

Lead-resistant lizards in New Orleans could hold clues to combating lead poisoning

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Tulane researchers found brown anole lizards in New Orleans have record-high blood-lead levels, yet tests of balance, speed and endurance revealed no impairments typically caused by lead exposure. (Photo by Wayne Wang)

New research from Tulane University found that brown anole lizards in New Orleans carry the highest blood-lead levels ever recorded in a vertebrate —

amounts that would be lethal to most other animals — yet they appear unaffected.

The **study**, published this month in *Environmental Research*, found that the lizards' blood lead levels exceeded all previously reported values for fish, amphibians, birds, reptiles and mammals.

“What’s astonishing is that these lizards aren’t just surviving, they’re thriving with lead burden that would be catastrophic for most other animals,” said study author Alex Gunderson, assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology in Tulane’s School of Science and Engineering.

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