Recommended Annual Breeding Schedule

Egernia cygnitos - Western Pilbara spiny-tailed skink

Habitat basis	Thermal principle	Breeding anchor
A small reddish member of the E. depressa group from rocky Western Pilbara country. Its short, stout spines and narrow tail are adaptations for anchoring in hard rock crevices.	Species-specific captive thermal data are not published. Use a measured, escapable rock hotspot with several cooler crevices; never heat the whole enclosure to basking temperature.	The species is live-bearing, but detailed timing is not published. On the Netherlands-shifted cycle, treat March-May courtship and June-September births as a working hypothesis to be refined from facility records.

Month	Day ambient	Night	Basking surface	UVI at bask	Photoperiod	Heat / UV hours	Feeding	Seasonal management
Jan	20-22 C	12-14 C	30-32 C	1-2	10 h	4-5 h	1-2 light feeds	Cool maintenance - adults only
Feb	22-24 C	14-16 C	32-34 C	2	11 h	6 h	2-3 feeds weekly	Staged spring increase
Mar	24-26 C	16-18 C	34-36 C	2-3	12 h	7 h	3 feeds weekly	Conditioning / possible courtship
Apr	26-28 C	18-20 C	36-38 C	2-3	13 h	8 h	3-4 feeds weekly	Primary courtship / mating window
May	27-29 C	20-22 C	38-40 C	2-3	13 h 30 m	9 h	3-4 feeds weekly	Possible mating / early gestation
Jun	28-30 C	21-23 C	40-42 C	3	14 h	9-10 h	4 feeds weekly	Gestation - monitor females
Jul	29-31 C	22-24 C	40-42 C	3	14 h	10 h	4 feeds weekly	Births possible / peak activity
Aug	29-31 C	22-24 C	40-42 C	3	13 h 30 m	9-10 h	4 feeds weekly	Births possible / recovery
Sep	29-31 C	20-23 C	38-42 C	2-3	13 h	9 h	3-4 feeds weekly	Late births / recovery
Oct	26-28 C	18-20 C	36-38 C	2-3	12 h	7-8 h	3 feeds weekly	Autumn transition
Nov	23-25 C	15-17 C	32-35 C	1-2	11 h	5-6 h	2 feeds weekly	Taper heat and feeding
Dec	20-22 C	12-14 C	30-32 C	1	10 h	4 h	1-2 light feeds	Cool maintenance - monitor weekly

Humidity: maintain strong ventilation, dry exposed rock and a practical background near 35-50% RH by day, usually rising overnight. Keep one slightly humid retreat and fresh water available. Avoid sustained cold combined with damp substrate.

Gradient caution: the day figures are warm-side air targets, not enclosure-wide temperatures. Maintain a cooler retreat around 24-27 C during peak months and verify each enclosure independently rather than applying one rack thermostat profile to all pairs.

Practical Husbandry and Pair Management

This revision separates confirmed species facts from cautious captive settings extrapolated from the E. depressa group and your established facility cycle.

Enclosure and pair management

For an established pair, use approximately **120 x 60 x 60 cm as a working minimum**, with **150 x 75 x 60 cm or larger preferred**. Greater floor area and many more retreats are required for any family group. Treat these as practical captive targets, not published species-specific minimums.

Group living is plausible from related Egernia, but has not been documented adequately for E. cygnitos. Manage each of your three pairs individually. Separate for persistent chasing, exclusion from the principal crevice or basking slab, bite wounds, repeated food suppression or declining body mass.

Rockwork and substrate

Anchor heavy rockwork directly to the enclosure floor. Build several horizontal and angled slab crevices narrow enough for full-body contact, with entrances at warm, intermediate and cool positions. The animal must be able to thermoregulate without surrendering its secure refuge.

Use **5-10 cm** of well-drained sandy, stony soil around the fixed rock base. Keep exposed surfaces mostly dry. Provide a localized slightly humid retreat for shedding, but do not allow moisture to collect below the slab stack.

Basking, light and UVB

During full activity provide a broad rock surface around **38-42 C**, with warm-side air near 28-31 C and a cooler retreat around 24-27 C. No reliable species-specific preferred-body-temperature or basking-surface study was located, so begin conservatively and adjust from measured behaviour and body condition.

A measured **UVI 2-3** at the main basking position is a cautious working target, with crevices below UVI 1. Provide bright visible light and measure UVB with a meter; lamp percentage alone does not establish exposure.

Diet and supplementation

The closest published species-group information indicates an omnivorous but strongly invertebrate-oriented diet. Use varied, appropriately sized gut-loaded roaches, crickets, locusts, small beetle larvae and other safe invertebrates as the main food during the active season.

Offer safe leafy greens and flowers once or twice weekly and let consumption guide the amount; keep sweet fruit rare. The supplied fixed 20-40% plant target is not retained because it has not been demonstrated for this species. Avoid relying on mealworms or other fatty larvae as staples.

Dust most growing-season insect feeds lightly with plain calcium and use a low-frequency multivitamin according to product strength. Avoid routine high-dose vitamin D3 when effective measured UVB is available. Adjust feeding to body condition and activity.

Period	Feeding management
Dec-Jan	Small meals only when animals are active and basking normally
Feb-Mar	Increase gradually as heat, light and activity rise
Apr-Sep	Adults 3-4 insect feeds weekly; support reproductive females
Oct	Reduce portions with shortening heat hours
November	Taper to the cool-maintenance level; monitor body mass

Winter management

Use a gradual autumn reduction rather than an abrupt shutdown. The table retains short daily basking through winter and a conservative **12-14 C night minimum**, because species-specific brumation requirements are not published and these valuable animals should not be subjected to deep cooling by assumption.

Continue small meals only while animals are actively basking and digesting. Weigh adults weekly or fortnightly under consistent conditions. Review the cycle for sustained hiding without basking, dehydration, respiratory noise, abnormal faeces or material weight loss.

Water and routine records

Keep a shallow stable bowl of fresh water available and replace it daily. Record basking use, retreat choice, food intake, faeces, body mass and pair interactions separately for every enclosure. These records are especially important because captive biology for this species is poorly documented.

Breeding, Neonates and Accuracy Review

Use the schedule as a controlled starting point and let the three pairs' recorded responses establish the facility-specific cycle.

Reproductive management

Egernia cygnitos is treated as viviparous from its phylogenetic position and the reproductive pattern of the E. depressa group. Direct species-specific gestation and birth records remain scarce. The related E. depressa is reported with a small litter, commonly **2-3 young**; use that only as a cautious expectation, not a guarantee for E. cygnitos.

On the shifted Netherlands calendar, monitor courtship most closely from March through May and females for late gestation from June through September. Do not use a fixed age or SVL threshold for breeding: published maturity data for this species were not located. Breed only full-sized, well-conditioned adults with stable pair behaviour.

Females and neonates

Provide several quiet warm crevices and minimize handling if a female becomes visibly distended or changes retreat use. After birth, add narrow neonatal refuges and low, safely accessible basking ledges. Confirm that every youngster feeds and gains weight; separate any neonate that is bitten, excluded or unable to thermoregulate.

Any birth from these animals should be documented with pairing history, maternal mass, courtship dates, birth date, litter size, neonatal mass and SVL. This will quickly make the facility protocol more reliable than generic congener extrapolation.

What was corrected from the supplied file

Supplied point	Review and revision
32-34 C enclosure-wide summer day	Changed to 29-31 C warm-side air with a 24-27 C cooler retreat; the gradient is mandatory.
43-49 C basking surface	Reduced to a cautious 38-42 C because no species-specific basking-surface study was located.
10 C winter night	Raised to a conservative 12-14 C starting range, with short daily basking and continued monitoring.
Probable social group housing	Reframed as established-pair management; related-species sociality does not prove group compatibility.
2-5 young; maturity at 2-3 years	Removed as species facts. Congener litter data are labelled clearly; no fixed maturity claim is made.
20-40% plant diet	Removed as a fixed ratio; invertebrates remain the base and plant intake is recorded individually.

Key references

1. Doughty, P., Kealley, L. & Donnellan, S.C. (2011). Revision of the pygmy spiny-tailed skinks, with descriptions of three new species. Records of the Western Australian Museum 26:115-137. doi.org/10.18195/issn.0312-3162.26(2).2011.115-137

2. Chapple, D.G. (2003). Ecology, life-history, and behavior in the Australian scincid genus Egernia. Herpetological Monographs 17:145-180. biology-assets.anu.edu.au/hosted_sites/Scott/2003chapplehm.pdf

3. ACT Government (2015). Risk assessment for importation of native reptiles: Egernia depressa entry (viviparity and generalist omnivory). act.gov.au native reptile risk assessment

4. The Reptile Database. Egernia cygnitos taxonomic account; reproductive mode listed by phylogenetic imputation. reptile-database.reptarium.cz/Egernia/cygnitos

Important: This is a practical evidence-informed protocol for a poorly documented species, not a controlled experimental standard. Use thermostatic control, independent thermometers, an infrared surface thermometer and a UV meter. Change seasonal parameters gradually and revise the schedule from your own breeding and health records.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Egernia cygnitos

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

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.