with clear practical pair and group dimensions, explicitly identified as husbandry targets rather than published minima.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Egernia depressa

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	UVI 0.5-1
February	UVI 1
March	UVI 1-2
April	UVI 2-3
May	UVI 2-3
June	UVI 2-3
July	UVI 3
August	UVI 3
September	UVI 2-3
October	UVI 2
November	UVI 1-2
December	UVI 0.5-1

Retain numbers; clarify measurement

The retained range remains a provisional captive working target. No new species-specific result was found that clearly requires a numerical change. Retaining it is not certification of an experimentally established optimum.

Evidence level: Provisional retention. 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; Murny, Baines and Dishman (2026), Reptile Lighting Guide V10. Full rationale and monthly comparison: [UVI_Audit_Report.html](#).