Recommended Annual Husbandry Schedule

Timon tangitanus - Moroccan eyed lizard / Atlas ocellated lizard

Identity and range

North African Timon from Morocco and northwestern Algeria. Recorded from low elevations to about 2,700 m in the High Atlas, so geographic origin strongly affects winter severity and activity season.

Habitat and annual cycle

Mediterranean rocky scrub, woodland edge, Holm-oak forest, river valleys, high plains and stone walls. Middle- and high-elevation populations undergo winter dormancy; lower populations may have a shorter and milder rest.

Diet and reproduction

Mainly worms, insects and snails, with occasional fruit. Courtship and mating are reported mainly in April-May; females may produce 1-3 clutches of roughly 2-20 eggs, with autumn hatching.

MONTH	DAY AMBIENT	NIGHT	BASKING	UVI*	PHOTOPERIOD	RH DAY / NIGHT*	SPRAY / RAIN	FOOD*	SEASONAL MANAGEMENT
January	8-12 C	6-10 C	Off	Off	10 h	55-65 / 70-80%	Local moisture only	None	Winter rest
February	10-14 C	7-11 C	Off / 28-32 C late	Off / 1	10 h 45 m	55-65 / 70-80%	Local moisture; light mist	None then 1	Rest; staged wake late
March	18-22 C	10-14 C	35-39 C	2-3	11 h 45 m	50-60 / 65-75%	Light mist 2x/wk	2-3	Warm-up / conditioning
April	22-26 C	12-16 C	39-42 C	3-4	13 h	45-60 / 60-75%	Light mist 1-2x/wk	3-4	Courtship / mating
May	25-29 C	14-18 C	40-44 C	4-5	14 h	40-55 / 55-70%	Mostly dry; moist nest	4-5	Mating / gravid females
June	27-31 C	16-20 C	41-44 C	4-5	14 h 30 m	35-50 / 50-65%	Dry surface; moist nest	4-5	Laying / possible next clutch
July	29-33 C	18-22 C	42-45 C	4-5	14 h 15 m	35-50 / 50-65%	Dry surface; moist retreat	4-5	Laying / incubation
August	28-32 C	18-22 C	41-44 C	4-5	13 h 30 m	35-50 / 50-65%	Dry surface; moist retreat	4	Incubation / recovery
September	25-29 C	16-19 C	39-42 C	3-4	12 h 30 m	40-55 / 55-70%	Light mist 1x/wk	3-4	Hatching / recovery
October	21-25 C	13-16 C	36-39 C	2-3	11 h 30 m	45-60 / 60-75%	Light mist 1-2x/wk	2-3	Autumn conditioning
November	16-20 C	9-12 C	32-35 C limited	1-2	10 h 30 m	50-65 / 65-80%	Local moisture	1-2 then stop	Gut-clearance / cooling
December	9-13 C	6-10 C	Off	Off	9 h 45 m	55-65 / 70-80%	Local moisture only	None	Winter rest

Calendar: Morocco, Algeria and the Netherlands are in the Northern Hemisphere, so the native month sequence is retained. * UVI, RH and feeding-frequency values are operational captive starting points rather than direct species-wide measurements. The range spans lowland Mediterranean sites to very cold High Atlas localities; adjust winter depth and duration to known geographic origin. Never allow captive animals to freeze.

Practical Husbandry and Daily Management

Moroccan mountain-Mediterranean husbandry: bright basking, deep retreats, dry summer surfaces and seasonal moisture.

Enclosure and structure

For one adult, about 180 x 80 x 80 cm or larger is a practical starting point; an adult pair benefits from about 220-240 x 90-100 x 90-100 cm or more. Provide broad open basking areas, stable rocks, cork, shrubs or branches, multiple secure retreats and at least 20-30 cm of diggable substrate, with a deeper nesting zone for females.

Heat, gradient and UVB

Use intense overhead radiant heat with a peak basking surface around 40-45 C during late spring and summer, while preserving shaded retreats in the low 20s C. Peak UVI 3-5 is a cautious captive starting range for this strongly heliothermic lacertid; species-specific field UVI measurements are lacking, so deep shade below UVI 1 must always remain available.

Humidity and seasonal rainfall

Do not keep the enclosure uniformly dry. Moroccan populations often use vegetated valleys, oak woodland, stream-cut ravines and deep rock or soil refuges even where the exposed surface is arid. Keep summer surfaces mostly dry while maintaining a slightly moist deep refuge. Increase localized moisture in spring and autumn; nest substrate should be moist enough to hold a tunnel but never wet.

Winter rest

Hibernation is documented at middle and high elevations, but the species spans an enormous altitudinal range. For captive adults of unknown origin, about 6-12 C for roughly 8-12 weeks is a conservative default after complete gut clearance. High-Atlas-derived stock may tolerate a colder or longer rest; warm lowland stock may require less. Never expose captive animals to freezing.

Nest provision

From April onward, provide a deep, shaded nesting area of soil/sand/clay that holds a tunnel without collapsing. A slightly moist zone 25-30 cm deep gives gravid females choice of depth and humidity. Maintain calcium access and monitor females closely because multiple clutches can deplete reserves.

Adult diet

Base the diet on varied gut-loaded invertebrates: crickets, roaches, locusts, grasshoppers, beetle larvae in moderation, earthworms where safe, and especially suitable snails. Fruit may be offered occasionally, particularly in late summer or autumn, but should not replace the invertebrate base. Avoid routine vertebrate prey even though small vertebrates are sometimes taken in the wild.

Juvenile diet

Offer appropriately sized well-fed insects frequently while growing, with regular calcium and correct UVB. Juveniles need shallow water, dense visual cover and a clear but gentler thermal gradient. Do not apply the full adult winter-rest program to small, recently hatched or underweight juveniles.

Social management

Adult males are territorial and should not be housed together. Male-female pairs still need a large complex enclosure with several basking and hiding sites. During the April-May breeding period, monitor for persistent chasing, bite wounds or exclusion from heat and separate immediately if either animal cannot retreat safely.

Daily keeper checks

Check alertness, gait, toes and claws, eyes and nose, mouth, tail, skin, feces, hydration and body mass. During spring breeding watch female body condition, abdominal contour, digging and calcium intake. During winter rest use periodic visual and weight checks without repeatedly warming the animal.

Lighting sequence

Use bright full-spectrum visible light together with UVB and the basking zone. Increase heat and day length gradually from late winter, reach the longest days in June-July, then taper through autumn. During deep winter rest, basking heat and UVB are switched off or kept only as a very limited late-winter transition.

Breeding, Eggs and Evidence Notes

Geographic origin is especially important because Timon tangitanus ranges from Mediterranean lowlands to High Atlas alpine conditions.

Breeding timing

Species accounts place copulation mainly in April-May. Courtship should therefore emerge soon after spring warm-up and strong feeding. Females may continue laying through early and mid-summer, and hatchlings are reported in autumn. Keep the seasonal rise gradual rather than moving animals directly from winter temperatures to peak summer heat.

Clutches and female recovery

A modern Moroccan species account reports 1-3 clutches of about 2-20 eggs. Captive North African eyed-lizard literature also documents repeated clutches, so females require excellent calcium status, hydration and recovery feeding. Do not deliberately push for the maximum number of clutches; body condition takes priority.

Incubation

Captive Timon tangitanus care literature commonly uses about 27-29 C and reports roughly 10-12 weeks incubation. A conservative starting point is 27.0-28.0 C in slightly moist vermiculite or perlite with stable ventilation and no free water touching the eggs. If your established line has known successful incubation parameters, preserve those rather than changing them to match a generic schedule.

Juvenile management

House hatchlings separately from adults and monitor feeding and growth closely. Provide dense cover, shallow water, a smaller basking gradient and accessible UVB. Because the species occurs across strong climatic gradients, the first winter should be conservative; only robust juveniles with known origin should receive substantial cooling.

Origin-dependent winter strategy

Oukaimeden and other High Atlas localities experience snow, repeated freezing days and very cold winter minima, while coastal and lower Mediterranean localities are much milder. Captive wintering should therefore be population-aware. When locality is unknown, a moderate cool rest is safer than imitating the coldest wild extremes.

Evidence confidence

Current taxonomy and range - High

Reptile Database and recent Moroccan species accounts recognize Timon tangitanus as a distinct species in Morocco and northwestern Algeria.

Altitude to about 2,700 m - High

Recent Moroccan field synthesis records the species from roughly 90 to 2,700 m, including Oukaimeden.

Middle/high elevation hibernation - High

Moroccan field accounts explicitly report winter dormancy at middle and high elevations.

April-May copulation - High

Repeated in modern Moroccan species accounts and regional herpetological summaries.

1-3 clutches, about 2-20 eggs - Moderate-high

Reported in the modern Moroccan species account; older captive North African Timon literature also documents repeated clutches.

Diet mainly worms, insects and snails - High

Modern Moroccan species account; fruit is also reported as an occasional supplement.

Incubation about 27-29 C / 10-12 weeks - Moderate

Captive Timon tangitanus guidance rather than a controlled species-wide experiment.

UVI 3-5 / basking surface 40-45 C - Moderate

Operational captive translation from heliothermic lacertid ecology; not direct field UVI measurements for this species.

Key references

Reptile Database; Martinez del Marmol et al. 2019 / Moroccan species account; MoroccoHerps; IUCN Mediterranean assessment; Langerwerf captive North African Timon reports; Dragon Farm captive breeding notes.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Timon tangitanus

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 / 1
March	2-3
April	3-4
May	4-5
June	4-5
July	4-5
August	4-5
September	3-4
October	2-3
November	1-2
December	Off

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.