

FENCE LIZARD

Photos by Tracy Langkilde



Photo 1. A fence lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*) basks in the afternoon sunshine.

Life has been less peaceful for these fence lizards since fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*) were introduced to the USA ~70 years ago. These invaders aggressively attack fence lizards. The consequences can be lethal, but these lizards have begun to fight back. Fence lizards from populations that have coexisted with fire ants for longer periods increase their chances of survival by performing vigorous body twitches that remove attacking ants, and by fleeing from the source of the assault. They also have longer hind limbs, which enhance the effectiveness of these strategies.



Photo 2. A juvenile fence lizard, *Sceloporus undulatus*, basking next to an active invasive fire ant mound, *Solenopsis invicta*, that can be seen along the right hand edge of the garden railing.

These photographs illustrate the article “Invasive fire ants alter behavior and morphology of native lizards,” by Tracy Langkilde, tentatively scheduled to appear in *Ecology* 90(1), January 2009.