

Recommended Annual Husbandry Schedule

Liolaemus splendidus - Splendid lizard

Identity and locality

A valid species described in 2023 from a single known population on basaltic plateau slopes about 9 km north of Piedra del Aguila, Neuquen, Argentina, at roughly 638-650 m elevation.

Habitat and natural history

Saxicolous and robust, using rocky basalt terrain and retreating beneath rocks. The formal description recorded two daily activity peaks and reduced activity during the period of strongest solar radiation.

Reproduction - critical update

The formal species description explicitly states that reproduction data were unavailable. Secondary online sources often call the species viviparous, but this collection has produced two fertile clutches of eggs. One documented egg laid 9 July 2026 hatched 70 days later on 17 September 2026. Manage this stock as oviparous.

Month	Day ambient	Night	Basking surface	UVI*	Photoperiod	Moisture	Adult food offers*	Seasonal management
Jan	8-11 C	6-8 C	Off	Off	8 h	Water check; mostly dry	None	Winter rest
Feb	8-11 C	6-8 C	Off	Off	8 h	Water check; mostly dry	None	Winter rest
Mar	10-14 C	7-9 C	30-33 C limited	1-2	9 h	Light local moisture	1 late	Staged warm-up
Apr	14-18 C	8-11 C	32-35 C	2-3	10.5 h	Light local spray 1x/wk	2-3	Emergence / reconditioning
May	17-21 C	10-13 C	34-37 C	3-4	12 h	Mostly dry; water always	3-4	Full activity / courtship watch
Jun	19-23 C	11-14 C	35-38 C	3-4	13.5 h	Mostly dry	4-5	Mating / follicular development
Jul	20-24 C	12-15 C	35-38 C	3-4	14 h	Moist lay box available	4-5	Egg laying - documented in collection
Aug	19-23 C	11-14 C	34-37 C	3-4	13.5 h	Lay box remains available	4-5	Post-lay recovery / incubation
Sep	17-21 C	10-13 C	33-36 C	2-3	12 h	Light local spray weekly	3-4	Hatching possible - 70 d record
Oct	14-18 C	8-11 C	31-34 C limited	2-3	10.5 h	Light local moisture	2-3	Seasonal taper
Nov	10-14 C	7-9 C	30-32 C limited	1-2	9 h	Minimal	1 then stop	Cooling
Dec	8-11 C	6-8 C	Off	Off	8 h	Water check; mostly dry	None	Winter rest

Climate translation: the native locality near Piedra del Aguila has hot dry summers and cold, wetter winters with regular frost/snow potential. This schedule shifts the Southern Hemisphere seasons by about six months for a Netherlands facility and deliberately keeps captive winter refuges above freezing.

* Species-specific UV requirements have not been measured. UVI values are conservative operational starting points. The formal description noted reduced activity during extreme solar radiation, so every basking zone must have immediate full-shade retreats.

Reproductive evidence hierarchy: primary 2023 description = no reproduction data; secondary public sources = often label viviparous; direct captive evidence in this collection = two fertile egg clutches and a confirmed 70-day hatch. The collection record should guide current husbandry while further clutches are documented.

Practical Husbandry and Daily Management

A saxicolous Patagonian *Liolaemus*: cool air, locally heated rock, secure crevices, an insect-led omnivorous diet and a genuine oviposition site are central to the working model.

Enclosure and refuge design

For an adult, a horizontal rocky enclosure around 120 x 60 x 60 cm is a practical facility starting point rather than a published minimum. Provide stable basalt-like rock shelves and narrow retreats, with multiple fully shaded crevices and a cool end that remains well below basking temperature.

Because the species retreats beneath rocks when approached and reduces activity during intense solar radiation, refuge quality matters more than simply adding heat. Build rockwork from the base so digging cannot destabilise it.

Heat, light and UVB

Warm the animal through an escapable rock-surface basking zone rather than high whole-enclosure air temperatures. Active-season basking around 34-38 C is a cautious starting range; keep surrounding air commonly in the high teens to low 20s C and preserve genuinely cool shaded refuges. Use measured UVB and complete shade.

Humidity and water

The locality is seasonally dry but receives much more winter precipitation than summer. Keep the active-season enclosure generally dry with excellent ventilation, constant clean drinking water and only localised moisture. During the breeding season provide a dedicated lay box with a moist but not wet digging layer.

Diet

The formal description found the diet predominantly insectivorous: ants were abundant in faecal samples, with Hemiptera, flies, beetles, coccinellids, hydrophilids, tenebrionids and spiders also present. Plant remains and *Schinus johnstonii* seeds were also recorded in substantial amounts. In captivity use diverse gut-loaded invertebrates as the base while offering safe leafy material, flowers and occasional suitable fruit/seed-bearing plant matter.

Feeding rhythm

Feed strongly during the active season while monitoring condition. Reduce intake during autumn cooling and stop routine feeding before winter rest once digestion slows. Do not cool animals with a recently full gastrointestinal tract.

Social management

The type description reported apparent social stratification with dominant adults and younger animals using different parts of the plateau. That does not prove captive compatibility. Provide duplicate resources and separate animals for persistent pursuit, refuge exclusion, bite injuries, suppressed basking or loss of body mass.

Daily keeper checks

Record appetite, body mass trend, stool output, basking use, retreat use, skin condition, locomotion and social behaviour. During the reproductive period record digging, abdominal contour and time spent in the lay box. During winter rest record mass and hydration on a planned schedule.

Breeding, Eggs and Evidence Record

This page deliberately prioritises the documented captive record over unsupported secondary claims of viviparity.

Reproductive status

The 2023 formal description states that the authors had no reproduction data. Some later secondary summaries call *Liolaemus splendidus* viviparous, but that claim is not established in the species description. In this collection, females have produced two fertile egg clutches. Current keeper management should therefore treat this stock as oviparous and maintain a functional nesting site.

Collection breeding record

Confirmed: two fertile clutches produced in captivity.

Confirmed incubation outcome: one egg laid 9 July 2026 hatched on 17 September 2026 - exactly 70 days.

Interpretation: this is direct evidence of oviparity in the captive stock. Continue documenting each clutch so the record can be strengthened and compared with future published data.

Nesting and incubation

Provide a private, easily excavated moist lay site from the period of follicular development onward. Once eggs are laid, preserve orientation and record egg mass, dimensions, clutch size, laying date and female mass. Until the successful incubation parameters are fully documented, use the same stable incubation regime that produced the 70-day hatch rather than increasing temperature simply to accelerate development.

Hatchlings

House hatchlings in simple, secure rocky nursery enclosures with narrow refuges, modest local basking, measured UVB and constant water. Start with small gut-loaded invertebrates and document hatch mass, total length, first shed and first voluntary feed.

Evidence confidence

Topic	Confidence and application
Identity / locality	High: formal 2023 species description and current taxonomy
Habitat / diet / behaviour	High: directly described in the type paper
Climate translation	Moderate-high: locality climate is well characterised, but captive values are conservative facility targets
UV requirement	Low-moderate: no species-specific UV study; measured UVI is an operational starting point
Reproductive mode in this stock	High: two fertile captive egg clutches directly observed
Species-wide reproductive mode	Developing: primary description had no data; secondary viviparity claims conflict with captive oviparity record
Incubation duration	High for one documented egg: 70 days; broader range still unknown

Wild climate context

Piedra del Aguila climate normals show roughly 26-28 C summer daytime highs with nights near 10-11 C, while winter daytime averages are roughly 5-10 C and nights near or slightly below 0 C. Winter is also the wetter part of the year. Captive winter values in this sheet are intentionally milder and above freezing.

Record set for every future clutch

Female ID and provenance; male ID; introduction dates; courtship and mating observations; pre-lay mass; digging; lay date; clutch size; egg dimensions and mass; incubation container and medium; water-to-medium ratio; actual min/max temperatures; hatch dates; hatchling mass/length; deformities; and female recovery.

Key references

- Ruiz, Chafrat, Quipildor, Valdecantos & Lobo (2023), Cuadernos de Herpetologia 37(2): 105-129 - formal species description, locality, habitat, diet and behaviour; explicitly states reproduction data were unavailable.
- Reptile Database - current taxonomy and distribution.
- Historical climate normals for Piedra del Aguila, Neuquen - used only to translate broad seasonal thermal context.
- Reptile Legends captive breeding record (2026) - two fertile egg clutches; one confirmed 70-day incubation from 9 July to 17 September 2026.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Liolaemus splendidus

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	Off
February	Off
March	1-2
April	2-3
May	3-4
June	3-4
July	3-4
August	3-4
September	2-3
October	2-3
November	1-2
December	Off

Refine numerical target

Offer UVI 3-4 in the optional T5 area during May-August, starting near 3, with lower spring/autumn targets. Rock/sun-basking ecology and general sunbeam guidance support this cautious working patch. It is not a measured species-specific optimum, and the recommendation is based on microhabitat and activity, not altitude alone. Keep immediate full shade and crevice retreats.

Evidence level: Inferred from sun-basking ecology. 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; Ruiz et al. (2023), description of Liolaemus splendidus. Full rationale and monthly comparison: [UVI_Audit_Report.html](#).