

1 **Title page:**

2 **Impact of developmental temperatures on the repeatability of thermal**
3 **plasticity in metabolic rate**

4

5 Fonti Kar¹, Shinichi Nakagawa¹, Daniel W.A. Noble²

6 *1 School of Biological Earth and Environmental Sciences, Ecology and Evolution Research*
7 *Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, Australia*

8 *2 Division of Ecology and Evolution, Research School of Biology, The Australian National*
9 *University, Canberra, ACT, Australia*

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11 Corresponding author: Fonti Kar

12 Correspondence email: fonti.kar@gmail.com

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16

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22 **Abstract**

23 Phenotypic plasticity is an important mechanism that allows populations to adjust to
24 changing environments. Plastic responses induced by early life experiences can have lasting
25 impacts on how individuals respond to environmental variation later in life (i.e., reversible
26 plasticity). Developmental environments can also influence repeatability of plastic responses
27 thereby altering the capacity for reaction norms to respond to selection. Here, we compared
28 metabolic thermal reaction norms in lizards (*Lampropholis delicata*) that were incubated at
29 two developmental temperatures ($n_{\text{cold}} = 26$, $n_{\text{hot}} = 25$). We repeatedly measured individual
30 reaction norms across six acute temperatures 10 times over ~ 3.5 months ($n_{\text{obs}} = 3,818$) to
31 estimate the repeatability of average metabolic rate (intercept) and thermal plasticity (slope).
32 The intercept and the slope of the population-level thermal reaction norm did not change with
33 developmental temperatures. Repeatability of average metabolic rate was, on average, 10%
34 lower in hot incubated lizards and was stable across acute temperatures. The slope of the
35 reaction norm was moderately repeatable ($R = 0.44$, 95% CI = 0.035 – 0.93) suggesting that
36 individual metabolic rate changed consistently with acute temperature, although credible
37 intervals were quite broad. Importantly, reaction norm repeatability did not depend on early
38 developmental temperature. Our work implies that thermal plasticity has the capacity to
39 evolve, despite there being less consistent variation in metabolic rate under hot environments.
40 This capacity for thermal plasticity to evolve will be increasingly more important for
41 terrestrial ectotherms living in changing climate.

42 **Introduction**

43 A substantial amount of variation in an individual's phenotype is determined by
44 formative processes experienced throughout embryonic development. Environmental
45 perturbations during this critical period can have persistent effects on an individual's
46 physiology, morphology, behaviour and life history (Noble et al. 2018; Eyck et al. 2019;
47 O'Dea et al. 2019). Developmental shifts in phenotypes may be adaptative if it allows
48 organisms to better cope in similar environments later in life (Beldade et al. 2011). However,
49 environment-phenotype mismatches can occur when developmental cues fail to predict later
50 life conditions (Auld et al. 2010; Bonamour et al. 2019). A multitude of traits throughout an
51 animal's life are labile; reversibly responding to environmental change. Reversible plasticity
52 in phenotypic traits allows individuals to adjust to acute changes in their surroundings
53 (Piersma and Drent 2003), and can broadly be classified into two categories, acclimation and
54 phenotypic flexibility (Piersma and Drent 2003; Havird et al. 2020). Acclimation is generally
55 a slower form of reversible plasticity that involves remodelling of physiological systems from
56 chronic exposure to a particular environment (Seebacher 2005). Phenotypic flexibility, in
57 contrast, describes short-term changes in traits that are induced by acute environmental
58 exposure, such as changes in metabolic rate in response to acute temperature (Piersma and
59 Lindström 1997; Piersma and Drent 2003).

60

61 Reversible plasticity may be able to alleviate the costs associated with phenotype
62 mismatches induced by early life environments (Angilletta Jr et al. 2003; Ghalambor et al.
63 2007). When environments shift predictably, flexibility in the phenotype would be
64 advantageous because individuals can compensate for the effects of prevailing conditions to
65 avoid discrepancies between the environment and the phenotype (Botero et al. 2015).

66 However, reversible plasticity can change depending on early environmental conditions and
67 might alter phenotypic responses to environmental variation (Beaman et al. 2016). The
68 interaction between early- and late life plasticity has been supported by a few studies that
69 show developmental differences in plasticity for a variety of traits including mitochondrial
70 function (Shama et al. 2014), metabolic rate (Seebacher et al. 2014) and locomotor
71 performance (Kazerouni et al. 2016). However, these studies solely focus on the
72 developmental effects on acclimation, whereas the influence on phenotypic flexibility and
73 variability of plastic responses is poorly known.

74

75 It has long been recognised that individuals vary in their plasticity, with some
76 responding more flexibly than others (Nussey et al. 2007; Dingemanse and Wolf 2013).
77 Consistent among individual variation in plasticity may be heritable, but nonetheless,
78 provides the phenotypic substrate for selective forces to act upon (Nussey et al. 2007; Araya-
79 Ajoy and Dingemanse 2017). Developmental environments, however, can influence
80 phenotypic variation available for selection (Sultan and Stearns 2005). For example, zebra
81 finches (*Taeniopygia guttata*) that experience nutritional stress as nestlings weigh less and
82 have reduced growth rates contributing to increases in the repeatability of metabolism and
83 behavioural traits (Careau et al. 2014a). Consistent among individual variation in plasticity
84 has also been reported in other labile traits including aggressiveness in great tits (*Parus
85 major*) (Araya-Ajoy and Dingemanse 2017), explorative behaviour in chickadees (Thompson
86 et al. 2018) and metabolic rate in amphipods (Réveillon et al. 2019). Whether developmental
87 environments affect consistent variation in plasticity *per se* is still not well understood.
88 Identifying the factors that impact repeatability is necessary for understanding the evolution
89 of plasticity in changing environments.

90

91 Energy metabolism is a key fitness related trait that is both consistently different among
92 individuals and highly labile within individuals (Nespolo and Franco 2007; Norin and
93 Metcalfe 2019). All organisms require energy for growth, maintenance and reproduction
94 (Careau et al. 2014c). Numerous studies have investigated the influence of various
95 developmental environments, such as temperature (Gangloff et al. 2015; Noble et al. 2018),
96 ultra-violet (UV) exposure (Kazerouni et al. 2016), and dietary restriction (Careau et al.
97 2014a) on metabolic rate, however, the impacts on plasticity of metabolic rate is not well
98 established (but see Seebacher et al. 2014). Developmental environments are expected to
99 influence metabolic plasticity, possibly through modifications in metabolic enzymes or
100 cellular membrane structure that influence their function in different environments
101 (Angilletta Jr 2016). Such changes imply that tolerance to environmental perturbations may
102 be determined by the developmental environment a given cohort experiences. Furthermore, if
103 repeatability of metabolic plasticity is also affected, then the capacity to respond to selection
104 might also depend on early life conditions. Understanding how early life environments shape
105 metabolic plasticity will be important for ectotherms where metabolic rate is closely
106 intertwined with prevailing environmental conditions.

107

108 Here we employed a ‘reaction norm approach’(sensu Via et al. 1995) to examine the impact
109 of developmental temperature on metabolic rate plasticity in an oviparous skink
110 (*Lampropholis delicata*). Specifically, we were interested in testing whether developmental
111 temperature affects the shape and repeatability of metabolic thermal reaction norms. Over 3.5
112 months, we repeatedly measured routine metabolic rate at six temperatures for lizards ($n_{\text{obs}} =$
113 3,818) that hatched from two incubation treatments (total individuals: $n_{\text{hot}} = 25$, $n_{\text{cold}} = 26$) to
114 address the following key questions: (1) How does developmental temperature change the
115 intercept and slope of the thermal reaction norm?; (2) How does the repeatability of

116 metabolic plasticity (i.e. slope of the reaction norm) change with developmental temperature?
117 (3) Do developmental temperature treatments differ in their repeatability of metabolic rate
118 (intercept) at each acute temperature (i.e. temperature-specific repeatability)? Our
119 experimental approach provides important insights into how development environments
120 mediate the capacity for ectotherms to respond to thermal variation during early stages of life
121 and the energetic consequences of such effects.

122 **Materials and Methods**

123 *Lizard collection and Husbandry*

124 We established a breeding colony of adult *L. delicata* ($n_{\text{females}} = 144$, $n_{\text{males}} = 50$) using wild
125 individuals collected across three sites throughout the Sydney region between 28 August and
126 8 September 2015 (UNSW Kensington Campus: -33.92, 151.24; Sydney Park: -33.91,
127 151.18, Macquarie Park: -33.77, 151.10). Three females were housed with a single male in
128 opaque plastic enclosures measuring 35cm \times 25cm \times 15cm (L \times W \times H). Enclosures were
129 kept under UV lights on a 12 hours light : 12 hours dark cycle in a temperature-controlled
130 room set to 24°C. Lizards had access to a heat lamp that elevated temperatures on one side of
131 the enclosure to 32 °C. Each enclosure was lined with newspaper and lizards had constant
132 access to water and tree bark was used as refuge. Adult lizards were fed medium sized
133 crickets (*Acheta domestica*) *ad libitum* dusted with calcium powder and multi-vitamin every
134 two days. From the beginning of the egg laying season (October of each year), we replaced
135 the newspaper lining with garden potting mix and placed an opaque plastic box (12 cm \times 17.5
136 cm \times 4.3 cm) containing moistened vermiculite in each enclosure for females to oviposit their
137 eggs. During this time, enclosures and vermiculite boxes were sprayed gently with water
138 every other day to maintain a relatively humid environment. From October to November,
139 vermiculite boxes were checked every day for eggs. Animal collection was approved by the
140 New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (SL101549) and all procedures were
141 approved by the Macquarie University Ethics committee (ARA 2015/015) and University of
142 New South Wales Animal Care and Ethics committee (ACEC 15/51A).

143 *Developmental Temperature Manipulations*

144 Eggs were collected between October 2017 – March 2018. When eggs were discovered, they
145 were weighed using a digital scale to the nearest 0.01g (Ohaus Scout SKX123). We also
146 measured egg length (distance between the furthest points along the longest axis of the egg)
147 and egg width (distance between the widest points along the axis perpendicular to the longest
148 axis of the egg) using digital callipers to the nearest 0.01 mm. Following measurements, each
149 egg was placed in a plastic cup (80 ml) containing 3 g of vermiculite and 4 g of water and
150 covered using cling wrap which was secured by an elastic band. Eggs from each clutch were
151 pseudo-randomly assigned to one of two fluctuating incubation temperature treatments. We
152 used two incubators to precisely control the temperature of eggs (LabWit, ZXSD-R1090).
153 The ‘hot’ treatment was exposed to a mean temperature of 29°C whereas the ‘cold’ treatment
154 was exposed to a mean temperature of 23°C. Both incubators fluctuated +/- 3°C the mean
155 temperature over a 24-hour period. These treatments represent the temperature extremes of
156 natural nest sites of *L. delicata* (Cheetham et al. 2011). Egg cups were rotated within each
157 incubator weekly to avoid uneven heat circulation within incubators. Incubators were also
158 checked daily for hatchlings. On average, the incubation duration for the ‘hot’ treatment was
159 30 days (SD = 1.40, range = 27 - 33) days and 47.7days (SD = 5.90, range = 25 - 53) for the
160 ‘cold’ treatment.

161 *Planned Missing Data and Metabolic Rate at Different Temperatures*

162 Metabolic measurements commenced in April 2018 and continued until August 2018. At the
163 beginning of measurements, hatchlings were on average 88.68 days old (SD = 23.75, range =
164 26 - 131). Due to the scale of our experiment, we used closed-system respirometry instead of
165 flow-through respirometry. We quantified routine metabolic rate (hereafter referred to as
166 metabolic rate [MR]) as our measurements likely included the energetic costs of random
167 movements (Withers 1992; Mathot and Dingemanse 2015). MR was measured as the volume

168 of CO₂ production per unit time (\dot{V}_{CO_2} mL min⁻¹) as CO₂ production is less susceptible to
169 fluctuations in water vapour and more feasible to detect in smaller organisms (Lighton 2008;
170 Tomlinson et al. 2018). Nonetheless, CO₂ production was strongly correlated with O₂
171 consumption ($r=0.81$, $p < 2.2e^{-16}$) with RQ values averaging 0.77 (SD = 0.41, $n_{obs} = 198$).
172 Due to logistical constraints, lizards were randomly assigned to one of two blocks for MR
173 measurements (block 1: $n=26$, block 2: $n = 25$). Each block was measured two days apart.
174 We sampled lizards once a week for two-weeks consecutively and then allowed them to rest
175 for one week before the next set of measurements. Each week of measurements was
176 considered a sampling session (ten sampling sessions in total over the course of 14 weeks).
177 We used the same incubators described above to precisely control the temperature at which
178 MR measurements were taken ($\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$).
179
180 Metabolic rate was measured at 24°C, 26°C, 28°C, 30°C, 32°C and 34°C in a randomised
181 order. However, at each sampling session we intentionally missed measurements at two
182 randomly selected temperatures using a planned missing data design (Nakagawa 2015; Noble
183 and Nakagawa 2018). Missing data was imputed during analysis (see Statistical Analyses).
184 At ~06:00, lizards were gently encouraged into an opaque respiratory chamber and then
185 weighed. After which, chambers were placed inside preheated incubators set at the
186 randomised temperature for 30 minutes to allow body temperatures to equilibrate. The lids of
187 the chambers were left ajar during this time to minimise CO₂ build up. After 30 minutes, each
188 chamber was flushed with fresh air and sealed. A 3 mL ‘control’ air sample was immediately
189 taken via a two-way valve to account for any residual CO₂ that was not flushed from the
190 chambers. The chambers were left in the incubator at the set temperature for lizards to respire
191 for 90 minutes. After this time, two replicate air samples (3 mL) were taken from each
192 chamber in order to estimate the change in CO₂ relative to the control sample. Two samples

193 were taken so we could explicitly estimate measurement error (see Statistical Analyses, Ponzi
194 et al. 2018). Chambers were then reopened and flushed with fresh air before being placed
195 back into the incubator for the second measurement temperature (2 temperatures / day)
196 following the same procedure approximately two hours later. Overall, this sampling design
197 enabled us to characterise the thermal reaction norm (four out of six temperatures for our
198 planned missing data design) for each lizard 10 times while accounting for measurement
199 error. This resulted in $n = 4,080$ measurements of MR ($[2 \text{ air samples} \times 4 \text{ temperatures}] \times 10$
200 sampling sessions = 80 samples per lizard). However, additional missing data from
201 equipment malfunction or human error meant that our total sample size was $n = 3,818$.

202

203 All air samples were injected into the inlet line of a Sables System FMS (Las Vegas NV,
204 USA) with the flow rate set to 200 mL min^{-1} to measure \dot{V}_{CO_2} and \dot{V}_{O_2} . Water vapour was
205 scrubbed from the inlet air with Drierite. Output peaks were processed using the R package
206 ‘metabR’ (<https://github.com/daniel1noble/metabR>). The rate of CO_2 produced by an
207 individual was calculated following (Lighton, 2008):

$$208 \quad \dot{V}_{CO_2} \text{ mL min}^{-1} = \frac{\Delta\%CO_2 \times (V_{chamber} - V_{lizard})}{t}$$

209 where $\Delta\%CO_2$ is the maximum percentage of CO_2 in air sample above baseline, which was
210 corrected by subtracting any ‘residual’ CO_2 from the initial flush from the larger of the two
211 air samples; $V_{chamber}$ is the volume of the chamber (70 mL) and V_{lizard} is the volume of the
212 lizard. We used the mass of the lizard as a proxy for its volume ($1 \text{ g} = 1 \text{ ml}$) because of their
213 high correlation and increased accuracy and precision in mass measurements (Friesen et al.
214 2017; Kar et al. 2021), and t is the duration of time in minutes after where the chamber has
215 been sealed and the first air sample was taken (90 minutes).

216 **Statistical Analyses**

217 We fitted Bayesian linear mixed effect models in *R* (Core Team 2013) using the package
218 ‘brms’ (Bürkner 2017). Metabolic rate was log transformed then body mass was log
219 transformed and then z-transformed. Age and temperature were z-transformed so parameter
220 estimates of main effects and interaction terms were more interpretable (Schielzeth 2010).
221 Our planned missing data design resulted in random missingness across temperatures (36%
222 missingness in MR and body mass) The ‘brms’ package is capable of performing model-
223 based data imputation. As such, we performed imputation during model fitting in all of our
224 analyses. Model-based imputation not only retains the hierarchical structure of the dataset but
225 also increases statistical power (P. Bürkner, personal communication 25 October 2020,
226 Nakagawa, 2015). Sensitivity analyses suggest that models with imputed data resulted in
227 similar conclusions to complete case analyses. However, we present results from the
228 imputation analysis in the main text as parameter estimates were more precise
229 (Supplementary Materials). For all models we used default priors which are presented in
230 Table S1. We ran four Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) chains; taking 800 samples from
231 the posterior distribution after discarding the first 1,500 iterations. This gave a total of 3,200
232 samples from the posterior distribution across all chains. We ensured chains were mixing by
233 inspecting trace plots and checked that scale reduction factors were less than 1.01, which
234 indicates that all chains had converged. Throughout we report posterior means and 95%
235 credible intervals for all parameters. All data and code to reproduce our results are provided
236 (see Data Accessibility).

237

238 To test whether developmental temperatures changed the shape of reaction norms, we fitted a
239 full model with MR as the response and temperature, treatment and an interaction between
240 treatment and temperature as predictors. The model also included a random intercept for

241 lizard identity and sampling session. We wanted to account for measurement error in all our
242 models as it may conflate parameter estimates (Ponzi et al., 2018). Using the two replicate air
243 samples, we estimated measurement error variance by including a nested random effect of
244 lizard identity, sampling session and temperature in all our models (e.g.
245 ID001_session1_temp24). This nested random effect (hereafter referred to as measurement
246 error) estimates the variance attributed to differences among replicates. While we show in a
247 previous study that measurement error can vary by temperature (Kar et al. 2021), here we
248 assumed that measurement error was constant across temperatures by fitting it as a random
249 intercept as estimating a random slope resulted in model convergence issues. Heterogeneous
250 residual variance across temperatures can also influence parameter estimates (Careau et al.
251 2014a). However, WAIC values indicated that a heterogeneous residual variance model was
252 not well supported, therefore homogenous variance was used in all models (Table S2).

253 Acclimation can influence metabolic plasticity and its effects can take place throughout the
254 course of our study. Unfortunately, it was not possible to measure MR at hatching. However,
255 we still tested whether there were treatment differences in thermal reaction norms in the first
256 sampling session (~2.5 months of age) where acclimation effects were likely to have the
257 weakest effect.

258

259 We estimated adjusted repeatability of the reaction norm slope (R_{slope}) in each developmental
260 temperature treatment by fitting separate models for each treatment group. MR was fitted as
261 the response and temperature, body mass and age (days since hatching) as predictors. We
262 included lizard identity, measurement error and a nested random effect of individual identity
263 and sampling session (hereafter referred to as series, Araya-Ajoy et al. 2015). Lizard identity
264 estimates among individual variance, whereas series partitions variance within individual
265 across all sampling sessions which allows the estimation of slope repeatability. A random

266 temperature slope was estimated for lizard identity and series. The repeatability of the slope
267 is calculated as the proportion of total variance in slopes explained by among individual
268 differences (Araya-Ajoy et al., 2015):

$$269 \quad R_{slope} = \frac{V_{I,slope}}{(V_{I,slope} + V_{series,slope})}$$

270 where: $V_{I,slope}$ is the among-individual variance in the temperature slope term and the
271 $V_{series,slope}$ is the within-individual variance in the temperature slope.

272

273 We estimated adjusted repeatability of average metabolic rate (i.e. intercept of the reaction
274 norm) at each acute temperature by fitting separate models for each treatment group. Similar
275 to above, MR was included as the response and temperature, body mass and age as
276 predictors. We included lizard identity, sampling session and measurement error as random
277 intercepts and temperature as a random slope for lizard identity. We calculated among
278 individual variance in metabolic rate at each temperature I_t following Schielzeth and
279 Nakagawa (2020):

$$280 \quad I_t = V_I + (t^2 \cdot V_S) + (2t \cdot Cov_{I,S})$$

281 where V_I is the among individual variance in intercepts, t is the specific temperature at which
282 repeatability is calculated for, V_S is the among individual variance in slope and $COV_{I,S}$ is the
283 covariance between the intercept and slope at the among individual level. Temperature
284 specific repeatability (R_t) is then calculated as follows:

$$285 \quad R_t = \frac{I_t}{(I_t + V_{session} + V_e)}$$

286 where: $V_{session}$ is the variance due to sampling session and V_e is residual variance.

287

288 We also wanted to estimate overall repeatability of average metabolic rate across all acute
289 temperatures. We therefore fitted the same model as above for each treatment, but we omitted

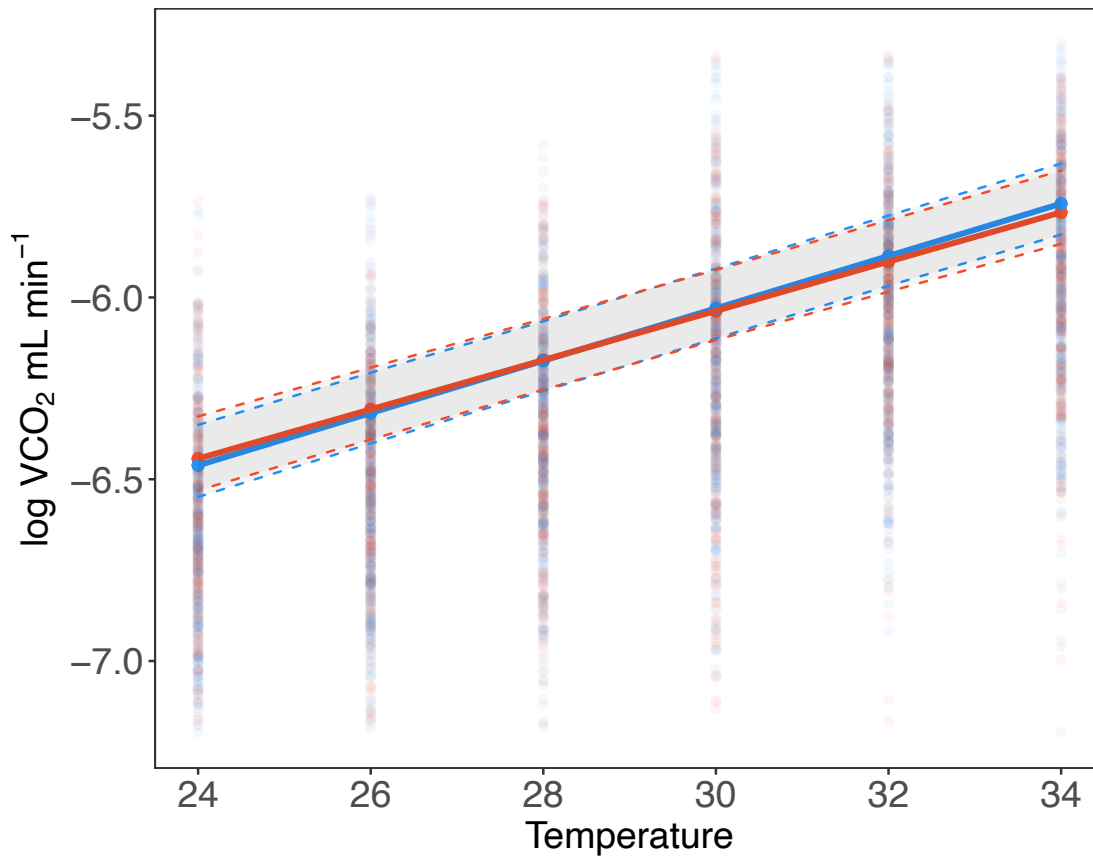
290 the random temperature slope for lizard identity, this estimates an average among individual
291 variance across all acute temperatures. Similarly, we calculated repeatability as per the
292 equation above but using just the single estimate of among individual variance.

293

294 In order to test for differences in repeatability among the two developmental temperatures,
295 we calculated contrasts by subtracting the posterior distributions of repeatability estimates of
296 the cold treatment from the hot treatment (Hot – Cold). To test whether the magnitude of
297 differences among treatments were significant by chance, we calculated probabilities of
298 direction (*pd*) using the package ‘bayestestR’(Makowski et al. 2019b). The probability of
299 direction is calculated relative to the posterior median and ranges from 50 -100%. The value
300 of *pd* describes whether an effect is either positive or negative as it is always relative to the
301 sign of the median (Makowski et al. 2019a). If the median is positive, then *pd* describes the
302 proportion of the posterior distribution that is also positive (Makowski et al. 2019a). A *pd*
303 value of 95% can be interpreted as the effect is positive with a probability of 95%.

304

305 **Results**



306

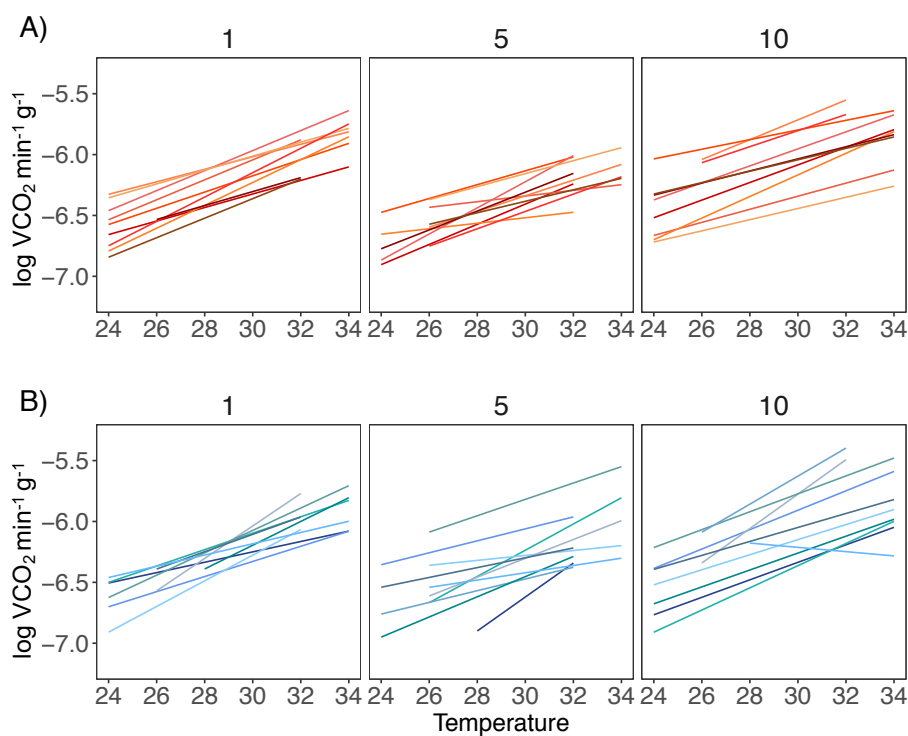
307 **Figure 1** Predicted thermal reaction norm of metabolic rate ($\text{VCO}_2 \text{ min}^{-1} \text{ g}^{-1}$) for the ‘cold’
308 developmental temperature group (blue line, $n_{\text{lizards}} = 26$) and the ‘hot’ developmental
309 temperature group (red line, $n_{\text{lizards}} = 25$) Points are raw data and are coloured according to
310 treatment groups. $n_{\text{obs}} = 3,818$. Dashed lines represent the upper and lower bounds of 95%
311 credible intervals.

312

313 We found no evidence to suggest that metabolic rate or its response to acute temperature was
314 influenced by early developmental temperature (Fig. 1, Table 1, Supplementary Materials
315 Section 1 Table S3-5). Congruently, there were no treatment differences in thermal reaction
316 norms at the first sampling session when acclimation effects are likely to have the least effect

317 (Supplementary Materials, Section 1). We therefore refitted the model with just the main
 318 effects (Supplementary Materials, Section 1, Table S4-S5). Across all models, temperature
 319 and body mass had positive effects on metabolic rate (Table 1, Supplementary Materials,
 320 Section 1, Table S3-5). Nonetheless, reaction norm slopes were significantly repeatable,
 321 albeit estimated with a large degree of error. Repeatability of slopes (R_{slope}) did not depend on
 322 developmental temperature treatments (Hot: $R_{slope} = 0.42$, 95% CI: 0.04 – 0.91; Cold: $R_{slope} =$
 323 0.46, 95% CI: 0.03 – 0.95; $pd = 53.5\%$, Fig. 2, Supplementary Materials, Section 2). A pd
 324 value of 53.5% indicates that there is roughly equal probability that the difference in R_{slope} is
 325 positive or negative, indicating little difference among treatment groups.

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337 **Figure 2** Thermal reaction norms of mass-adjusted metabolic rate for lizards reared at **A)**
 338 ‘hot’ developmental temperatures (top, red lines, $n_{lizards} = 25$) and **B)** ‘cold’ developmental
 339 temperatures (bottom, blue lines, $n_{lizards} = 26$) at session number one, five and ten. Each
 340 uniquely coloured line represents an individual reaction norm. There is a random subset of 10
 341 individuals from each treatment.

Table 1 Model coefficients of the full model testing whether developmental temperature affects the elevation (intercept) and slope of the thermal reaction norm of metabolic rate. This model used an imputed dataset of $n_{\text{obs}} = 6,000$, 36% of observations were imputed. The intercept is the cold developmental temperature. MR was log transformed and mass, age and temperature were z-transformed. Bolded estimates are significantly different from zero. Lower and upper bound of estimates represent 95% credible intervals. COV represents covariance. Main effects model is presented in Table S4

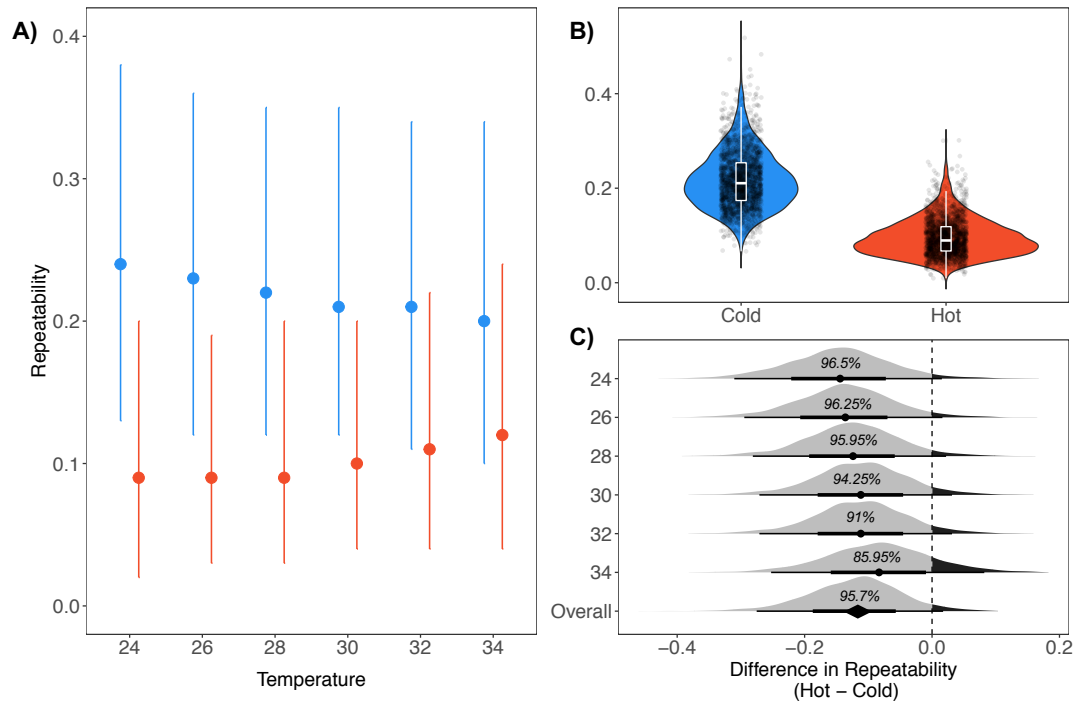
Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper
<i>Fixed effects</i>			
Intercept MR	-6.292	-6.372	-6.218
Treatment 29	-0.003	-0.062	0.058
Acute Temperature	0.262	0.246	0.278
Treatment 29 × Acute Temperature	-0.016	-0.039	0.007
Age	-0.035	-0.079	0.006
Mass	0.128	0.105	0.151
<i>Random Effects</i>			
Lizard Identity			
Intercept	0.009	0.006	0.015

Temperature Slope	9.53e ⁻⁵	1.54e ⁻⁷	0.000479
COV _{Intercept – Slope}	-0.00018	-0.00122	0.000599
Sampling Session			
Intercept	0.01	0.003	0.026
Measurement Error			
Intercept	0.044	0.04	0.049
Residual	0.041	0.038	0.043

343

344 Overall, temperature-specific repeatability was relatively low, with the cold developmental
345 treatment tending to have higher repeatability estimates compared to the hot developmental
346 treatment (Fig. 3, Fig S1, Supplementary Materials, Section 3 Table S10). Irrespective of
347 acute temperature, repeatability of average metabolic rate was on average 10% higher in cold
348 incubated lizards ($pd = 95.7\%$, Fig. 3B, C). There was a 95.7% probability that the difference
349 in overall repeatability was negative, indicating that lizards from the cold treatment are more
350 likely to have higher repeatability. Higher repeatability in the cold treatment was associated
351 with significant increases in among individual and residual variance (Fig. S2).

352



353

354 **Figure 3** (A) Temperature-specific adjusted repeatability for average metabolic rate for the
 355 ‘cold’ developmental temperature group (blue, $n_{\text{lizards}} = 26$) and the ‘hot’ developmental
 356 temperature group (red, $n_{\text{lizards}} = 25$). Error bars represent 95% credible intervals. (B) Violin
 357 and boxplot showing the posterior distribution of overall adjusted repeatability of each
 358 treatment group irrespective of acute temperature. (C) Posterior distribution of the difference
 359 in repeatability (Hot – Cold) overall and at each acute temperature. Point represents the
 360 median; thicker lines represent the interquartile range and thin lines represent the 95%
 361 credible intervals. The probability of direction is presented on each distribution and describes
 362 the probability that the difference in repeatability is either positive or negative. Grey regions
 363 of the distribution represent negative estimates indicating repeatability was greater in the cold
 364 treatment, whereas black regions represent positive estimates which indicates that
 365 repeatability was greater in the hot treatment. All values were calculated from imputation
 366 models (Supplementary Materials, Section 3 Table 11-14). Contrasts are presented in Table
 367 S10.

368 **Discussion**

369 Early developmental temperature did not change the intercept or slope of the
370 population reaction norm in delicate skinks. Thermal plasticity of metabolic rate was
371 unaffected by developmental temperature, however; variation in slope had relatively high
372 repeatable ($R > 0.4$). Temperature-specific repeatability of metabolic rate (i.e., intercept) was
373 lower among lizards that were reared in hot developmental temperatures. Our results suggest
374 that, while individuals displayed consistent variation in their plasticity (Individual x
375 Environment), how metabolic rate responds to acute temperature variation later in life was
376 robust to thermal extremes of natural nest sites. Developmental temperatures did not have an
377 impact on average metabolic rate but rather it changed the amount of consistent individual
378 variation in average metabolic rate. Below we discuss the implications of our results for the
379 evolution of thermal reaction norms.

380

381 *Thermal reaction norms of metabolic rate are robust to developmental temperature*

382 Developmental environments that affect later life plasticity may affect how
383 individuals and populations respond to environmental fluctuations (Beaman et al. 2016).
384 Epigenetic modifications during development that influence the physiological system are
385 likely responsible for shaping plastic responses in complex ways (Hu and Barrett 2017;
386 McCaw et al. 2020). However, our results suggest instead that thermal reaction norms for
387 metabolic rate were robust to changes in incubation temperature. Results have been mixed
388 among the few studies that have investigated the effects of pre- and post-hatching
389 temperature on the plasticity of metabolic rate (Table 1, Beaman et al., 2016). For example,
390 wild caught mosquitofish (*Gambusia holbrooki*) developing under more variable spring
391 conditions exhibited steeper thermal reaction norms for metabolic scope compared to fish

392 born in summer (Seebacher et al., 2014). In contrast, incubation temperature did not affect
393 plasticity in metabolic rate of striped marsh frog tadpoles (Seebacher and Grigaltchik 2014).
394 Given that our lizards were reared in a common environment post hatching, the lack of
395 difference we observed may be the result of reversible plasticity from acclimation in
396 metabolic rate to the laboratory conditions. It is possible that acclimation capacities may have
397 overwhelmed any developmental differences in thermal reaction norms. Generally,
398 acclimation of physiological function takes approximately three to four weeks to complete, so
399 it is likely that acclimation had already taken place by the time we began the study when
400 lizards were about ~2.5 months old (Seebacher, 2005). Nonetheless, it is clear that whether
401 acclimation homogenised possible developmental effects, developmental environments may
402 have little long-term impacts on reaction norms. Future studies should employ cross factorial
403 designs where post-hatch environments are deliberately matched and mismatched with early
404 environmental conditions to disassociate acclimation effects (Schnurr et al. 2014; Kazerouni
405 et al. 2016).

406

407 Stable thermal reaction norms of metabolic rate across both developmental
408 temperatures have key evolutionary implications. Our results imply that population reaction
409 norms may be robust to temperature variation within the thermal range of natural nests
410 (Cheetham et al., 2011). Past thermal regimes encountered by ancestors may have canalized
411 population responses so that they are less sensitive to fluctuations in developmental
412 temperature (Liefert et al. 2009). Canalization may reduce the costs of phenotypic plasticity
413 during development if environmental variation is predictable across generations (Aubret and
414 Shine 2010). In support of this, damselflies undergoing range expansions exhibit geographic
415 variation in thermal reaction norms that align with past climatic conditions (Lancaster et al.
416 2015). Population comparisons across environmental gradients might reveal whether local

417 adaptation shapes developmental plasticity of population reaction norms that lead to
418 canalisation (Toftegaard et al. 2015). Developmental environments may play a stronger role
419 in shaping population plastic responses in areas that experience greater thermal variability,
420 such as those in temperate or high elevation regions (Bonamour et al. 2019). While our
421 incubation treatments represent thermal extremes of natural nest sites, they may not have
422 been severe enough to induce changes in the thermal reaction norms, particularly given that
423 we used more realistic fluctuating incubation temperatures. Developmental stress is thought
424 to lead to the recruitment of heat shock proteins thereby changing reversible plasticity later in
425 life (Beaman et al. 2016; Chevin and Hoffmann 2017). Recent work has shown lizard
426 embryos exposed to extreme heat produce higher levels of heat shock proteins and have
427 greater thermal tolerance as juveniles, however this subsequently reduces thermal tolerance
428 later in life (Gao et al. 2014). This implies there may be constraints in how thermal responses
429 can be shaped by extreme developmental environments.

430

431 *Developmental temperatures and repeatable thermal plasticity of metabolic rate*

432 Repeatability of reaction norm slopes did not change with developmental temperature,
433 but lizards reared in hot temperatures had reduced repeatability in metabolic rate (intercept).

434 Variation in developmental time has important consequences on hatching condition and may
435 contribute to differences in consistent variation in hatchling phenotypes. Developmental time
436 exhibits a negative nonlinear relationship with temperature, such that development times are
437 considerably shorter at hotter temperatures (Noble et al. 2018; Marshall et al. 2020).

438 Consequently, eggs reared in warmer environments are expected to be more constrained in
439 their developmental rates, thus hatching phenotypes are more likely to be less variable
440 compared to eggs reared in cooler environments (Pettersen et al. 2019). Indeed, incubation
441 duration was short and less variable in our hot developmental treatment (Hot: 30 days, SD =

442 1.40, range = 27 - 33; Cold: 47.7 days, SD = 5.90, range = 25 – 53). Shortened development
443 times may restrict embryo yolk assimilation that is needed for growth (Oufiero and Angilletta
444 2006; Storm and Angilletta 2007). Elevated mitochondrial proton leak at hot developmental
445 temperatures may also lead to less efficient energy production and may explain why
446 metabolic rate did not differ among treatments despite changes in repeatability (Chamberlin
447 2004). Lower repeatability under hot nest temperatures may be problematic as global
448 temperatures continue to rise (Botero et al. 2015). Provided that some of the repeatable
449 phenotypic differences in metabolic rate are heritable (Dohm 2002; Falconer and Mackay
450 2009), our results suggest that the evolutionary potential of metabolic rate may be dampened
451 for populations incubating in warming environments. However, metabolic plasticity may still
452 be able to evolve under rising temperatures (Ghalambor et al., 2007).

453

454 We found that individuals consistently vary in metabolic plasticity in response to acute
455 temperatures to a certain extent. While several studies have reported significant among
456 individual variation in thermal plasticity slopes (Careau et al. 2014b; Briga and Verhulst
457 2017), its repeatability is rarely estimated as it requires a study design that allows partitioning
458 of within and between individual variance of slopes (Araya-Ajoy et al., 2015). Our
459 repeatability estimates for reaction norm slopes were consistent with a previous study of the
460 same species ($R = 0.23$, Kar et al. 2021). Similarly, moderate repeatability of thermal
461 sensitivity of metabolic rate has also been observed in amphipods ($R = 0.38$, Réveillon et al.
462 2019). Assuming that repeatable reaction norm slopes have a heritable basis (Driessen et al.
463 2007), our work implies that thermal plasticity has the potential to be selected upon and
464 evolve (Falconer, 1952; but see Dohm, 2002).

465

466 Consistent individual differences in metabolic rate were stable across acute
467 temperatures. This result demonstrates that temperatures within the operable range of *L.*
468 *delicata* maintains consistent individual differences in MR (Matthews et al. 2016).
469 Repeatability in metabolic rate may be an important mechanism that promotes consistent
470 variation in thermoregulation, behaviour and life history (Sæther 1987; Réale et al. 2010;
471 Goulet et al. 2017). Overall, our estimates for the repeatability of MR ranged from 0.09 –
472 0.22. Our results are in line with a meta-analysis showing that repeatability decreases with
473 time between repeated measurements (White et al. 2013). Specifically, the average
474 repeatability of MR in ectotherms from studies that had a measurement interval that was
475 equal or larger than our study (≥ 8.5 days) was $R = 0.33$ (SD = 0.21, $n = 18$). Interestingly,
476 repeatability of average MR in wild caught adult *L. delicata* ($R = 0.3 - 0.5$, Kar et al. 2021)
477 was comparatively larger relative to our results. This is likely due to life stage differences in
478 environmental effects that shape phenotypic variation. As individuals mature, their
479 experiences in different microhabitats (diet, thermal preferences) can promote among-
480 individual variation in traits (Kruuk and Hadfield 2007). Such common (micro) environment
481 effects could further increase repeatability and may explain differences between lab and wild
482 studies (Auer et al. 2016).

483 **Conclusion**

484 The role of developmental temperature on phenotypic plasticity exhibited later in life is
485 complex. At the population level, thermal plasticity of metabolic rate was robust to changes
486 in temperature during embryonic development suggesting that thermal reaction norms may be
487 canalised. In contrast, the impact of developmental temperature manifested as a change in the
488 repeatability of temperature-specific metabolic rate. This has important evolutionary
489 implications. Reduced among individual variation in hot temperatures may alter a

490 population's ability to respond to selection under warming climate. However, population
491 thermal reaction norms could still respond to selective processes to some extent (assuming
492 they are heritable), allowing populations to persist. Elucidating the role of developmental
493 environments on shaping plastic responses may require more stressful incubation conditions
494 and cross-factorial experimental designs to disassociate the effects of acclimation from
495 developmental plasticity.

496 **Data Accessibility**

497 Datasets and code used to generate results of this study is accessible via Open Science
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