

REPTILE LEGENDS - KEEPER PROTOCOL

Northern Hemisphere annual schedule - Aramac, Queensland locality

Egernia stokesii - Aramac, Queensland

Gidgee Skink - Aramac locality, Central West Queensland

A robust, social, viviparous skink from the Aramac area of Central West Queensland. This keeper schedule is written for the Northern Hemisphere/Netherlands: the natural Aramac seasonal sequence is shifted by about six months. Taxonomic caution: current Australian Faunal Directory treatment assigns Queensland populations to *E. s. zellingi*; *E. s. stokesii* is the Houtman Abrolhos form. The Aramac locality is therefore retained here as the primary identification.

Taxonomy Aramac locality <i>Egernia stokesii</i> . Current Australian Faunal Directory treatment places Queensland populations with <i>E. s. zellingi</i> ; <i>E. s. stokesii</i> is the Houtman Abrolhos form.	Local habitat Central West Queensland: hot semi-arid gidgee country, rocky/basalt areas, logs and deep crevices. Nearby Barcaldine climate averages about 35-36 C summer maxima and 8-9 C winter minima.	Social system Stable family groups are normal in <i>E. stokesii</i> , often sharing permanent crevices and basking sites. Preserve proven pairs/groups; unfamiliar adults can fight.	Reproduction Viviparous. Aramac-specific breeding data are sparse, so timing uses eastern <i>E. stokesii</i> evidence: natural spring mating and late-summer births, shifted ~6 months for the Netherlands.
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Annual keeper schedule - Northern Hemisphere

Month	Day air	Night	Bask	UVI*	Light	RH day/night*	Misting / moisture	Food d/wk	Seasonal management
January	18-21 C	8-11 C	31-34 C	1.0-2.0	10.1 h	38-50 / 48-60%	Mostly dry; light spray 1x/10-14 d	1-2	Mid-winter rest; low feeding; retain short bask window
February	19-22 C	9-12 C	32-35 C	1.0-2.0	10.8 h	36-48 / 46-58%	Mostly dry; light spray 1x/10-14 d	1-2	Late winter; begin gradual warm-up
March	22-25 C	11-14 C	34-37 C	2.0-3.0	11.8 h	34-46 / 44-56%	Light spray about 1x/wk	2-3	Spring activation; feeding and social activity increase
April	25-28 C	14-17 C	36-40 C	2.5-4.0	13.0 h	32-44 / 42-54%	Light spray 1x/wk	3	Courtship/mating period; monitor established groups
May	27-30 C	16-19 C	38-42 C	3.0-5.0	14.0 h	30-42 / 40-52%	Light spray 1x/wk; moist retreat optional	3-4	Peak mating / early gestation; strong basking access
June	29-32 C	18-21 C	40-44 C	3.5-5.5	14.5 h	32-45 / 42-55%	Summer rain pulse 1-2x/wk, then dry	3-4	Hot active season; Aramac summer-rain analogue begins
July	29-32 C	18-21 C	40-44 C	3.5-5.5	14.7 h	34-48 / 44-58%	Rain pulse 1-2x/wk; dry fully between	3-4	Peak summer; gravid females need secure crevices
August	28-31 C	17-20 C	39-43 C	3.0-5.0	14.1 h	34-48 / 44-58%	Rain pulse about 1x/wk	3-4	Main live-birth window begins; inspect refuges daily
September	26-29 C	15-18 C	37-41 C	2.5-4.0	13.0 h	32-45 / 42-55%	Reduce rain; light spray 1x/wk	3	Births may continue; protect neonates if aggression occurs
October	23-27 C	13-16 C	35-39 C	2.0-3.5	11.8 h	30-43 / 40-53%	Mostly dry; light spray every 7-10 d	2-3	Autumn slowdown; feeding follows activity
November	20-24 C	10-13 C	33-36 C	1.5-2.5	10.7 h	34-46 / 44-56%	Mostly dry; light spray every 10-14 d	2	Cooling transition; shorten basking period
December	18-21 C	8-11 C	31-34 C	1.0-2.0	9.9 h	38-50 / 48-60%	Mostly dry; water always available	1-2	Winter rest; cool, dry and well ventilated

* UVI values are keeper working targets, not a published subspecies-specific optimum. Measure at the animal-accessible basking surface directly under the T5 strip. Provide adjacent crevices and shade down to near-zero UVI. RH is ambient; the enclosure should remain dry and well ventilated rather than damp.

Housing, climate and nutrition

Enclosure and refuge design

Prioritize floor area, thermal gradient and refuge complexity. For an adult pair or established family group, use a large terrestrial enclosure with stacked rock slabs, firmly fixed cork/wood, multiple narrow crevices and several basking shelves. Every animal must have more than one refuge and more than one exit route.

Social housing

E. stokesii forms unusually stable family groups. Long-term pairs and offspring may coexist for years, but this does not mean arbitrary adults can be mixed. Introduce only with abundant space and duplicate resources; watch for exclusion from basking sites, feeding stations or refuges.

Temperature strategy

Aramac lies in Queensland Central West. Nearby long-term Barcaldine normals average about 35.7 C maximum in January and 22.8 C in July, with mean minima about 23.3 C and 8.1 C respectively; sub-zero winter extremes occur occasionally. Shifted to the Netherlands calendar, use the coolest phase Dec-Feb and hottest phase Jun-Aug, while always retaining a localized basking gradient rather than heating the whole enclosure to surface temperature.

UVB / T5 target

Use a linear T5 UVB strip with an exposed basking shelf beneath it. Measure directly at the animal-accessible surface under the tube. Active-season keeper target is approximately UVI 3.5-5.5, tapering to UVI 0-1 in deep crevices; winter target about UVI 1-2. These are captive working targets, not a published Aramac-specific physiological optimum.

Humidity and water

Aramac is semi-arid with strongly summer-biased rainfall. Keep the bulk enclosure dry and highly ventilated, provide fresh water continuously, and offer one modestly humid refuge. In the shifted Northern Hemisphere schedule, modest rain/misting pulses increase in Jun-Sep, but the enclosure must dry fully between events.

Diet

Omnivorous. South Australian field data include both plant and arthropod material, including seeds and fleshy fruits such as ruby saltbush; general records include grasshoppers, grubs, moths, beetles and spiders. In captivity use a varied mix of leafy greens/weeds, flowers, small amounts of suitable fruit/berries and gut-loaded insects.

Feeding rhythm

Feed lightly in winter and increase with spring activity. Active adults generally do well with 3 feeding days weekly, occasionally 4 for gravid females or juveniles. Avoid obesity: these skinks are efficient feeders and low winter activity should be matched by lower intake.

Substrate

Use dry, well-drained soil/sand/clay or a compactable arid mix rather than loose dusty sand alone. Rock and timber structures must be supported from the enclosure base so digging cannot cause collapse.

Handling and health

Minimize handling. Monitor body condition, toes, jaw symmetry, shedding, respiration and social access to resources. Persistent wheeze/nasal discharge, weight loss, mouth lesions or chronic hiding away from the group warrants veterinary review.

Breeding, live young and records

Northern Hemisphere breeding sequence

No Aramac-specific reproductive calendar has been published. The best eastern *E. stokesii* field evidence places mating in Australian spring and births in late summer. Shifted for the Netherlands this becomes courtship/mating mainly April-May and births mainly August-September. Treat this as a locality-informed working schedule and refine it from your own line records.

Viviparity

Females give birth to live young; there are no eggs to incubate. Hawker data from 29 litters found an average of 5.07 young per litter. Across the species, 1-8 young have been reported and litter size increases with female size.

Gestation

After spring mating, maintain strong basking access, good UVB/mineral provision and varied feeding. Do not overheat the whole enclosure. Gravid females should always be able to choose a cooler secure refuge and should not be crowded by other group members.

Birth and neonates

Expect births mainly August-September on this Northern Hemisphere calendar. Labour may span several days. Check refuges carefully, because neonates may remain close to the family group but infanticide has been reported. If adults show predatory or aggressive interest, remove neonates to a secure nursery.

Neonate care

Provide a scaled-down but structurally rich enclosure with narrow refuges, a moderate basking zone, low-to-moderate UVB and small gut-loaded insects plus finely chopped plant foods. Maintain hydration without wet substrate.

Family structure and mate choice

Field genetic studies found most offspring had both parents within the same social group, and many males and females reproduced with the same partner across multiple years. Preserve proven compatible pairs and family line records rather than frequently reshuffling adults.

Female breeding frequency

Not every mature female breeds every year. A substantial minority of field females were non-gravid in some seasons, so skipped years should not automatically be treated as reproductive failure if condition and husbandry are otherwise good.

Taxonomic note

Keep ARAMAC, QUEENSLAND attached to every animal record. Current AFD taxonomy assigns central/eastern Australian populations to *E. s. zellingi* and restricts *E. s. stokesii* to the Houtman Abrolhos. If your founding paperwork says *E. s. stokesii*, preserve that historical label as provenance metadata but do not let it replace the verified locality.

Legal records

The species is not normally managed as a CITES-listed reptile, but maintain complete proof-of-origin, breeder/transfer records and individual IDs in the Netherlands. Keep subspecies/locality data attached to each animal and do not cross geographic forms if conservation-line value matters.

Record keeping

Record animal ID, sex, origin/locality, partner/group membership, monthly weights, winter minima, mating dates, gravid observations, birth dates, litter size, neonatal weights, feeding, sheds and medical events. Long-term pair and family records are especially valuable in this highly social species.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Egernia stokesii - Aramac, Queensland

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	1.0-2.0
February	1.0-2.0
March	2.0-3.0
April	2.5-4.0
May	3.0-5.0
June	3.5-5.5
July	3.5-5.5
August	3.0-5.0
September	2.5-4.0
October	2.0-3.5
November	1.5-2.5
December	1.0-2.0

Retain numbers; clarify measurement

Retain the existing locality working schedule, including the June-July 3.5-5.5 patch. Correct the abbreviated active-season note so it agrees with the table. This locality refinement is inferred and not a measured population-specific UV requirement.

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](#).