

Iguana iguana - Colombia population

Colombian Green Iguana

Colombia locality protocol - lowland northern Colombia / Magdalena-Momposina default. Exact locality within Colombia can alter rainfall timing and should override this generic country-level schedule.

Core profile

Mainland Colombian green iguana; this protocol uses the northern lowland/Magdalena-Momposina population as the reproductive and climate anchor.

Breeding anchor

Field nesting in Depression Momposina occurs from late January through March; hatching mainly April-May.

Clutch data

34 Colombian nests averaged about 29.4 eggs; recorded ranges were 12-44 and 21-56 eggs at two study areas.

Seasonality

No brumation. Reproduce the annual cycle through rainfall, humidity, food abundance and nesting access while keeping tropical temperatures year-round.

Annual keeper schedule

Month	Day	Night	Bask	UVI	Light	RH day/night	Rain / mist	Food d/wk	Seasonal management
January	28-31 C	23-25 C	38-42 C	4-6	11.7 h	62-75 / 75-85%	Light AM mist; drier phase	6	Breeding / nesting begins
February	29-32 C	23-25 C	39-42 C	4-6	11.9 h	58-72 / 72-82%	Drier; 2-3 light mists/wk	6	Main nesting period
March	29-32 C	24-26 C	39-42 C	4-6	12.1 h	60-75 / 75-85%	Rain starts increasing	5-6	Late nesting / incubation
April	28-31 C	24-26 C	38-41 C	4-6	12.3 h	72-84 / 82-92%	Frequent showers	6-7	Main hatching begins
May	28-31 C	24-26 C	38-41 C	4-6	12.4 h	76-88 / 84-94%	Wet; regular rain/mist	7	Hatching / female recovery
June	28-31 C	24-26 C	38-41 C	4-6	12.5 h	74-86 / 82-92%	Wet-season showers	7	Juvenile growth / browse abundance
July	28-31 C	24-26 C	38-41 C	4-6	12.4 h	72-85 / 82-92%	Frequent short showers	7	Growth / recovery
August	28-31 C	24-26 C	38-41 C	4-6	12.3 h	74-87 / 84-94%	Wet; regular showers	7	Peak plant growth
September	27-30 C	24-26 C	37-40 C	4-6	12.1 h	76-88 / 85-95%	Wettest phase	7	High browse abundance
October	27-30 C	24-25 C	37-40 C	4-6	11.9 h	78-90 / 86-95%	Frequent rain	7	Maintain body condition
November	27-30 C	23-25 C	37-40 C	4-6	11.7 h	74-86 / 82-92%	Rain easing	7	Condition toward breeding
December	28-30 C	23-25 C	38-41 C	4-6	11.6 h	68-80 / 78-88%	Transition drier	6-7	Courtship / breeding condition

Basking values are surface temperatures, not whole-enclosure air temperatures. RH targets assume excellent ventilation. Do not create a Colombian dry season by withholding drinking water or allowing dehydration.

Housing, climate and nutrition

Population identity and locality

Use the label *Iguana iguana* - *Colombia population* unless a narrower locality is documented. Colombia contains Caribbean dry forest, Magdalena/Cauca river valleys, humid Pacific forest, Llanos and Amazonian habitat; this schedule is anchored to northern lowland populations where reproductive ecology is well studied. Preserve any more precise locality data.

Natural habitat

Colombian green iguanas occupy river margins, gallery forest, tropical dry forest, humid forest, mangroves and other wooded habitats near water. In the Depression Momposina study, group densities were consistently higher along river margins than around marsh edges, probably reflecting vegetation structure.

Enclosure and structure

A large arboreal herbivore requiring heavy branches, broad elevated shelves, visual cover and a deep terrestrial nesting area. For one adult, about 200 x 120 x 200 cm is a practical indoor minimum starting point; larger room-scale housing is preferable. Adult males should normally be housed separately unless space and social monitoring are exceptional.

Heat, basking and UVB

Maintain tropical air temperatures year-round: generally 27-32 C by day and 23-26 C at night. Provide a broad basking surface around 38-42 C with cooler shaded zones. A measured UVI around 4-6 at the primary basking site is a practical captive target, with easy access to shade below UVI 1.

Humidity, rainfall and water

Northern lowland Colombia has a strong annual rainfall cycle. Use a drier January-March phase, rapidly increase rainfall in April-May, and maintain a humid wet season through much of the remainder of the year. Keep clean drinking water available at all times and provide good airflow; daytime RH can fall temporarily after basking but overnight recovery should remain high.

Diet

Colombian natural-history material describes green iguanas as folivorous/herbivorous; one Universidad Nacional summary reports leaves forming about 57% of the diet in low deciduous forest, with fruit and flowers taken as available. Feed calcium-rich leaves, safe browse, flowers and fibrous vegetables as the base, with fruit a smaller seasonal component. Avoid routine animal protein.

Feeding rhythm

Healthy adults can receive food 6-7 days/week with quantity adjusted to body condition and season; juveniles should have fresh food daily. During the wet-season growth phase emphasize fresh browse and leaf diversity. During reproductive conditioning ensure females enter the season lean-muscular rather than obese and have reliable calcium/UVB access.

Breeding, nesting and evidence notes

Annual reproductive cycle

Direct field work in the Depresion Momposina found nesting from the end of January through March and hatching in April-May. Broader northern-Colombia literature places the full nesting/hatching season from about mid-January into June. In captivity, begin courtship conditioning in November-December, provide nesting substrate before January, and expect the main gravid/laying window from late January through March.

Clutch size

The Colombian study monitored 34 nests. Hatillo de Loba clutches averaged 27.8 eggs (range 12-44), Isla Leon clutches averaged 33 eggs (range 21-56), and the combined mean was 29.43 eggs. The authors cautioned that these exploited populations appeared to have unusually small females, so larger well-conditioned captive females may exceed these values.

Nest design

Natural egg chambers in the study ranged from 9 to 98 cm deep, averaging about 43 cm. Nests occurred most often in clay and sand, but also in mixed sand/clay and sand/gravel. Captive females should receive at least 45-60 cm of warm, compactable, slightly moist sandy-soil mix, with deeper areas for large females. The substrate must hold a tunnel without collapsing.

Incubation

Colombian field hatching occurs mainly in April-May after late-January to March laying. For artificial incubation, use established green-iguana methods rather than claiming a Colombia-specific laboratory optimum: approximately 28.5-30 C in a stable, humid medium is a conservative working range. Avoid overheating and avoid saturated media; egg mass and shell appearance should be monitored rather than routinely adding large amounts of water.

Female management

Gravid females may reduce food and increase digging/restlessness. Maintain hydration, calcium availability and accessible nesting substrate. After laying, prioritize fluids, browse and gradual nutritional recovery. Failure to nest, persistent straining, prolonged lethargy or collapse requires reptile-veterinary assessment.

Breeding management

Preserve locality information. If these are known Colombian-origin animals, avoid crossing them with Caribbean island lineages or color-morph lines if the goal is to retain geographic provenance. Adult male aggression can be severe during reproductive condition.

Evidence anchors

- Munoz, Ortega, Bock & Paez (2003), Revista de Biología Tropical 51:229-239: two Depresion Momposina populations; nesting late January-March and hatching April-May; 34 nests monitored.
- The same Colombian study reported clutch means of 27.8 eggs (12-44) and 33 eggs (21-56), combined mean 29.43 eggs; egg chambers were 9-98 cm deep, mean about 43.4 cm.
- The study sites were tropical dry forest / dry-to-humid transition habitats associated with the Magdalena River and wetlands, and iguana group density was higher along river margins than marsh margins.
- Universidad Nacional de Colombia natural-history material describes Colombian green iguanas as primarily herbivorous and reports leaves as about 57% of diet in low deciduous forest, with fruit and flowers used seasonally.
- IDEAM provides Colombia climate normals and atlas products; exact rainfall timing varies strongly across the country, so a known narrower Colombian locality should supersede this northern-lowland default.
- General green-iguana UVB and artificial-incubation targets are used only where Colombia-specific controlled husbandry trials are unavailable.

Review date: 2 October 2026. Country-level Colombia protocol; refine the annual rain cycle if exact source locality is known.

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

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](#).