

Study: Invasive lizards' tempers flare with the heat

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Turns out those New Orleans lizards with record levels of lead in their blood are also picking more fights — but heat, not heavy metal, may be driving their aggression.

A new Tulane University [study](#) published in the *Journal of Thermal Biology* finds that invasive brown anoles become more aggressive toward native green anoles as temperatures rise, suggesting that warming conditions could tip the competitive balance between the two species.

Earlier Tulane [research](#) revealed record-high levels of lead in brown anoles collected in New Orleans, prompting questions about whether lead exposure

could explain their feisty tendencies. While the team can't rule out a connection, the evidence so far points elsewhere, said senior study author Alex Gunderson, assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology in Tulane's **School of Science and Engineering**.

“Invasive species cause a lot of ecological and economic damage, so biologists are really interested in understanding what makes these species so successful.”

Julie Rej, School of Science and Engineering

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