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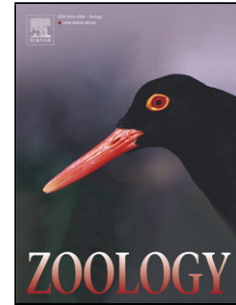
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The ability of lizards to identify an artificial Batesian mimic

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Highlights

- Reptile predators are poorly studied in the context of the evolution of warning signals.
- Gran Canaria skinks refuse red firebugs and their artificially prepared mimics.
- Previous food experience does not reduce this aversion.

Abstract

Birds are usually considered the main predators shaping the evolution of aposematic signals and mimicry. Nevertheless, some lizards also represent predominately visually oriented predators, so they may also play an important role in the evolution of aposematism. Despite this fact, experimental evidence regarding the responses of lizards to aposematic prey is very poor compared to such evidence in birds. Lizards possess very similar sensory and cognitive abilities to those of birds and their response to aposematic prey may thus be affected by very similar processes. We investigated the reactions of a lizard, the Gran Canaria skink (*Chalcides sexlineatus*), to an aposematic prey and its artificial Batesian mimic. Further, we attempted to ascertain whether the lizard's food experience has any effect on its ability to recognise an artificial Batesian mimic, by using two groups of predators differing in their

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