

Recommended Annual Husbandry Schedule

Gallotia palmae - La Palma lizard / Bluebeard lizard
formerly *Gallotia galloti palmae*

Identity and taxonomy	Climate and annual cycle	Diet and reproduction
La Palma endemic lineage formerly treated as <i>Gallotia galloti palmae</i> . A July 2026 phylogenomic study elevated it to full species as <i>Gallotia palmae</i> ; the Canary Islands biodiversity database now also treats that name as valid. It occurs across La Palma from coastal volcanic habitats into upland environments.	La Palma has a mild oceanic climate with winter rain and almost rainless summers at the coast. AEMET airport normals run from about 18 C mean in January-February to about 24 C in August-September, while higher-elevation populations experience much cooler conditions. Low and mid-elevation animals remain active through winter on suitable sunny days.	A strongly plant-dominant omnivore. Direct La Palma diet data found plant matter dominating adults, while invertebrates remain important, especially for juveniles. Life-history data report a mean clutch size around 3 eggs; broader <i>Gallotia</i> accounts place reproduction from spring into summer.

MONTH	DAY AMBIENT	NIGHT	BASKING	UVI*	PHOTO	RH DAY / NIGHT*	SPRAY / RAIN	FOOD*	STATUS / BREEDING
January	18-22 C	13-16 C	31-34 C	2-3	10 h 35 m	60-70 / 70-80%	Light rain/mist 2-3x/wk	2-3	Mild winter rest
February	18-22 C	13-16 C	32-35 C	2-3	11 h	60-70 / 70-80%	Light rain/mist 2x/wk	2-3	Conditioning
March	19-23 C	14-17 C	34-37 C	3-4	11 h 45 m	55-70 / 65-80%	Light rain/mist 2x/wk	3-4	Courtship begins
April	21-25 C	15-18 C	36-39 C	3-4	12 h 40 m	55-70 / 65-80%	Light mist 1-2x/wk	4	Courtship / mating
May	22-26 C	16-19 C	38-41 C	4	13 h 25 m	55-65 / 65-75%	Light mist; moist nest	4-5	Mating / first laying
June	24-28 C	18-20 C	40-42 C	4-5	13 h 55 m	55-65 / 65-75%	Light mist 1x/wk; moist nest	4-5	Main laying / incubation
July	25-29 C	19-21 C	41-43 C	4-5	13 h 45 m	55-65 / 65-75%	Mostly dry; moist retreat	4-5	Incubation / hatching
August	25-29 C	20-22 C	41-43 C	4-5	13 h 10 m	55-65 / 65-75%	Mostly dry; moist retreat	4	Late laying / hatching
September	24-28 C	19-22 C	40-42 C	4	12 h 20 m	55-70 / 65-80%	Light mist 1x/wk	4	Hatching / recovery
October	22-26 C	18-20 C	37-40 C	3-4	11 h 25 m	60-70 / 70-80%	Rain/mist 1-2x/wk	3-4	Autumn taper
November	20-24 C	16-18 C	34-37 C	3	10 h 45 m	60-70 / 70-80%	Rain/mist 2-3x/wk	3	Reduced activity
December	19-23 C	14-17 C	31-34 C	2-3	10 h 25 m	60-70 / 70-80%	Rain/mist 2-3x/wk	2-3	Mild winter rest

Calendar: La Palma and the Netherlands are both in the Northern Hemisphere, so the native month sequence is retained. This is a mild winter slowdown, not deep brumation. * UVI, RH, spray and feeding frequencies are captive working targets. Coastal AEMET humidity remains around 70% even in the almost rainless summer, so aim for dry exposed surfaces with fresh water, ventilation and a slightly humid deep refuge rather than a bone-dry enclosure. High-elevation provenance requires a cooler interpretation of this schedule.

Practical Husbandry and Daily Management

La Palma Gallotia husbandry: strong basking, bright UVB, plant-rich feeding, volcanic structure, mild winter reduction and seasonal local moisture.

Enclosure and structure

For one adult, about 120 x 60 x 60 cm or larger is a practical minimum starting point; a breeding pair benefits from roughly 150-160 x 75-80 x 70 cm or more. Provide stable volcanic-style rocks, broad basking ledges, cork/rock crevices, low branches and 15-25 cm of diggable soil/sand/clay. Anchor heavy rocks to the base.

Heat, gradient and UVB

Use bright overhead radiant heat with a broad, escapable basking surface. Peak active-season surfaces around 40-43 C are appropriate while maintaining much cooler shaded retreats. Related Gallotia work places preferred body temperature near 33.8 C, so the basking surface must not become the whole-enclosure temperature. A measured active-season UVI around 4-5 is a practical target, reducing in winter.

Humidity and rainfall

Do not confuse very low summer rainfall with very low air humidity. La Palma Airport normals remain near 70-73% RH through summer. Keep exposed surfaces mostly dry from June-August, maintain drinking water and a slightly humid deep refuge, then increase localized rain/misting in autumn and winter. Strong airflow is essential.

Winter management

At low and middle elevations Gallotia can remain active throughout the year. From November-February reduce ambient heat, basking intensity, food and daylight, but keep a functioning basking option and fresh water. Do not impose deep brumation unless working with well-documented high-elevation stock and a deliberately provenance-specific protocol.

Nest provision

By April provide at least 20-30 cm of tunnel-holding soil/sand with a lightly moist lower layer. Keep part of the laying zone shaded and cooler than the basking site. The female should be able to choose moisture and depth. Maintain this nesting opportunity through August.

Adult diet

Make plant material the majority of the adult diet: edible weeds, leafy greens, flowers, browse and modest seasonal fruit. Direct La Palma comparative data found a very high plant component in adults. Add a smaller rotation of gut-loaded invertebrates such as crickets, roaches, locusts, snails and other suitable prey. Avoid an adult diet dominated by animal protein.

Juvenile diet

Juveniles should receive proportionally more small gut-loaded invertebrates while being offered chopped greens, flowers and soft fruit from the beginning. Increase the plant proportion with growth. Maintain calcium access and appropriate UVB throughout development.

Social management

Adult males are territorial and can fight. Individual male housing is safest. Breeding pairs may work in large structured enclosures, but provide duplicate basking, feeding and retreat sites and separate immediately for sustained pursuit, biting, food exclusion, heat exclusion or weight loss.

Daily keeper checks

Check alertness, gait, toes/claws, eyes/nose, mouth, skin, tail, feces, hydration and body mass. During warm months confirm that deep retreats remain cooler than the basking area. During breeding, monitor female abdominal contour, digging behaviour, calcium intake and post-lay recovery.

Plant and fruit caution

Wild Gallotia consume native fruits, flowers, leaves, shoots and nectar, but captive feeding should emphasize nutritionally useful greens and browse rather than sugary fruit. Fruit is a supplement, not the bulk of the bowl. Avoid avocado, rhubarb and unknown ornamental plants.

Breeding, Eggs and Evidence Notes

La Palma-specific facts are separated from genus-level or keeper-derived starting points.

Breeding timing

Species-level accounts place reproduction from April into July; *Gallotia* life-history field work also sampled during the March-July breeding period. Use March for conditioning, April-May for mating and May-July as the main laying window. Keep the nest zone available through August.

Clutch size and maturity

The 2004 La Palma dataset reported mean clutch size 3.0, female maturity near 78 mm SVL and about 35 months. Broader summaries commonly give 3-6 eggs, so design nesting and calcium support for a range rather than one fixed number.

Incubation

Direct controlled palmae-specific trials are scarce. A cautious starting point is 25.5-27 C in a stable, slightly moist medium. Related *Gallotia* captive data often hatch in roughly two to three months. Record every clutch so temperature and moisture can be refined.

Juvenile management

Give hatchlings dense cover, accessible UVB, modest local basking and frequent small insects while offering finely chopped plant foods from day one. Avoid overheating small enclosures and increase the plant proportion with growth.

Taxonomy note

Cottam et al. (2026) elevated the La Palma lineage to *Gallotia palmae*. Older biology and husbandry literature normally uses *Gallotia galloti palmae*, so both names are retained here for traceability.

Taxonomy: *Gallotia palmae* - High

Peer-reviewed 2026 phylogenomics plus current Canary Islands biodiversity database.

La Palma endemic range - High

Historical and modern sources agree; older literature uses *G. galloti palmae*.

Coastal climate cycle - High

AEMET La Palma Airport 1981-2010 normals: mild winter, winter rain, nearly rainless summer, RH around 70%.

Plant-dominant adult diet - High

Direct La Palma comparative diet sample: plant matter strongly dominated adult diet.

Mean clutch about 3 eggs - High-moderate

Direct life-history comparative dataset for *G. g. palmae*; broader accounts give 3-6.

Year-round low/mid elevation activity - Moderate-high

Species-level Iberian vertebrate synthesis; consistent with mild island climate.

Peak basking 40-43 C / UVI 4-5 - Moderate

Captive translation using *Gallotia* thermal physiology; surface temperature and UVI are not direct palmae field measurements.

Incubation 25.5-27 C - Moderate-low

Conservative keeper starting point derived from related *Gallotia* captive reproduction; direct palmae controlled trials are limited.

Key references

1. Cottam et al. 2026 - species elevation to *Gallotia palmae*. 2. Gobierno de Canarias biodiversity database - current taxon. 3. AEMET La Palma Airport 1981-2010 normals. 4. Molina-Borja & Rodríguez-Domínguez 2004 - La Palma life-history data, mean clutch 3.0. 5. López-Darías et al. 2015 - direct La Palma adult diet. 6. Salvador 2015 - *Gallotia* reproduction/activity synthesis. 7. Albaladejo-Robles et al. 2022 and related *Gallotia* thermal work - used only as thermal context.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Gallotia palmae

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	2-3
February	2-3
March	3-4
April	3-4
May	4
June	4-5
July	4-5
August	4-5
September	4
October	3-4
November	3
December	2-3

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; Muryn, Baines and Dishman (2026), Reptile Lighting Guide V10. Full rationale and monthly comparison: [UVI_Audit_Report.html](#).