Recommended Annual Husbandry Schedule

Liolaemus tenuis - slender lizard / thin tree iguana

Range and habitat
Endemic to Chile, broadly recorded from Coquimbo south to Los Rios, from sea level to about 1,800 m. It is primarily arboreal, using trunks and low rock or wall perches, and also occupies human structures.

Thermal biology
Laboratory-selected body temperature averaged **37.0 +/- 0.7 C** across two sampled forms/populations. This is a body temperature, not an enclosure-air or basking-surface target; the animal must be able to move between heat, shade and cool refuges.

Diet and reproduction
Published and official accounts describe an insectivorous, egg-laying species. A Chilean assessment reports about six eggs on average. Eggs are retained internally for roughly 60 days and are laid at an advanced embryonic stage.

Month	Day ambient	Night	Basking surface	UVI*	Photoperiod	Moisture cycle	Adult feeding*	Seasonal / breeding management
Jan	14-17 C	9-12 C	Off or 30-32 C / 2 h	0-1	9 h	Light drink/mist weekly	None or 1 small feed	Cool rest; feed only if basking and digesting
Feb	15-18 C	10-13 C	30-33 C / 2-3 h	1	10 h	Light mist weekly	1-2 small feeds	Staged emergence; assess condition
Mar	20-23 C	12-15 C	35-38 C	2-3	11 h	Mist 2x weekly; dry fully	3 feeds	Condition adults; courtship may begin
Apr	23-26 C	14-17 C	37-40 C	2-3	12 h	Mist 2-3x weekly	4-5 feeds	Primary courtship / mating window
May	24-27 C	15-18 C	38-41 C	2-3	13 h	Mist 3x weekly	5 feeds	Monitor females; nest available
Jun	25-28 C	17-20 C	39-42 C	3	14 h	Mist 3-4x weekly	5-6 feeds	Egg laying may begin; advanced embryos
Jul	25-28 C	17-20 C	39-42 C	3	14 h	Mist 3-4x weekly	5-6 feeds	Expected laying window; post-lay recovery
Aug	24-27 C	16-19 C	38-41 C	2-3	13 h	Mist 3x weekly	5 feeds	Incubation / hatch watch; recovery
Sep	22-25 C	14-17 C	36-39 C	2-3	12 h	Mist 2-3x weekly	4 feeds	Late hatch watch; begin seasonal taper
Oct	19-22 C	12-15 C	34-37 C	2	11 h	Mist 1-2x weekly	3 feeds	Autumn taper; record body mass
Nov	16-19 C	10-13 C	31-34 C / 3 h	1	10 h	Light mist weekly	1-2 feeds	Cool-down; stop only after gut clears
Dec	14-17 C	9-12 C	Off or 30-32 C / 2 h	0-1	9 h	Light drink/mist weekly	None or 1 small feed	Cool rest; no forced deep brumation

Northern-hemisphere translation: the published October copulation record in Chile corresponds approximately to April; published December-January laying corresponds approximately to June-July. Exact captive timing may vary by provenance and individual.

* UVI, feeding frequency and enclosure temperatures are conservative facility starting points, not experimentally validated captive requirements. Measure basking surface, air temperature and UVI separately. Keep shade below UVI 1 and never use lamp-output percentage as a substitute for a meter reading.

Cool-season safety: 4-6 C nights in the supplied sheet were not supported by the species-specific sources reviewed. Use a mild cool rest unless provenance and veterinary oversight justify more. Continue access to water, record mass every 2-4 weeks, and reverse cooling for weight loss, dehydration, respiratory signs or sustained activity without digestion.

Practical Husbandry and Daily Management

A small, territorial, diurnal trunk-and-rock specialist requiring vertical structure, bright light, an escapable high-temperature basking zone and varied live prey.

Enclosure and furnishing

For one adult, **90 x 45 x 90 cm** is a conservative facility minimum; **120 x 60 x 120 cm or larger** is preferred for a compatible breeding unit. These dimensions are operational starting points, not published species-specific minima. Use cork trunks, rough vertical branches, low rock ledges and walls with multiple sight breaks.

Create several secure retreats behind bark and among rockwork across warm and cool zones. Fix all heavy structures from the enclosure base. Use a drainage layer and a dry-topped soil/sand/leaf-litter surface; avoid loose stacks and inaccessible cavities.

Heat, light and UVB

The measured mean selected body temperature was **37.0 +/- 0.7 C**. Provide a local **37-42 C basking surface** during full activity, warm-side air in the mid-20s and a cooler shaded zone. The basking value is a surface setting, not a target whole-enclosure or body temperature. Watch for gaping, agitation and failure to retreat.

Use bright visible light and a measured **UVI 2-3** at the main basking perch as a cautious starting point. Provide complete shade and retreats below UVI 1. No species-specific UV-dose trial was located, so meter the exact setup and adjust with veterinary and collection experience.

Water, humidity and ventilation

Provide clean shallow water and droplets after light misting. Humidity varies across the species' broad range; the reviewed evidence does not justify fixed monthly RH percentages. Use wet-dry cycling with strong ventilation, letting bark and surfaces dry fully between events. Keep a slightly moist refuge available during shedding and nesting.

Diet and supplementation

Use varied appropriately sized, gut-loaded live prey: crickets, locusts, roaches, flies, moths, silkworms and other soft-bodied insects. The species is described as insectivorous; vertebrate prey and routine plant feeding are not supported as staples. Avoid relying on fatty larvae or mealworms alone.

Offer adults small meals four to six days weekly during full activity, adjusted to intake and body condition; juveniles generally need smaller, more frequent feeds. Dust most active-season meals lightly with plain calcium, with multivitamin and D3 used conservatively according to measured UVB, diet and veterinary plan.

Social management

Males are territorial and field studies describe polygyny. This does not guarantee captive compatibility. Never house adult males together. Introduce one male to one or more females only in a large structured enclosure with duplicate basking and feeding sites and immediate separation capacity.

Daily keeper checks

Check	Record
Activity	Emergence, basking, climbing, refuge use and posture
Feeding	Prey types, intake, supplements, water and faeces
Condition	Mass trend, eyes, jaw, limbs, toes, skin, tail and wounds
Environment	Basking surface, warm/cool air, night minimum and UVI

Veterinary triggers

Seek reptile-veterinary assessment for persistent weight loss, abnormal breathing, jaw or limb swelling, retained sheds constricting toes, wounds, neurological signs, a gravid female with declining condition, prolonged straining, or failure to resume normal activity after warm-up. Quarantine and faecal screening are prudent for all new animals.

Breeding, Egg Management and Evidence Review

The species lays eggs after prolonged internal retention. Breeding should be managed around documented seasonal cues, advanced embryos and the female's welfare rather than a rigid calendar.

Breeding sequence

A field copulation was recorded on **13 October** in central Chile, early in the Southern Hemisphere spring. On the shifted Northern Hemisphere programme, use March-April as the primary courtship and mating window while accepting that provenance and individual condition can move timing.

The male may approach rapidly, bite the female around the neck or shoulder and mount. Because these normal elements can become injurious in captivity, supervise introductions and separate for sustained pursuit, repeated biting, feeding suppression, blocked basking or refuge exclusion.

Gravid female and nest

Published embryology describes roughly **60 days of egg retention**. A Chilean government assessment reports **about six eggs on average**. Provide several private nest choices by April: approximately 15-20 cm of cohesive, slightly moist soil/sand/leaf-mould that holds a shallow tunnel but is never wet or compacted hard.

Use mass trend, appetite, abdominal contour and reptile-veterinary imaging when available. Separate the female if the male interferes with heat or feeding. Weakness, repeated unproductive digging, prolapse, abnormal discharge or prolonged straining is an emergency.

Eggs and hatchlings

Published work reports laying in **December-January** in Chile - approximately June-July on this shifted schedule - with embryos already well developed. Handle eggs minimally, preserve orientation and use a conservative **22-24 C** trial with stable, moderately moist incubation medium and no free water on shells. This range is a cautious starting point, not a validated commercial recipe.

Record laying date, clutch size, egg mass, incubation temperature and humidity, fertility, hatch date and neonatal measurements. Prepare small vertically structured rearing enclosures before hatching. Keep neonates individually or in closely monitored groups with measured UVI, tiny prey and narrow secure retreats.

Audit of the supplied sheet

Item	Finding and correction
Range / habitat	Broadly correct; clarified as Chile endemic, mainly arboreal with low rock/wall use
Preferred temperature	Supported and made precise: mean selected body temperature 37.0 +/- 0.7 C
Winter 4-6 C	Not supported by reviewed species sources; replaced with conservative mild cool rest
UVB 5-8%	Lamp percentage is not an exposure measure; replaced with meter-based UVI 2-3
Daily mist / 70% RH	No species-specific support located; replaced with ventilated wet-dry cycling
May-June breeding	Shifted earlier: October Chile field mating corresponds approximately to April
Egg biology	Added: about 60 days retention, advanced embryos, average about six eggs

Evidence confidence

High: taxonomy, Chilean distribution, arboreal habit, insectivory, egg laying and mean selected body temperature. **Moderate:** mean clutch, seasonal mating and egg-retention timing. **Low / operational:** exact enclosure size, UVI, misting frequency, captive cooling limits, feeding frequency and incubation range.

Key references

1. Chile Ministry of the Environment, species background sheet for L. tenuis: distribution, habitat, insectivory, oviparity and mean clutch.

2. Labra (1998), Revista Chilena de Historia Natural 71:349-358: selected body temperatures; mean 37.0 +/- 0.7 C.

3. Vidal, Ortiz & Labra (2008), Revista Chilena de Historia Natural 81:171-178: broad climatic range, arboreality and population/sex differences in heating rate.

4. González-Candia (2019), Cuadernos de Herpetologia 33(2):83-86: 13 October mating observation and courtship sequence.

5. Lemus et al. (1981), Journal of Morphology 169:337-349: approximately 60-day egg retention, December-January laying and post-laying embryonic development.

6. Jaksic & Nunez (1979) / later microhabitat studies: trunk and rock use; perch choice varies with local sympatry.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Liolaemus tenuis

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	0-1
February	1
March	2-3
April	2-3
May	2-3
June	3
July	3
August	2-3
September	2-3
October	2
November	1
December	0-1

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.