

Recommended Annual Husbandry Schedule

Uromastyx princeps - Princely spiny-tailed lizard

Range and taxonomy Confirmed localities are in Somalia, especially Sanaag, Bari, Nugal and Mudug. Ethiopia/Eritrea records remain uncertain; the current species database states that it is not known with certainty outside Somalia. The historical Zanzibar type locality is considered erroneous.	Habitat and form A very active, rock-associated Horn of Africa species using escarpments, boulder fields and deep fissures. Its unusually short, broad, heavily armed tail and strong claws suit narrow cliff crevices; give usable height as well as floor area.	Conservation and trade All Uromastyx are listed in CITES Appendix II. Retain complete acquisition, transfer and breeding records and verify origin carefully; captive husbandry and reproductive data for this rarely kept species remain limited.
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Month	Day ambient	Night	Basking surface	UVI	Photoperiod	Lamp hours	Surface / refuge RH	Adult feeding	Seasonal management
Jan	20-23 C	15-17 C	38-42 C	2-3	8 h	4 h	30-40 / 40-50%	1-2 light feeds	Mild winter maintenance
Feb	22-25 C	16-18 C	42-46 C	3	9 h	5 h	30-40 / 40-50%	2-3 feeds	Staged warm-up
Mar	25-28 C	18-20 C	48-52 C	4-5	10 h	7 h	25-35 / 35-45%	5-6 feeds	Conditioning / courtship
Apr	27-30 C	19-21 C	48-52 C	5-6	11 h	9 h	25-35 / 35-45%	Daily	Courtship / mating
May	29-32 C	21-23 C	48-52 C	5-6	13 h	11 h	25-35 / 35-45%	Daily	Gravid / laying
Jun	30-33 C	22-24 C	48-52 C	5-6	14 h	12 h	25-35 / 35-45%	Daily	Laying / recovery
Jul	31-34 C	23-25 C	48-52 C	5-6	14 h	12 h	25-35 / 35-45%	5-6 feeds	Peak summer
Aug	30-33 C	22-24 C	48-52 C	5-6	13 h	11 h	25-35 / 35-45%	5-6 feeds	Summer / hatchlings
Sep	28-31 C	20-22 C	46-50 C	4-5	12 h	9 h	25-35 / 35-45%	5-6 feeds	Recovery
Oct	26-29 C	19-21 C	44-48 C	4	10.5 h	7 h	30-40 / 40-50%	3-4 feeds	Autumn transition
Nov	23-26 C	17-19 C	40-44 C	3	9 h	5 h	30-40 / 40-50%	2-3 feeds	Taper
Dec	20-23 C	15-17 C	38-42 C	2-3	8 h	4 h	30-40 / 40-50%	1-2 light feeds	Mild winter maintenance

Operating note: this is a captive-facility starting schedule, not a published species standard. Adjust gradually from measured enclosure temperatures, UVI, body mass, appetite, faecal output and behaviour. The hotspot must always be escapable.

Winter note: U. princeps comes from a relatively warm climate and should not receive the deep winter cooling used for some larger continental species. Retain a daily basking opportunity and feed only after full basking; never combine cold conditions with recent feeding.

Practical Husbandry and Daily Management

A highly active Horn of Africa cliff specialist requiring intense light, broad radiant heat, anchored vertical structure and carefully supervised breeding introductions.

Enclosure, burrow and substrate

Use approximately **150 x 75 x 100 cm or larger for one adult**. A compatible pair needs at least 180 x 90 x 120 cm, duplicate resources and immediate separation capacity. The supplied 120 x 70 x 50 cm enclosure is too restricted for this agile vertical specialist. Provide **20-30 cm of compactable sand-clay loam**, with a deeper nesting zone where construction permits.

Build usable height with anchored shelves, boulder faces, narrow vertical and horizontal crevices and at least two secure retreats. Fix every stone and slab from the enclosure floor before adding substrate. Never balance heavy rock on excavatable soil.

Heat, light and UVB

During full activity provide warm-side air around **29-34 C**, a cooler retreat and broad measured surfaces around **48-52 C**. Use several heated ledges rather than one small hotspot; measure surface and air temperatures separately.

Target **UVI 5-6** at the principal active-season basking position, with complete shade in the burrow and additional areas below UVI 1. Measure UVI at animal height and replace lamps according to meter readings rather than calendar age alone.

Water and humidity

Keep a stable shallow dish of fresh water available and change it daily: experienced breeders specifically report that princeps may drink and benefit from slightly more humidity than many congeners. Maintain a dry, well-ventilated surface and one slightly humid deep refuge; never keep the enclosure or burrow wet.

Diet and feeding

Base the diet on varied high-fibre leaves, safe weeds and flowers: dandelion, plantain, sow thistle, chicory, endive, escarole, collard, mulberry and hibiscus. Uromastyx are primarily herbivorous; routine animal protein is unnecessary.

Offer adults **5-6 times weekly** through full activity and daily during breeding, gravidity and post-lay recovery, adjusted to intake and condition. Soaked lentils, split peas and mixed seeds are small supplements rather than the base. Use plain calcium according to diet and measured UVB.

Social management

Treat adults as individually managed unless a stable pair has demonstrated compatibility. Bright colour and apparent calm do not predict social safety. Provide multiple spaced basking shelves, feeding points and crevices; separate for injuries, chasing, exclusion, suppressed basking or feeding, or declining mass.

Daily keeper checks

Check	Record
Activity	Emergence, basking, digging, retreat use and abnormal hiding
Feeding	Items offered, intake and any food exclusion
Condition	Mass trend, jaw, eyes, skin, tail, feet and faeces
Environment	Hotspot surface, warm/cool air, UVI, burrow stability and water

Veterinary triggers

Seek reptile-veterinary assessment for persistent anorexia, marked weight loss, jaw swelling, weakness, abnormal breathing, repeated unproductive digging, retained eggs, wounds or failure to use heat normally. Quarantine, origin records and faecal screening are prudent for new animals.

Breeding, Nesting and Evidence Review

Direct published breeding data are sparse; seasonal, clutch and incubation values below are conservative working ranges that must be refined from individual and clutch records.

Seasonal breeding management

Use December-January mild cooling followed by a staged February-March warm-up. Experienced breeders note that princeps changes little in winter compared with colder-climate species. Courtship commonly begins during spring warm-up and laying may occur from May through August; treat these as broad working windows.

Introduce animals under direct observation and remove either animal immediately if courtship becomes injurious or access to heat, food or refuge is blocked. Both sexes may become aggressive after breeding; do not assume a previously stable pair remains safe.

Nest provision

Provide a private nesting route before a female appears gravid: at least **25-30 cm** of warm, cohesive sand-clay loam leading to a horizontal chamber. Offer more than one temperature and moisture choice. The chamber should be only damp enough to hold shape, never wet.

Monitor digging remotely and avoid repeated disturbance. After laying, record the female's mass, palpation or imaging findings, hydration, appetite and faeces; provide daily water, heat and generous plant food during recovery.

Eggs and incubation

Specialist captive reports place this small species at approximately **6-15 eggs**. Treat that as a planning range, not a target: individual size, age, nutrition and prior breeding history matter, and direct species-specific datasets are limited. Record every egg separately.

Use **31-32.5 C** as a conservative starting range, with roughly **65-95 days** as a planning window based on specialist genus-level practice. Use barely damp medium, prevent droplets from touching eggs and track egg mass, condensation and logger temperature continuously.

Key references

1. Uetz, P., Freed, P., Aguilar, R., Reyes, F., Kudera, J. & Hošek, J. (eds.). The Reptile Database: *Uromastyx princeps*. Current nomenclature, Somalia localities, uncertain extra-Somalia records and oviparity; accessed 22 September 2026.
2. Wilms, T.M., Böhme, W., Wagner, P., Lutzmann, N. & Schmitz, A. (2009). On the phylogeny and taxonomy of the genus *Uromastyx*. *Bonner zoologische Beiträge* 56:55-99.
3. Spawls, S., Mazuch, T. & Mohammad, A. (2023). *Handbook of Amphibians and Reptiles of North-east Africa*. Bloomsbury. Regional natural history and distribution context.
4. Exotics Keeper (2024). Mastering *Uromastyx* Husbandry and Breeding, interview with Kamiel Hamers. Specialist captive guidance on princeps activity, hydration, mild winter change, clutch size and incubation.
5. CITES. Genus *Uromastyx*, Appendix II. Trade-control status checked 22 September 2026.

Evidence confidence

Topic	Confidence and application
Taxonomy / range	High for Somalia; low for Ethiopia/Eritrea because records are uncertain
Habitat / form	Moderate: regional natural-history literature and specialist reports
Enclosure / feeding	Moderate: genus biology plus specialist captive practice
Captive seasonal table	Moderate-low: facility starting points, to be revised from records
Clutch / incubation	Moderate-low: specialist captive practice, not controlled species trials

Source corrections applied

Eritrea and Djibouti were removed from the confirmed range: the current species database confirms Somalia and regards records outside Somalia as uncertain. The enclosure was enlarged and made taller, substrate was deepened from 10-15 cm to 20-30 cm, and stable cliff-like ledges and vertical crevices were emphasized. Winter cooling was softened, daily water retained, and reproductive values were explicitly marked as provisional.

Record set for every breeding attempt

Individual IDs; dates of seasonal changes; weekly mass; feeding; courtship and mating dates; first digging; laying date and clutch data; egg dimensions and mass; incubator and media details; temperature logger export; fertility; hatch dates; neonatal mass; post-lay recovery and complications.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Uromastyx princeps

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	3
March	4-5
April	5-6
May	5-6
June	5-6
July	5-6
August	5-6
September	4-5
October	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](#).