Recommended Annual Husbandry Schedule

Uromastyx yemenensis - South Arabian spiny-tailed lizard

Identity and range
A medium-sized member of the Uromastyx ocellata group from south-western Yemen. The type locality is near Lawdar in Abyan Governorate. The western form originally named U. yemenensis shobraki was elevated to the full species U. shobraki; this sheet concerns U. yemenensis sensu current taxonomy.

Habitat and form
Rocky desert and semi-desert near the Gulf of Aden and southern Arabian mountains, where summer monsoon influence makes habitats more mesic than inland deserts. Adults reach about 33.2 cm total length; they use rock surfaces, cracks and crevices and should be managed as capable climbers.

Conservation and trade
IUCN Near Threatened and CITES Appendix II. Retain acquisition, transfer and breeding records. Captive origin and the distinction from U. shobraki should be documented rather than inferred from colour or seller wording.

Month	Day ambient	Night	Basking surface	UVI	Photoperiod	Lamp hours	Surface / refuge RH	Adult feeding	Seasonal management
Jan	18-21 C	14-16 C	38-42 C	2-3	8 h	4 h	35-45 / 45-55%	1 light feed	Cool maintenance
Feb	20-23 C	15-17 C	42-46 C	3	9 h	5 h	35-45 / 45-55%	2-3 feeds	Staged warm-up
Mar	24-27 C	17-19 C	47-51 C	4-5	10.5 h	7 h	30-40 / 40-50%	5-6 feeds	Conditioning / courtship
Apr	27-30 C	19-21 C	50-54 C	5-6	12 h	9 h	30-40 / 40-50%	Daily	Primary mating window
May	29-32 C	21-23 C	50-55 C	5-6	13 h	11 h	35-45 / 45-60%	Daily	Gravid / laying begins
Jun	30-33 C	22-24 C	50-55 C	5-6	14 h	12 h	40-50 / 50-65%	Daily	Laying / monsoon moisture
Jul	31-34 C	23-25 C	50-55 C	5-6	14 h	12 h	40-50 / 50-65%	5-6 feeds	Warm wet season / incubation
Aug	30-33 C	22-24 C	50-55 C	5-6	13.5 h	11 h	40-50 / 50-65%	5-6 feeds	Warm wet season / hatchlings
Sep	28-31 C	20-22 C	48-52 C	4-5	12 h	9 h	35-45 / 45-60%	5-6 feeds	Late monsoon / recovery
Oct	25-28 C	18-20 C	45-49 C	4	10.5 h	7 h	30-40 / 40-50%	3-4 feeds	Drying transition
Nov	21-24 C	16-18 C	41-45 C	3	9 h	5 h	35-45 / 45-55%	2-3 feeds	Seasonal taper
Dec	18-21 C	14-16 C	38-42 C	2-3	8 h	4 h	35-45 / 45-55%	1 light feed	Cool 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: use mild cooling only for healthy, well-conditioned adults. Retain a daily basking opportunity and offer small meals only after full basking. Do not combine cold conditions with recent feeding or impose deep brumation without stock-specific evidence.

Practical Husbandry and Daily Management

A medium-sized South Arabian rock specialist requiring intense light, broad radiant heat, anchored climbing structure, seasonal moisture and carefully supervised introductions.

Enclosure, burrow and substrate

Use approximately **150 x 75 x 90 cm or larger for one adult**. A compatible pair needs at least 180 x 90 x 100 cm, duplicate resources and immediate separation capacity. These are conservative facility dimensions, not measured species minima. 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 a broad measured surface around **50-55 C**. Use several heated shelves 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. Maintain strong ventilation and a dry basking surface, but do not manage this monsoon-influenced species as an ultra-dry Saharan form. During the warm wet season, use localized evening misting and a moderately humid deep refuge; the animal and exposed rock must still dry fully each day.

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

Species-specific captive breeding records document mating, laying, clutch size and a hatch interval, but the schedule and incubation settings remain working ranges that must be refined from individual records.

Seasonal breeding management

Use December-January mild cooling followed by a staged February-March warm-up. Specialist records repeatedly place mating in March-April and laying from late April through June. Treat these as strong captive observations rather than fixed biological deadlines, and do not intensify cooling solely to force reproduction.

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

Direct specialist records include clutches of **7 and 8 eggs**, with repeated laying dates from late April through June. Broader clutch limits are not well established for this species. Individual size, age and condition matter; handle eggs gently, preserve orientation after placement and record every egg separately.

One documented 8-egg captive clutch laid on 9 May began hatching on 29 July, about **81 days** later, but the incubation temperature was not published. Use **29.5-31 C** only as a conservative genus-level starting range and validate it with calibrated logging; use barely damp medium and prevent droplets from touching eggs.

Evidence confidence

Topic	Confidence and application
Taxonomy / range	High: peer-reviewed revision and current reptile database
Habitat / adult size	High-moderate: taxonomic revision, type series and Arabian habitat review
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-high for 7-8 eggs and spring laying; moderate for incubation settings

Source corrections applied

Current taxonomy separates western U. shobraki from U. yemenensis. Husbandry was therefore anchored to the Lawdar/Abyan form and the monsoon-influenced southern Arabian habitat. A broad, escapable 50-55 C surface zone was retained as a genus-level starting point, while seasonal moisture was increased without allowing persistent wetness. Incubation temperature remains provisional because the direct hatch record did not publish it.

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.

Key references

1. Uetz, P. et al. (eds.). The Reptile Database: Uromastyx yemenensis. Current nomenclature, Lawdar type locality, oviparity and separation of U. shobraki; accessed 28 September 2026.

2. Wilms, T.M. & Schmitz, A. (2007). A new polytypic species of the genus Uromastyx from southwestern Arabia. Zootaxa 1394:1-23.

3. Wilms, T.M. & Böhme, W. (2007). Review of the taxonomy of the spiny-tailed lizards of Arabia. Fauna of Arabia 23:435-468 - habitat, range, size and monsoon context.

4. Elevages Lisard captive records (2015-2026): repeated U. yemenensis mating and laying dates, 7-8 egg clutches and an approximately 81-day lay-to-hatch interval. 5. IUCN Red List and CITES: Near Threatened; Appendix II.

UVI beneath the optional T5 tube

Uromastyx yemenensis

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.