

Big Thicket

National Preserve
Texas

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Anoles

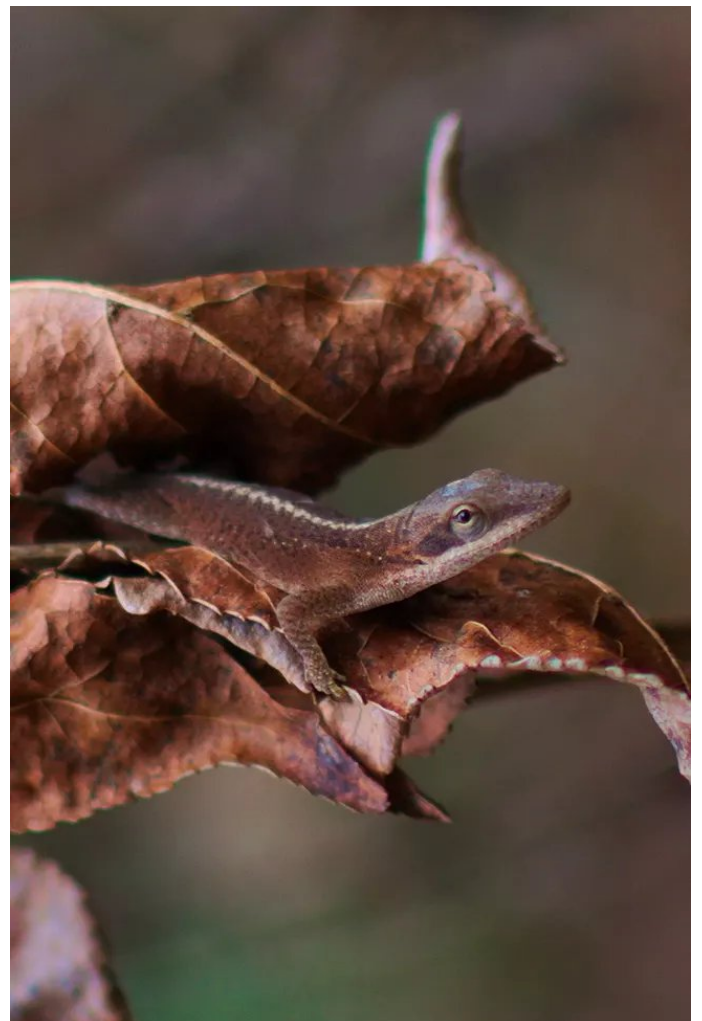
Genus: *Anolis*

Green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)

Brown anole (*Anolis sagrei*)

If you see a green or brown lizard along a trail in the Big Thicket, it's probably an anole. These reptiles eat small insects, such as crickets, moths, and flies.

Can you tell them apart? The name green anole is slightly misleading, because green anoles can be green OR brown. Both species also have the distinctive pink to red colored dewlap that they frequently display. However, brown anoles tend to have more distinctive patterns on their skin, while green anoles have a more solid color pattern. Another hint is that brown anoles tend to stay close to the ground, while green anoles are comfortable higher up in trees. This isn't foolproof, because female green anoles often move lower towards the ground when looking for food or laying eggs. Green anoles tend to have longer and more pointed snouts



than brown anoles.

Brown anole camouflaged against leaves
NPS Photo

While this doesn't help you distinguish between the two, another key point is that green anoles are native to the United States. Brown anoles are native to Cuba and the Bahamas but have been introduced to the southeastern United States. Since being introduced to the US brown anoles have competed with green anoles for territory and food sources.

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Green anole
NPS Photo / Scott Sharaga

Sources



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CONTACT INFO

Mailing Address:

6044 FM 420
Kountze, TX 77625

Phone:

409-951-6700

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