Recommended Annual Husbandry Schedule

Leiosaurus bellii - Bell's anole (matuasto de Bell)

Range and taxonomy
Endemic to Argentina, from Mendoza south through La Pampa, Neuquen, Rio Negro and Chubut to Santa Cruz. A terrestrial leiosaurid, oviparous, and assessed as IUCN Least Concern (2016).

Habitat and ecology
Temperate Monte shrubland and transitional Patagonian steppe, usually on sandy or sedimentary soils with scattered stones, open scrub and substantial bare ground. Activity is frequently crepuscular.

Diet and temperament
Carnivorous; field evidence includes tenebrionid beetles. Regional references describe strong aggression and occasional cannibalism. Individual housing is the safest default outside closely supervised breeding introductions.

Month	Day ambient	Night	Basking surface	UVI	Photoperiod	Lamp hours	Surface / retreat RH	Adult feeding	Seasonal management
Jan	20-23 C	14-17 C	34-37 C	2-3	9.5 h	5 h	30-40 / 40-55%	2 feeds	Cool maintenance
Feb	22-25 C	15-18 C	36-39 C	2-3	10.5 h	6 h	30-40 / 40-55%	2-3 feeds	Staged warm-up
Mar	24-27 C	17-20 C	38-41 C	3-4	11.5 h	8 h	30-40 / 40-55%	3-4 feeds	Conditioning
Apr	26-29 C	18-21 C	40-43 C	3-4	12.5 h	9 h	25-40 / 40-55%	4 feeds	Courtship watch
May	27-30 C	19-22 C	40-44 C	3-4	13.5 h	10 h	25-40 / 40-55%	4 feeds	Pairing / mating
Jun	28-31 C	20-23 C	41-44 C	3-4	14.5 h	11 h	25-40 / 40-55%	4 feeds	Mating / follicles
Jul	28-31 C	20-23 C	41-44 C	3-4	15 h	11 h	25-40 / 40-55%	4 feeds	Gravid / laying watch
Aug	27-30 C	19-22 C	40-43 C	3-4	14 h	10 h	25-40 / 40-55%	4 feeds	Laying / recovery
Sep	25-28 C	17-20 C	38-41 C	3	12.5 h	8 h	30-40 / 40-55%	3-4 feeds	Recovery
Oct	22-25 C	15-18 C	36-39 C	2-3	11 h	6 h	30-40 / 40-55%	2-3 feeds	Autumn taper
Nov	18-21 C	12-15 C	32-35 C	1-2	10 h	4 h	30-40 / 40-55%	1-2 feeds	Pre-cooling
Dec	14-18 C	8-12 C	Off / 30-32 C	Off / 1	9 h	0-3 h	30-40 / 40-55%	None or 1	Optional cool rest

Operating note: these are conservative captive starting points, not published species standards. Change temperatures gradually and revise them from measured enclosure gradients, body mass, appetite, faecal output and behaviour. The basking site must always be escapable.

Correction to supplied climate table: the original month sequence paired declining winter temperatures with lengthening days and gave UVI 6-8 without a species-specific basis. This schedule restores a coherent northern-hemisphere light cycle and moderates UV exposure. Deep sub-zero brumation is not recommended without provenance-specific evidence and veterinary oversight.

Practical Husbandry and Daily Management

A robust, secretive and potentially dangerous-to-conspecifics ground lizard from open Argentine shrub-steppe.

Enclosure and substrate

Use at least **120 x 60 x 60 cm for one adult**, with 150 x 75 x 75 cm preferred. Provide visual cover, multiple ground-level refuges and an open foraging zone. Use 15-25 cm of compactable sandy loam with leaf litter and scattered rounded stone; support every heavy item from the floor.

Treat solitary housing as the default. For breeding, use adjacent enclosures or a removable divider and introduce animals only under direct observation. Provide duplicate hides, heat and feeding points, and maintain immediate separation capacity.

Heat, light and UVB

During full activity provide warm-side air around **27-31 C**, a cooler zone around **22-25 C** and a broad basking surface around **40-44 C**. Because the species is often crepuscular, include angled shade and low-cover routes between refuge and heat.

Use bright full-spectrum visible light and target a measured **UVI 3-4** at the main active-season basking point, with complete shade below UVI 1. Measure at body height; lamp percentage is not a dose.

Water and humidity

Keep shallow fresh water available. Maintain a dry, ventilated surface, with a mildly humid retreat or lower substrate zone around 40-55% RH. Lightly dampen only part of the substrate and let the surface dry; avoid persistent wetness or cold-damp conditions.

Diet and feeding

Base the diet on varied, gut-loaded invertebrates: darkling beetles and larvae, roaches, crickets, locusts and other safe captive-bred prey. Avoid wild-caught insects from pesticide areas. Adults generally need three to four modest feeds weekly when fully active; reduce with cool-season inactivity.

Dust most insect meals lightly with plain calcium. Use D3 and multivitamins conservatively according to measured UVB, diet and veterinary guidance. Weigh weekly during seasonal transitions and breeding; this secretive species may conceal decline.

Handling and social risk

Regional references describe this lizard as very aggressive and sometimes cannibalistic. Use tools and a secure transfer box rather than routine hand restraint. Never leave introductions unattended, and do not co-house juveniles of very different sizes.

Daily keeper checks

Check	Record
Activity	Emergence, basking, cover use, digging and abnormal hiding
Feeding	Prey offered, intake, strike accuracy and regurgitation
Condition	Mass trend, jaw, eyes, skin, toes, abdomen and faeces
Environment	Hotspot surface, warm/cool air, UVI, water and substrate gradient

Veterinary triggers

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

Breeding, Nesting and Evidence Review

Species-specific captive reproduction data are sparse; the breeding values below are cautious working parameters, not proven performance targets.

Seasonal breeding management

Use gradual cooling only for healthy, well-conditioned adults. Reverse cooling immediately for sustained activity with weight loss, respiratory signs or dehydration. Restore heat and feeding fully before any breeding introduction.

Introduce a female into a neutral, spacious breeding enclosure only after both animals are active and feeding. End the session at once for sustained pursuit, biting, pinning or blocked refuge access. Given reported aggression and cannibalism, do not assume pair compatibility.

Nest provision

Provide a private laying zone before pairing: at least **25-30 cm** of warm, cohesive sandy loam beneath cover, with one slightly moister tunnel-holding section. Avoid excavation or repeated inspection while a female is actively digging.

After laying, separate the female, record mass and hydration, and restore heat, water and calcium-supported feeding. Repeated digging without laying, lethargy or declining condition requires prompt imaging and veterinary assessment.

Eggs and incubation

The species is confirmed oviparous, but robust published clutch and incubation ranges were not located. Record every egg and treat the first successful clutch as a controlled evidence-gathering exercise. Preserve egg orientation unless the egg is known to have been recently laid.

A conservative first attempt is **26-28 C** in lightly damp vermiculite or perlite, with no free water or droplets touching eggs. Use a calibrated logger and watch mass trend, shell appearance and condensation. Do not increase temperature merely to shorten incubation.

Evidence confidence

Topic	Confidence and application
Taxonomy / range	High: current Reptile Database and IUCN assessment
Habitat / diet	Moderate-high: Argentine protected-area synthesis and field observations
Aggression / activity	Moderate: regional field guide synthesis
Captive climate	Moderate-low: facility starting points derived from ecology
Clutch / incubation	Low: species-specific captive evidence remains sparse

Source corrections applied

The supplied one-page schedule was not reproduced unchanged. Its months were shifted without recalculating day length, producing longer days as winter deepened. Sub-zero brumation and UVI 6-8 were not supported by species-specific evidence. The revised schedule uses coherent northern-hemisphere seasonality, individual housing as default and explicitly low-confidence breeding guidance.

Record set for every breeding attempt

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

Key references

1. Uetz, P. et al. (eds.). The Reptile Database: Leiosaurus bellii. Taxonomy, distribution and oviparity; accessed 22 September 2026.

2. Arzamendia, V. et al. (2016). Leiosaurus bellii. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016: e.T203147A61324899. Range, habitat, diet and conservation status.

3. SIB, Administracion de Parques Nacionales, Argentina. Leiosaurus bellii species account, derived from Scolaro (2005). Habitat, activity, diet, oviparity and temperament.

4. Van Devender, T.R. (1977). Observations on the Argentine iguanid lizard Leiosaurus bellii. Journal of Herpetology 11(2):238-241.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Leiosaurus bellii

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	3-4
June	3-4
July	3-4
August	3-4
September	3
October	2-3
November	1-2
December	Off / 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.