Fire ants began invading fence lizard habitat over 70 years ago. Fire ants are venomous and potentially deadly when attacking and when being eaten because they sting lizards in the mouth. Fence lizards have been evolving, however, in response to the novel selective pressures posed by fire ants, although it is not always a simple evolutionary response. A native fence lizard’s propensity to eat invasive fire ants is a result of both lifetime exposure and evolutionary selective pressures that vary across ontogeny. Juveniles intrinsically have higher propensities to eat fire ants than adults, but lifetime exposure reverses this trend. See Robbins & Langkilde, pp. 1937–1946. Editor’s Choice Article.

Photo: Tracy Langkilde and Travis R. Robbins.