

# Green Anoles and the Department of Defense

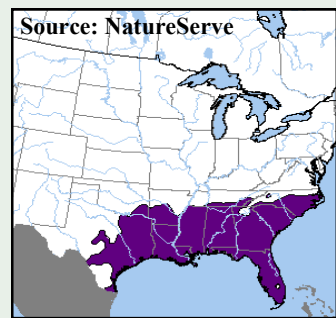


Picture by Paul Block

The Green Anole (*Anolis carolinensis*) is a lizard that, despite its name, is as almost as often brown as it is green. The same individual's color changes because of mood and/or environmental conditions. It is called (improperly) "chameleon" by many familiar with it.

**Description:** Green Anoles are medium-sized lizards measuring 5-8 inches (12-20 cm) in total length. They can change color within minutes from brown to green or vice versa. Males have an elongate cartilage in the throat that can be extended from the body to display the dewlap, a brightly colored patch of skin that is used in territorial and courtship displays. These lizards also have expanded toe pads with hair-like structures that adhere to smooth surfaces such as leaves, tree bark, and walls.

**Range:** This species occurs throughout the southeastern United States, including southern and eastern Texas, southeastern Oklahoma, central Arkansas, Tennessee, and North



Carolina south to the Rio Grande, Gulf Coast, and Florida Keys. It has also been introduced and is established in the Hawaiian Islands.

**Habitat:** Green Anoles spend most of their time in trees and shrubs and are habitat generalists, occupying a wide variety of habitats, including upland forests, swamps, wooded parks, cleared fields, flower gardens, and residential lots.

**Behavior:** Male Green Anoles are strongly territorial in spring and summer. When approached by another male, a resident male extends his red dewlap and bobs his head. If the intruding male continues his trespass, a heated battle may ensue that includes physical interactions such as biting. Courtship occurs from spring through summer. Females, generally smaller than males, lay a single egg at intervals of about 3 weeks. Eggs are buried in moist soil, sphagnum, leaf litter, rotting wood, or under rocks and debris. Eggs hatch in 5-7 weeks. Green Anoles sleep in vegetation at night. In cold weather, they seek cover but do not go deep underground, which likely restricts their distribution to areas with warmer climates.

**Military Interactions:** One of the most commonly encountered reptiles on DoD properties in the Southeast. This lizard is typically encountered both in military training and housing areas.

**Conservation Status:** The Green Anole has no federal conservation status, and where present, tends to be quite common. It has a NatureServe Raking of G5-Secure, and is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN Red list.

**Threats/Planning Considerations:** This species appears to be disappearing in part of Florida where the introduced brown anole has become established. This factor, competition with and predation by other non-native anoles, and human-caused habitat degradation have caused declines in central and southern Florida. A habitat management practice to benefit this species is to restore and/or maintain patches of forest.



Occurrence on Military Lands	
Confirmed	Potential
Confirmed present on 66 military properties (15 Air Force; 22 Army; 8 Marine Corps; and 21 Navy).	Up to an additional 39 military properties (13 Air Force; 10 Army; and 16 Navy).