

1 **DOI: 10.1016/j.jtherbio.2019.02.008**

2
3 **The mathematics of thermal sub-optimality: Nonlinear regression**
4 **characterization of thermal performance of reptile metabolic rates.**

5 Sean Tomlinson^{1,2}

6
7 ¹ School of Molecular and Life Sciences, Curtin University, Kent Street, Bentley 6102 Western
8 Australia

9 ² Kings Park Science, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Kattidj Close,
10 Kings Park 6005, Western Australia

11
12 ***Author for correspondence:** sean.tomlinson@dbca.wa.gov.au

13
14
15 **Running Head:** Non-linear Regression Estimates of Ectotherm Optimality

16
17 **Keywords:** thermal performance, metabolic rate, non-linear regression, ectotherm, reptile,
18 Agamidae, Iguanidae, Scincidae

19
20 The thermal performance of ectotherms is characterised as unimodal and asymmetrical.
21 Although still debated, it has been assumed that the peak of a performance curve indicates
22 the optimal temperature for an organism. The temperature at this peak rarely coincides with
23 preferred body temperatures, suggesting that the assumption is unsound. Any mathematical
24 formulation hoping to characterise the thermal performance of ectotherms must
25 accommodate the disagreement between the peak of the performance function and the
26 preferred temperature of the target organism(s). The mathematical function examined and
27 advocated here provides the most intuitive equation to describe thermal performance by
28 ectotherms. It also quantifies several physiologically informative parameters, one of which
29 seems congruent with preferred body temperatures.

30

Abstract

Although several approaches have been suggested, there is no broadly accepted single approach for quantitative characterization of thermal performance in ectotherms. I sought to identify the most appropriate non-linear function with which to represent thermal performance of ectothermic metabolic rate, and to interrogate the biological relevance of the thermal parameters of this function. I used published data for exercise-induced metabolic rates of nine species of reptile from a broad phylogenetic base and global distribution. Using an Akaike Information Criterion, I compared 12 different models proposed to characterize thermal performance adapted from a broad range of disciplines, finding that a beta-distribution model described the reptile metabolic rate data most parsimoniously. Using the beta-distribution model, unique functions were parameterized for each species. Four parameters were extracted from each species-specific fit: the temperature coincident with the peak of the thermal performance curve, T_{opt} ; the point at which the function intersected the x-axis, CT_{max} ; and two points indicative of thermal breadth, $T_{d(lower)}$ and $T_{d(upper)}$. There was a positive relationship between the species' preferred body temperatures (T_{pref}) reported in the scientific literature and both T_{opt} and $T_{d(lower)}$ extracted from the species-specific beta functions. While $T_{d(lower)}$ estimates were not different to published T_{pref} values, T_{opt} estimates were statistically higher than T_{pref} . This is consistent with previous observations that the point of peak performance does not match T_{pref} . The predicted CT_{max} also correlated well with published values. The model in its current form was not able to estimate CT_{min} , and this parameter was not explored here, but should be in future research. By providing a quantitative description of the thermal performance, the beta-distribution function offers a new theoretical basis for thermal optimality. I contend that T_{pref} aligns with the mathematical threshold $T_{d(lower)}$, where metabolic rate is at its maximum prior to thermal inhibition.

62

63 Introduction

64 Temperature is one of the most ubiquitous abiotic factors encountered by organisms
65 (Withers, 1992), and the influence that it has upon their performance is a critical determinant
66 of fitness (Somero, 2005). Since thermal performance is critical in both driving and
67 constraining many aspects of ecology and evolution (Somero, 2005; Dowd *et al.*, 2015),
68 attempts to quantify its optimum have been incorporated into many contributions to
69 conservation, environmental management, and pure biological research (e.g. Buckley (2008);
70 Kearney *et al.* (2009); Evans *et al.* (2015); Tuff *et al.* (2016)). The basis of all of these
71 applications is that there should be an optimal temperature at which performance is
72 maximized while accruing minimal deleterious effects such as oxidative damage. Beyond this
73 threshold performance declines rapidly (Angilletta, 2006). This thermal optimum, T_{opt} , might
74 be intuitively expected to occur at the peak of the thermal performance curve (Huey &
75 Kingsolver, 1989; Martin & Huey, 2008; Dowd *et al.*, 2015). However, accumulating evidence
76 indicates that preferred body temperatures, T_{pref} , of many ectotherms do not and should not
77 coincide with the hypothesized T_{opt} (Martin & Huey, 2008).

78

79 The diverse array of potential performance metrics includes, among a great many others,
80 sprint speed, juvenile development rates (both in invertebrates and vertebrates), and
81 respiration patterns (Angilletta, 2009). Underpinning many of these measures is the
82 constraint imposed by the effects of temperature on enzymatic reactions (Huey & Kingsolver,
83 1989), or oxygen limitation on mitochondrial activity (Pörtner, 2010). There is a long heritage
84 of seeking phylogenetic and ecological signals in the average metabolic rates of species as
85 well (Andrews & Pough, 1985; Lighton & Fielden, 1995; Chown *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, the
86 involvement of metabolic rates in thermal performance has gained increasing recognition in
87 the last decade (Angilletta, 2009; Pörtner, 2010). Yet, while there is much empirical evidence
88 for the characteristic asymmetrical, unimodal curve describing a number of performance
89 metrics (Angilletta (2006); Figure 1) from sprint speed to fecundity to metabolic rates, there
90 has been no broadly accepted analysis that provides consistent interpretation of these curves
91 between species (Dowd *et al.*, 2015). Here I have investigated various potential models of

92 thermal performance using exercise-induced peak metabolic rates of reptiles, and following
93 the assumption that patterns in metabolic rates should be broadly indicative of the patterns
94 of most performance metrics (Gillooly *et al.*, 2001; Gillooly *et al.*, 2002) at least insofar as they
95 are measured for whole animals, rather than isolated enzyme-catalysed reactions (Huey,
96 1982).

97 Understanding thermal performance of metabolic rates in ectotherms has long been of
98 interest to comparative physiologists and ecophysiologicals. However, unlike the study of
99 endotherms for which Scholander *et al.* (1953) provides a unifying theoretical construct, a
100 consistent theoretical model for ectotherms has been lacking (Angilletta, 2006), despite many
101 attempts in the last half century (Thornton & Lessem, 1978; Wollkind *et al.*, 1978; Hertz *et al.*,
102 1983; Crowley, 1985; Kovac *et al.*, 2007; Tomlinson & Menz, 2015; Tomlinson & Phillips,
103 2015). The lack of a broadly agreed arithmetic model describing thermal performance in
104 ectotherms (analogous to the Scholander-Irving model) has generated a great deal of debate
105 concerning the ecological and evolutionary bases to thermal sensitivity in ectotherms (Huey
106 & Kingsolver, 1989; Gilchrist, 1995; Angilletta *et al.*, 2003; Angilletta, 2009). From this debate,
107 two consistent elements have emerged that require synthesis: (a) there is expected to be a
108 continuous, non-linear increase in performance related to increased chemical kinetics (Huey
109 & Stevenson, 1979; Huey & Kingsolver, 1989; Angilletta, 2009) to (b) a point where thermal
110 limitation is either imposed by increased mitochondrial inefficiency (Pörtner *et al.*, 2006), by
111 enzyme denaturation (Somero, 2002) or several other potential physiological constraints
112 (Somero, 2002). This schema establishes how thermal increase and inhibition accelerate
113 chemical reaction rates, leading to the Arrhenius model of thermal performance (Sharpe &
114 DeMichele, 1977), but offers little insight into an appropriate mathematical function to
115 characterize the physiological performance more broadly, including any intrinsic interspecific
116 differences in the performance traits themselves.

117 Additional to the thermokinetic aspects above, I contend that there must be both minimum
118 and maximum asymptotes to the function. The minimum asymptote must be zero or more
119 because performance of any type, including metabolic rate, cannot be negative. The existence
120 of the upper asymptote is less well-articulated in ectotherms, although it is a common
121 concept for endotherms (Tomlinson, 2016). My reasoning for its existence in relation to
122 ectothermic metabolic rate is that the supply networks required to fuel metabolic activity

123 must impose some structural limitations to maximum performance. These could be anything
124 from oxygen supply limitation leading to mitochondrial inefficiency (*sensu* (Pörtner, 2010)),
125 limitations in the production and transport of ATP within the cell (Suarez, 1996), or any
126 number of other biophysical mechanisms. Pörtner (2001) presents relatively strong evidence
127 for aquatic ectotherms and there has been some tentative suggestion for terrestrial species
128 (Pörtner, 2001; Tomlinson *et al.*, 2017) that, when an ectotherm approaches thermal maxima,
129 as its energetic expenditure peaks, it may no longer have any capacity to supply the oxygen
130 requirements for activity (Pörtner, 2001; Pörtner, 2010). Regardless of the specific
131 mechanism(s) at play, their ultimate outcome would be an upper limit where metabolic rate
132 is not thermally constrained, but is operating at the peak structural capacity of the animal.
133 Represented graphically (Figure 1), these four elements imply that below the critical
134 temperature where thermal inhibition takes place, the thermal performance of metabolic
135 rate is S-shaped. This might traditionally imply that thermal performance is a logistic function,
136 characterized by a lower asymptote (r_{min}), an upper asymptote (r_{max}), a nonlinear “slope”, or
137 exponential scaling factor b , and a midpoint (T_i), representing 50% of r_{max} , around which the
138 thermal function is symmetrical (Ritz & Streibig, 2008). Finally, the rapid, non-linear decline
139 in performance above a critical threshold (Angilletta, 2006), while an essential element of the
140 model, can be captured arithmetically in a number of ways. Models encapsulating these
141 theoretical constraints have previously been proposed to describe thermal performance by
142 ectotherms (Hertz, 1983; Crowley, 1985; Kovac *et al.*, 2007); however, there are other,
143 structurally simpler thermal performance models in the broader literature that serve similar
144 purposes (Yan & Hunt, 1999; Arnall *et al.*, 2014; Tomlinson *et al.*, 2015; Tomlinson & Phillips,
145 2015).

146

147 Fitting non-linear functions to thermal performance provides the mathematical basis to such
148 a theory, where the majority of parameters represent physiological responses of the organism
149 and interspecific differences can then be interpreted consistently. Traditionally, where
150 thermal performance of metabolic rates has been statistically modelled at all, it has been
151 interrogated by linearizing the data through mathematical transformation and fitting
152 segmented regressions to it (e.g. Bennett and Dawson (1972); Snyder and Weathers (1976);
153 Tomlinson and Phillips (2012); Mason *et al.* (2013)). Transformations of this type simplify the

154 data, reducing the number of parameters required to describe any patterns, but they also
155 alter the variance structure (Hayes & Shonkwiler, 2006; Gurka & Edwards, 2011), generally
156 compressing it and constraining the interpretation of potentially adaptive traits. More
157 realistically, these relationships should be analyzed by the application of nonlinear functions
158 in order to maintain as many physiologically informative factors as possible. My objective here
159 was to identify the most appropriate, broadly applicable theoretical model of thermal
160 performance of metabolic rate in ectotherms by resolving the most appropriate of the
161 proposed non-linear functions, using a meta-data set of reptile metabolic rates. I also aimed
162 to see whether the most appropriate model of thermal performance was capable of
163 estimating preferred body temperatures, T_{pref} , by correlating known preferred body
164 temperatures of my nine study species with the modelled temperature thresholds derived
165 from the species-specific functions.

166

167 **Methods**

168 *Study taxa*

169 This study required a solid database of standardized metabolic rates of ectothermic taxa to
170 be coupled with reliable estimates of their preferred body temperatures (T_{pref}). While
171 metabolic rates have been studied in a great diversity of ectotherms, there are several
172 decades of studies specifically focusing on reptiles, and their thermoregulation and thermal
173 preferences (Martin & Huey, 2008). Few of these studies, however, have managed to capture
174 a breadth of thermal performance suitable for fitting the non-linear functions that I explored
175 here. Thus, the data that I have garnered from the literature represent the small number of
176 papers where the exercise-induced maximal metabolic rates (MMR) of active squamate
177 reptiles increase with T_b and show a decrease beyond their peak capacity. This data set
178 encompasses only eight species of reptiles from three families, including the Agamidae
179 (Wilson, 1974), Iguanidae (Moberly, 1968; Bennett, 1972; Bennett & Dawson, 1972; Bennett
180 *et al.*, 1975), and Scincidae (Wilson, 1974) (Table 1).

181

182 *Data handling*

183 Raw data of individual responses were extracted by calculating Cartesian co-ordinates of the
184 published figures and converting these to independent data points. For the purposes of
185 comparison, all metabolic data were allometrically standardized to $\text{mLO}_2 \cdot \text{g}^{-0.80} \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ (Andrews
186 & Pough, 1985). Given that individual masses were rarely available, all mass corrections were
187 undertaken using the published mean values for the species. Since the data used for the
188 analyses herein do not perfectly represent the values published for each species, the
189 individual data are included in Appendix 1.

190

191 *Statistical analysis*

192 (Huey, 1982) characterised models of thermal performance as falling into three categories:
193 empirical, descriptive, and deductive, noting that, while performance data would ideally be
194 fitted to a theoretical function derived from an underlying set of physical principles, the only
195 deductive curves available were based upon chemical reactions, and were far removed from
196 whole-animal physiology. In a similar manner, three of the functions that I identified for my
197 candidate library have been derived from chemical kinetics. The first model was a multi-
198 exponential model, first developed by Sharpe and DeMichele (1977) to characterize the
199 relationship between temperature and the development rates of insects based upon
200 Arrhenius laws of chemical kinetics. This has been reformulated for application to metabolic
201 rates (Kooijman, 2010), and used to characterize the thermal performance of at least one
202 reptile (Arnall *et al.*, 2014) in the form:

$$\dot{V}O_2 = \frac{\exp\left(\frac{T_A}{T_R} - \frac{T_A}{T_b}\right)}{1 + \exp\left(\frac{T_{AL}}{T_b} - \frac{T_{AL}}{T_L}\right) + \exp\left(\frac{T_{AH}}{T_H} - \frac{T_{AH}}{T_b}\right)} \quad (1)$$

204 where T_R represents a reference temperature, T_L and T_H represent the lower and upper
205 thermal tolerance limits respectively. Distinct from earlier iterations constructed around
206 activation energy and enthalpy of specific reactions (Sharpe & DeMichele, 1977; Schoolfield
207 *et al.*, 1981), the reformulation makes use of “Arrhenius temperatures”, described as “the
208 slope of the relationship between the logarithm of a physiological rate and the inverse

209 absolute temperature” (Kooijman, 2010). While these parameters have the dimension of
 210 temperature (K), this is presumably an energetic equivalent value to standardize the units of
 211 the function. In this context, Kooijman (2010) characterizes T_A to represent the Arrhenius
 212 temperature of the reaction within the tolerance thresholds, and T_{AL} and T_{AH} are the Arrhenius
 213 temperatures for the rate of decrease beyond these thresholds.

214 A second function derived from chemical kinetics was proposed by Johnson *et al.* (1954) on
 215 the basis of enzyme activation:

$$216 \quad \dot{V}O_2 = \frac{c \times T_b \times \exp^{-\frac{\Delta H^\ddagger}{R \times T_b}}}{1 + \exp^{-\frac{\Delta H_1}{R \times T_b}} \times \exp^{\frac{\Delta S_1}{R}}} \quad (2)$$

217 Where ΔH^\ddagger represents the heat activation for transition state intermediates ΔH_1 represents
 218 the heat activation for the reaction (in this case respiration), ΔS_1 represents the entropy of
 219 the reaction (in this case respiration), R represents the gas law constant (~8.31) and c
 220 represents a constant. Consistent with this interest in chemical kinetics mediated by enzyme
 221 thermal tolerance, Ratkowsky *et al.* (2005) proposed the third function in my candidate set:

$$222 \quad \dot{V}O_2 = \frac{c_T \times \exp^{\frac{-\Delta H^\ddagger}{R \times T_b}}}{1 + \exp^{\frac{-n \times (\Delta H_1 - 18.1 \times T_b + \Delta C_p) \times ((T_b - 373.6) - T_b \times \ln(\frac{T_b}{385.2}))}{R \times T_b}}} \quad (3)$$

223 Where additional parameters included are the heat capacity change between the native and
 224 denatured states of the controlling enzyme (ΔC_p), the enthalpy change at the convergence
 225 temperature for enthalpy (ΔH_1), and the number of amino acid residues in the protein (n).

226

227 The functions described above notably don't parameterize variables that are informative to
 228 whole animal physiology (Huey, 1982), namely minimum performance, maximum
 229 performance, the temperature of peak performance (the canonical T_{opt}), nor any suggestion
 230 of T_{pref} . Functions of that do describe these parameters fall into the empirical and descriptive
 231 categories of functions identified by Huey (1982), which were distinguished on the basis of
 232 their mathematical origin (empirical) and their use of specific physiological parameters
 233 (descriptive). I draw no distinction between the two categories here, but included in my
 234 candidate library eight published functions which specifically incorporate species-specific

235 performance traits such as the upper asymptotes (parameterized here as r_{max}) and/or lower
 236 asymptotes (r_{min}), and physiologically informative temperature thresholds such as T_{opt} , CT_{max}
 237 (the point where performance equals zero), T_l (the lower critical temperatures), T_u (the upper
 238 critical temperature) into the equations. These functions also typically include some form of
 239 reaction rate multiplier, k . For purposes of comparison, I have re-parameterized these from
 240 their original forms such that all the equivalent parameters are represented by consistent
 241 cyphers here.

242 The first of these physiologically informed functions I re-parameterized from a skewed normal
 243 function (Lehman *et al.*, 1975) that originally incorporated temperature thresholds and a
 244 constant, c , that defined the breadth of the curve (originally enumerated as -2.3; Lehman *et*
 245 *al.* (1975)), but not performance asymptotes. In order to translate this to represent metabolic
 246 rates, the upper asymptote r_{max} had to be introduced, and the “sign” function (sgn) employed
 247 to mathematically articulate the piece-wise nature of the original algorithm:

$$248 \quad \dot{V}O_2 = r_{max} \times \exp^{c \times \left(\frac{T_b - T_{opt}}{T_l - T_{opt}} \times \frac{T_b - T_{opt}}{T_u - T_{opt}} \right)} \quad (4)$$

249

250 The fifth of my candidate thermal performance function was a special Poisson-density
 251 function (O'Neill *et al.*, 1972):

$$252 \quad \dot{V}O_2 = r_{max} \times \left(\frac{CT_{max} - T_b}{CT_{max} - T_{opt}} \right) \frac{(\ln(Q_{10}) \times (CT_{max} - T_{opt}))^2 \times \left(1 + \sqrt{1 + \frac{40}{(\ln(Q_{10}) \times (CT_{max} - T_{opt} + 2))}} \right)^2}{400} \times$$

$$253 \quad \exp \frac{(\ln(Q_{10}) \times (CT_{max} - T_{opt}))^2 \times \left(1 + \sqrt{1 + \frac{40}{(\ln(Q_{10}) \times (CT_{max} - T_{opt} + 2))}} \right)^2}{400} \times \left(1 - \frac{CT_{max} - T_b}{CT_{max} - T_{opt}} \right) \quad (5)$$

254 Where Q_{10} represents the ratio of the metabolic rate at two temperatures separated by 10 °C
 255 (IUPS Thermal Commission, 2003). Equation 6 of my candidate set was an exponential x power
 256 function (Lassiter, 1975):

$$257 \quad \dot{V}O_2 = r_{min} \times \exp^{a \times (T_b - T_{opt})} \times \left(\frac{T_l - T_b}{T_l - T_{opt}} \right)^{a \times (T_l - T_{opt})} \quad (6)$$

258 Where a is a constant. Equation 7 was a logistic x logistic function (Thornton & Lessem, 1978):

$$\dot{V}O_2 = \frac{k_l \times \exp\left(\frac{1}{T_{opt}-T_b} \times \ln\left(\frac{0.98 \times (1-k_l)}{0.2 \times k_l}\right)\right) \times (T_b - T_l)}{1 + k_l \times \left(\exp\left(\frac{1}{T_{opt}-T_b} \times \ln\left(\frac{0.98 \times (1-k_l)}{0.2 \times k_l}\right)\right) \times (T_b - T_l) - 1\right)} \times \frac{k_u \times \exp\left(\frac{1}{T_{opt}-T_b} \times \ln\left(\frac{0.98 \times (1-k_u)}{0.2 \times k_u}\right)\right) \times (T_b - T_u)}{1 + k_u \times \left(\exp\left(\frac{1}{T_{opt}-T_b} \times \ln\left(\frac{0.98 \times (1-k_u)}{0.2 \times k_u}\right)\right) \times (T_b - T_u) - 1\right)} \quad (7)$$

Where k_l represents the reaction rate multiplier near the lower critical temperature and k_u represents the reaction rate multiplier near the upper critical temperature. Equation 8 was a two-way negative exponential function derived by (Huey & Stevenson, 1979):

$$\dot{V}O_2 = r_{max} \times \left(1 - \exp^{-k_l \times (T_b - T_l)}\right) \times \left(1 - \exp^{-k_u \times (T_b - T_u)}\right) \quad (8)$$

The ninth model in the candidate set was a bi-exponential model, developed independently in two publications (Logan *et al.*, 1976; Tomlinson *et al.*, 2015):

$$\dot{V}O_2 = r_{min} + e^{k_l \times T_b} - e^{T_b - T_d} \quad (9)$$

where T_d is the temperature of deviation from the pure exponential function.

The tenth model was a six-parameter, exponentially modified logistic function, broadly consistent with those previously published (Hertz, 1983; Crowley, 1985; Kovac *et al.*, 2007):

$$\dot{V}O_2 = r_{min} + \frac{r_{max} - r_{min}}{1 + e^{k_l \times (T_b - T_l)}} - (e^{k_u \times (T_b - T_d)}) \quad (10)$$

Here, T_d is again the temperature of deviation from the pure logistic function. There is also a parameter around which the logistic base function is symmetrical, T_i .

In recognition of the complexity of this model, containing six parameters, I also tested two simpler models. The first of these simpler models was a modified cubic function (Knies *et al.*, 2006; Knies *et al.*, 2009);

$$\dot{V}O_2 = r_{min} + k \times (T_b^3 - T_b^2 - T_b) \times k \times (T_b - T_{opt}) \quad (11)$$

278

Alternatively, a model proposed to describe the thermal performance of plant physiology (Yan & Hunt, 1999) was used as the fourth candidate model, characterized as:

$$\dot{V}O_2 = r_{max} \times \left(\frac{T_{max} - T_b}{T_{max} - T_{opt}}\right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{T_{opt}}\right)^{\frac{T_{opt}}{T_{max} - T_{opt}}} \quad (12)$$

281

282 Here, r_{max} indicates the maximal capacity of the organism, or the upper asymptote of the
283 function. T_{max} indicates the upper thermal tolerance limit, where performance intersects the
284 horizontal axis, (the traditional CT_{max}), and T_{opt} represents the temperature at which the
285 performance function peaks (the traditional interpretation of T_{opt}). The beta-distribution
286 model formulated by [Yan and Hunt \(1999\)](#) does not provide a parameter analogous to T_d . As
287 such, I propose that similar thresholds can be estimated from half the breadth between T_{opt}
288 and T_{max} thus:

$$289 \quad T_{d(upper)} = T_{opt} + \left(\frac{T_{max} - T_{opt}}{2} \right) \quad (12.1)$$

$$290 \quad T_{d(lower)} = T_{opt} - \left(\frac{T_{max} - T_{opt}}{2} \right) \quad (12.2)$$

291 The four candidate non-linear models were fitted to the combined data for all species, and
292 were compared using an information-criterion approach ([Burnham & Anderson, 2002](#)) using
293 the ‘thermper’ package ([Bruneaux, 2017](#)) in the *R* statistical environment version 3.2.1 ([R
294 Core Team, 2016](#)). The most parsimonious model, with the lowest resulting Akaike
295 Information Criterion (AIC), was inferred to capture the maximal complexity of the data with
296 the smallest reduction in likelihood of fit.

297

298 Once the best model form was identified in this manner, unique fits were resolved for each
299 species of reptile. Each of these unique fits resulted in a humped relationship, the maximum
300 of which is consistent with a classical interpretation of optimal temperature, T_{opt} ([Huey &
301 Kingsolver, 1989](#)). All nonlinear modelling was undertaken using the ‘nls2’ package
302 ([Grothendieck, 2013](#)) in the *R* statistical environment version 3.2.1 ([R Core Team, 2016](#)). All
303 data are presented as means, as generated from published data.

304

305 **Results**

306 *Selection of an appropriate thermal performance function*

307 The complete data set extracted from the literature showed the distinctive, humped
308 distribution characteristic of thermal performance data (Figure 2), which eight of the
309 candidate models were capable of mimicking. The functions constructed on the basis of

310 enzyme kinetics (Johnson *et al.*, 1954; Ratkowsky *et al.*, 2005) were not able to be fitted to
311 the data describing the metabolic rates of whole animals that I collected here. Of the
312 candidate performance functions, the beta-distribution function (Yan & Hunt, 1999) best
313 accounted for the variation in the data, followed by the exponentially-penalised logistic
314 function (Kovac *et al.*, 2007), and finally the Arrhenius function (Sharpe & DeMichele, 1977)
315 (beta-distribution AICc = 513.7, AIC weight = 0.35, Δ AIC = 0.00; exponentially penalized logistic
316 AICc = 514.1, AIC weight = 0.29, Δ AIC = 0.35; Arrhenius AICc = 515.1, AIC weight = 0.18, Δ AIC
317 = 1.31). All other candidate models were more than two AIC units distant from the best model
318 (Table 2). The residuals resulting from the beta-distribution function had the narrowest range
319 (-0.89 to 5.51 mL O₂.g^{-0.8}.h⁻¹), followed by the exponentially penalized logistic (-0.85 to 5.55
320 mL O₂.g^{-0.8}.h⁻¹), and finally the Arrhenius function (-0.91 to 5.53 mL O₂.g^{-0.8}.h⁻¹). Of the three,
321 however, the beta-distribution function best indicated the decline in metabolic rate that is
322 expected beyond an upper thermal threshold, projected at 48.1 °C, and at 57.0 °C for the
323 exponentially penalized logistic function. The Arrhenius function did not identify a peak for
324 this data set. The temperature range between the peak of the function and CT_{max} was 23.0 °C
325 for the beta-distribution function, compared to 6.6 °C for the exponentially-penalized logistic.
326 The Arrhenius function cannot be resolved in such a manner as to estimate CT_{max}, because
327 the function never intersects the horizontal axis, so mathematically the tolerance breadth of
328 this function is infinite. On these bases I sought ways of parameterizing the thermal optima
329 of the individual reptile species by applying the beta-distribution function, as the best model
330 with the most plausible physiological interpretations.

331

332 *Parameterizing thermal optima*

333 The beta-distribution function could be grouped into unique parameters for each family
334 (Figure 3) and for each of the nine study species (Table 3). Each species-specific function
335 facilitated the estimation of an optimum at the peak of the thermal performance function,
336 T_{opt} . A lower threshold, $T_{d(lower)}$ could also be estimated for each species from the breadth
337 between the parameterized T_{opt} and T_{max} . T_{opt} ranged between 34.0 °C and 41.3 °C, while
338 $T_{d(lower)}$ ranged from 29.7 °C to 38.5 °C (Table 1). There was a strong correlation between T_{pref}
339 and T_d across all species ($r = 0.72$) and also between T_{pref} and T_{opt} across all species ($r = 0.78$)
340 However, the T_d estimates were much closer to equivalence with T_{pref} than were the T_{opt}

341 estimates (Figure 4). This was supported statistically, where there were no differences
342 between paired T_{pref} and $T_{d(lower)}$ estimates ($t_8 = 0.274$, $p = 0.791$), but T_{opt} estimates were
343 higher than the observed T_{pref} of the species ($t_8 = 6.77$, $p = 1.40 \times 10^{-4}$). The T_{max} estimates
344 resulting from beta-distribution functions fitted for each species were also not significantly
345 different to the published CT_{max} values ($t_5 = 1.50$, $p = 0.192$).

346

347 **Discussion**

348 The initial aim of this study was to identify the most appropriate of the diverse candidate set
349 of non-linear functions proposed to represent thermal performance by ectotherms. Of these,
350 three functions were statistically indistinguishable in describing the pattern of thermal
351 performance in metabolic rates of reptiles, including the beta-distribution function (Yan &
352 Hunt, 1999), the exponentially-penalized logistic function (Kovac *et al.*, 2007) and the
353 Arrhenius function (Sharpe & DeMichele, 1977). However, there are a number of
354 idiosyncrasies associated with adapting the Arrhenius function to model metabolic rates.
355 Firstly, it is dependent upon a reference temperature (the T_R parameter) which I fitted on the
356 basis of the data, but which previously appears to have been selected somewhat arbitrarily
357 (Arnall *et al.*, 2014). The lack of a parameterized r_{min} also assumes that the minimum
358 metabolic rate is zero, which is a relic of its original application to insect development rates
359 (Sharpe & DeMichele, 1977). This is captured by an implicit step change in rates between k_L
360 and k_R (Eqn. 3.2), but it does not parameterize an estimate of the standard metabolic rate
361 (SMR), which is the minimum maintenance cost of a living animal. Secondly, the resulting
362 function does not resolve CT_{max} in the manner of the other candidate models tested (i.e. it
363 does not ever intersect the temperature axis). Finally, it applies no theoretical upper limit to
364 metabolic rates (or a peak metabolic rate; PMR), assuming that uninhibited reactions will
365 increase in speed, which makes it increasingly complicated to apply to data sets where
366 seasonal acclimation or diverse phylogeny can imply interactions between temperature and
367 PMR. There is an emerging literature discussing the disconnect between statistical viability
368 and biological plausibility (Martinez-Abraín, 2008; Halsey *et al.*, 2015), and I contend that the
369 Arrhenius function, while being statistically indistinguishable from the beta-distribution and
370 exponentially-penalised logistic functions in its ability to characterize ectothermic thermal

371 performance, its interpretive value is limited because of the five shortcomings in biological
372 relevance described above.

373 A biologically relevant function to describe thermal performance by ectotherms must have
374 some further components beyond the simple concepts that performance declines beyond an
375 upper and lower threshold, but increases within those bounds. The assumptions discussed in
376 the introduction, that 1) there must be both a lower and upper horizon to performance, 2)
377 the increase from minimum to maximum must be continuous and non-linear as a result of the
378 thermal kinetics of chemical reactions (Angilletta, 2009), and 3) there must be an upper
379 tolerance threshold, establish at least four parameters integral to the more physiologically
380 appropriate models, r_{min} , r_{max} , T_{opt} , and $T_{d(lower)}$. Hence, the most statistically robust *and*
381 physiologically relevant of the four candidate functions was the beta-distribution model,
382 which was originally developed to describe plant thermal physiology (Yan & Hunt, 1999). As
383 with the Arrhenius model, this function assumes that r_{min} is zero, as a relic of its development
384 in the context of growth rates, but it is capable of estimating r_{max} and two critical thermal
385 tolerance thresholds. As further data are collected, these estimated values may provide a
386 more objective comparative approach to understanding ecological and evolutionary patterns
387 in the energetic requirements of ectotherms. This task remains complicated by the question
388 of the most appropriate temperature at which to make comparative measurements (Huey &
389 Stevenson, 1979; Atkinson, 1994).

390 The beta-distribution function provides estimates of two thresholds of thermal tolerance, T_{opt}
391 representing the classical interpretation of thermal optimum at the peak of the performance
392 function (Huey & Kingsolver, 1989, 1993), and an upper threshold, T_{max} , which closely
393 approximates CT_{max} . Using these two parameters in concert, however, it is possible to
394 calculate two further threshold points, the upper and lower T_d . The lower appears to
395 approximate T_{pref} in ectothermic reptiles, and I venture that the upper may represent the
396 body temperature at which the animal actively seeks refuge, as is used to parameterize some
397 mechanistic niche envelope models (e.g. Kearney and Porter (2016)). While there are
398 established techniques to identify the performance breadth based upon proportions of
399 maximal performance (usually 80% or 95% thresholds) as has often been applied to
400 locomotor performance (e.g. van Berkum (1988); Huey *et al.* (1989); Navas (1996); Angilletta
401 *et al.* (2002)), these thresholds are somewhat arbitrary and difficult to compare between

402 studies. It is notable that the scope between metabolic rates objectively estimated at $T_{d(lower)}$
403 and T_{opt} in all cases is approximately 90% (Table 1), regardless of the phylogenetic heritage or
404 ecological niche and biome in which the species originated (van Berkum, 1988).

405

406 *Statistical considerations*

407 Non-linear regression is an approach to studying a number of physiological processes,
408 including dose responses (Ritz *et al.*, 2015), water relations in plants (Lewandrowski *et al.*,
409 2016), and thermal performance in both endotherms (Tomlinson, 2016) and ectotherms
410 (Hertz, 1983; Crowley, 1985; Kovac *et al.*, 2007; Tomlinson & Menz, 2015; Tomlinson &
411 Phillips, 2015). There are a number of packages in the *R* statistical environment that can
412 automate this process, including the 'drc' package (Ritz & Streibig, 2012; Ritz *et al.*, 2015). I
413 caution, however, that it is critical to understand both the parameters and structures of the
414 functions used, and their physiological analogues. The beta-distribution function applied
415 here, for example, is only made appropriate if temperature is converted from degrees Celsius
416 to Kelvin, because in this format there are no hard limits in the independent variable (i.e. $T_a =$
417 $0\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ is just another point along the continuum). If the function is fitted in degrees Celsius it
418 become undefined at temperatures below zero, and clearly loses relevance to the real world.
419 This is easily remedied by the addition of 273 to all temperature components of the function,
420 meaning that all parameters are still fitted in degrees Celsius, thus:

$$421 \quad \dot{V}O_2 = W_f \times \left(\frac{(T_{max}+273) - (T_a+273)}{(T_{max}+273) - (T_{opt}+273)} \right) \times \left(\frac{(T_a+273)}{(T_{opt}+273)} \right)^{\frac{(T_{opt}+273)}{(T_{max}+273) - (T_{opt}+273)}} \quad (12.3)$$

422

423 It is also critically important to understand the structure of the data required to fit these
424 functions. Although a non-linear regression approach is the most appropriate to interrogate
425 thermal biology, it requires a specific experimental design to accommodate the analysis
426 appropriately, and this needs to be considered prior to the collection of data. Experimental
427 design was a substantial constraint on the selection of appropriate data for this study; the
428 thermal performance data for only the nine species selected had been collected over a wide
429 enough temperature range to capture the decline in metabolic rate beyond the upper

430 tolerance threshold, despite the fact that there were numerous other species available in the
431 literature where performance had been measured over a narrower range (see Appendices).
432 In the event that further data are to be collected to test these functions, it is critical that
433 measurements are made as far beyond this threshold as is ethically defensible. Furthermore,
434 studies should increase the number of intervals in the key parts of the range to increase the
435 sensitivity of the fitted function to critical turning points, consistent with discussion by [Knies](#)
436 [and Kingsolver \(2010\)](#) concerning T_b near T_{opt} .

437 Nonlinear regression using the 'nls' protocol in the *R* statistical environment assumes a
438 normal distribution of errors ([Ritz & Streibig, 2008](#); [Baty et al., 2015](#)). Studies such as this fall
439 prey to the quality of data that can be extracted from the published literature. Ideally, had I
440 experimentally collected all these data myself I would have access to all the individual stat
441 required to ensure independence of the data, such as specific temperatures, body mass and
442 individual identifications for the purposes of identifying and accounting for deviations from a
443 normal distribution of errors. Failing the ability to incorporate these into a repeated measures
444 design, or as a series of random factors within my analyses, I'm restricted to the next best
445 thing, which is to acknowledge this uncontrolled effect. The sample sizes in my data are not
446 equal, and some of my data will bear a flattening of the variance structure resulting from the
447 application of average body masses into my calculations. Given that these effects should be
448 equivalent across all the models that I applied here, however, I feel that this is at least
449 consistent across my analyses.

450

451 *Why "suboptimal" is optimal*

452 Several discussions have identified a lack of congruence between the optimal performance
453 temperature (T_{opt}) at the peak of the performance curve, and the preferred body temperature
454 (T_{pref}) of many reptiles ([Martin & Huey, 2008](#); [Dowd et al., 2015](#)). My question was
455 parameterized thus: if T_{opt} is not indicative of thermal preferences and thermoregulatory
456 behavior, does an appropriate non-linear function parameterize more accurate ways to
457 estimate them? The preferred body temperatures published for the reptiles studied here
458 were most closely approximated by $T_{d(lower)}$, rather than T_{opt} (Figure 4), estimated from the
459 beta-distribution function. Where T_{opt} is the mathematical representation of the thermal

460 optimum at the peak of the performance function, t-testing indicated that the fitted T_{opt}
461 values were higher than the published T_{pref} . The lower temperature threshold that I
462 calculated at $T_{d(lower)}$ was statistically indistinguishable from T_{pref} of the nine species studied.

463 One theory underpinning the apparent paradox that mathematically suboptimal
464 temperatures are in fact biologically optimal rests on the asymmetry of thermal performance
465 curves, where performance (or apparent fitness) declines much more rapidly when T_b exceeds
466 T_{opt} than when T_b is below T_{opt} (Huey & Stevenson, 1979; Gilchrist, 1995; Izem & Kingsolver,
467 2005; Martin & Huey, 2008). In this context, as well as avoiding the risk of rapid declines in
468 fitness when T_b exceeds T_{opt} , fitness should also be optimized across the thermal performance
469 function. This results in a relationship between the distance between T_{pref} and T_{opt} and the
470 degree of asymmetry of the thermal performance function (Martin & Huey, 2008). When the
471 thermal performance functions that I resolved here for each species were assessed for
472 asymmetry in this manner, however, the relationship appeared to be the reverse of that
473 expected. Although performance optima are typically characterized using only a single
474 performance metric, such as locomotor capacity, fecundity, or metabolic rate, there is an
475 implicit assumption that they are all proxy indicators for the thermal effects on enzyme-
476 catalyzed reactions (Sharpe & DeMichele, 1977; Huey & Kingsolver, 1989). Regardless of
477 whether that assumption is justified, there should be strong selection to maximize lifetime
478 fitness by centering T_{pref} below the T_{opt} (Martin & Huey, 2008), because performance declines
479 so rapidly beyond this tolerance threshold regardless of underlying mechanisms. As such, I
480 remain unconvinced that the small number of species that I have investigated here suitably
481 replicate the data set reported by Martin & Huey (2008) for sprint speed to provide much
482 support in comparing the patterns of performance asymmetry and thermal preference
483 breadth between the two.

484

485 Alternative to Martin and Huey (2008), the oxygen- and capacity-limited thermal tolerance
486 (OCLTT) theory (eg. Pörtner (2010)) suggests that maintaining a buffer of aerobic scope could
487 be the mechanistic basis to the observed patterns, whereby ectotherms maintain T_{pref} below
488 the putative performance maximum. The theory poses that critical temperature thresholds
489 represent the transition points from aerobic to anaerobic mitochondrial metabolism (Pörtner,
490 2010). Furthermore, Pörtner (2010) concludes that oxygen limitation sets in prior to

491 functional failure. Bearing in mind that aerobic scope best represented as the maximum
492 amount of oxygen available for any aerobic activity above routine for any specific
493 temperature, maintaining T_b at a point lower than T_{opt} should allow the organism to maintain
494 some scope for increased metabolic output prior to catastrophic oxygen limitation.
495 Essentially, one way of interpreting these theories is in terms of an “engineering failsafe”:
496 maintaining T_b at levels below the temperature where the performance curve peaks allows
497 some leeway for metabolic rates to increase in response to environmental stimuli or
498 increased exertion. Assuming that the metabolic rates of the fitted performance functions for
499 each species genuinely reflect the maximum aerobic capacity of the reptiles studied,
500 maintaining body temperatures close to the estimated T_d values should allow the reptiles in
501 question to consistently maintain an aerobic scope of about 10% of their maximal capacity
502 (Table 1). This is advantageous compared to maintaining a higher T_b close to T_{opt} because,
503 consistent with [Pörtner \(2010\)](#), maintaining T_b at levels that appear suboptimal allows the
504 animals to remain responsive to their environment, with some capacity for increased O_2
505 consumption required for increased activity associated with foraging, escaping predation and
506 other behaviors.

507 The species included in this analysis represent a broad spectrum of ecological niches and
508 phylogenetic spread. Both of these elements undoubtedly contributed some variation to my
509 findings, some of which can be speculated at but some remain too data-deficient to interpret,
510 and I have therefore chosen not to speculate upon them. Generally, a study with the
511 phylogenetic breadth represented here should include phylogenetic corrections ([Feder, 1987](#);
512 [Garland & Adolph, 1994](#)). The data requirement that the temperatures over which
513 performance was measured were broad enough to indicate a decline in metabolic rate
514 constrained my sample size, limiting scope for accommodating phylogenetic corrections.

515 Furthermore, there is a disconnect between the physiological heritage of the term “optimal
516 temperature” which was initially coined in a mathematical context as the point where
517 performance was maximal, and evolutionary contexts where it implies lifetime fitness gains
518 ([Martin & Huey, 2008](#)). Obviously lifetime fitness is the culmination of a wide array of traits
519 and pressures, not all of which will have the same thermal requirements, and some of which
520 may trade off against each other. The final caveat on the generality of the beta-distribution
521 model’s ecological and evolutionary interpretations is that although this function appears

522 competent to describe the thermal performance of metabolic rate for the reptiles described
523 here, it may not apply to all ectotherms (Dowd *et al.*, 2015) or all life history stages (Kingsolver
524 *et al.*, 2011), nor to all possible performance traits (Huey, 1982). The ecological and
525 evolutionary interpretations of this modelling approach, therefore, remain tentative until
526 further data can contribute to these models. Nevertheless, having a broadly applicable model
527 of thermal performance should facilitate these kinds of comparisons, and should be rigorously
528 tested.

529

530 *Conclusions*

531 Thermal performance by ectotherms is a non-linear interaction between physiological
532 processes (including the regulated body temperature) and ambient temperature. Although
533 any performance metric should conform to the same relationship, the metabolic rates of
534 ectotherms are best related to T_a by a beta-distribution function. This function provides the
535 capacity to calculate the parameter T_d , which approximates the preferred body temperatures
536 of the animal, at least in the nine species of reptiles that I investigated here. This threshold,
537 while not consistent with a classical paradigm of thermal optimality in ectotherms, is
538 consistent with existing alternative hypotheses.

539

540 **Acknowledgements**

541 Financial support for S. Tomlinson was provided by Australian Research Council grant IC150100041.
542 The author gratefully acknowledges S. Arnall (formerly University of Western Australia), W.
543 Lewandrowski (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Western Australia), M.
544 Kearney (University of Melbourne), and P. Withers (University of Western Australia) for informative
545 discussions on the nature of thermal performance functions and ectothermic metabolic rates. L. Gilson
546 (Curtin University) provided invaluable advice on flow and clarity of the draft. I also acknowledge the
547 suggestions and input of several anonymous peer reviewers, without whose commentary this
548 manuscript would not have evolved to the level of completion that it has.

549

550 **Literature Cited**

- 551 Andrews, R.M. & Pough, F.H. (1985) Metabolism of squamate reptiles: allometric and ecological
552 relationships. *Physiological Zoology*, **58**, 214-231.
- 553 Angilletta, M.J. (2006) Estimating and comparing thermal performance curves. *Journal of Thermal*
554 *Biology*, **31**, 541-545.
- 555 Angilletta, M.J., Niewiarowski, P.H. & Navas, C.A. (2002) The evolution of thermal physiology in
556 ectotherms. *Journal of Thermal Biology*, **27**, 249-268.
- 557 Angilletta, M.J., Wilson, R.S., Navas, C.A. & James, R.S. (2003) Tradeoffs and the evolution of thermal
558 reaction norms. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, **18**, 234-240.
- 559 Angilletta, M.J.J. (2009) *Thermal Adaptation: a Theoretical and Empirical Synthesis*. Oxford University
560 Press, Oxford.
- 561 Arnall, S.G., Kuchling, G. & Mitchell, N.J. (2014) A thermal profile of metabolic performance in the rare
562 Australian chelid, *Pseudemydura umbrina*. *Australian Journal of Zoology*, **62**, 448-453.
- 563 Atkinson, D. (1994) Temperature and organism size - a biological law for ectotherms? *Adv. Ecol. Res.*,
564 **25**, 1-58.
- 565 Bartholomew, G.A. (1966) A field study of temperature relations in the Galapagos marine iguana.
566 *Copeia*, **1966**, 241-250.
- 567 Baty, F., Ritz, C., Charles, S., Brutsche, M., Flandrois, J.-P. & Delignette-Muller, M.-L. (2015) A toolbox
568 for nonlinear regression in R: The package *nlstools*. *Journal of Statistical Software*, **66**, 1-21.
- 569 Bennett, A.F. (1972) The effect of activity on oxygen consumption, oxygen debt, and heart rate in the
570 lizards *Varanus gouldii* and *Sauromalus hispidus*. *Journal of Comparative Physiology A*, **79**, 259-
571 280.
- 572 Bennett, A.F. & Dawson, W.R. (1972) Aerobic and anaerobic metabolism during activity in the lizard
573 *Dipsosaurus dorsalis*. *Journal of Comparative Physiology A*, **81**, 289-299.
- 574 Bennett, A.F. & John-Alder, H. (1986) Thermal relations of some Australian skinks (Sauria: Scincidae).
575 *Copeia*, **1986**, 57-64.
- 576 Bennett, A.F., Dawson, W.R. & Bartholomew, G.A. (1975) Effects of activity and temperature on
577 aerobic and anaerobic metabolism in the Galapagos marine iguana. *Journal of Comparative*
578 *Physiology B*, **100**, 317-329.
- 579 Bruneaux, M. (2017) *thermPerf: model fitting for thermal performance curves*. R package version 0.0.1.
- 580 Bruschi, G.A., Taylor, E.N. & Whitfield, S.M. (2016) Turn up the heat: thermal tolerances of lizards at La
581 Selva, Costa Rica. *Oecologia*, **180**, 325-334.
- 582 Buckley, L. (2008) Linking traits to energetics and population dynamics to predict lizard ranges in
583 changing environments. *American Naturalist*, **171**, E1-E19.
- 584 Burnham, K.P. & Anderson, D.R. (2002) *Model Selection and Multimodel Inference: a Practical*
585 *Information-theoretic Approach, 2nd Edition*. Springer, New York.
- 586 Chown, S.L., Marais, E., Terblanche, J.S., Klok, C.J., Lighton, J.R.B. & Blackburn, T.M. (2007) Scaling of
587 insect metabolic rate is inconsistent with the nutrient supply network model. *Functional*
588 *Ecology*, **21**, 282-290.
- 589 Crowley, S.R. (1985) Thermal sensitivity of sprint-running in the lizard *Sceloporus undulatus*: support
590 for a conservative view of thermal physiology. *Oecologia*, **66**, 219-225.
- 591 DeWitt, C.B. (1967) Precision of thermoregulation and its relation to environmental factors in the
592 desert iguana, *Dipsosaurus dorsalis*. *Physiological Zoology*, **40**, 49-66.
- 593 Dowd, W.W., King, F.A. & Denny, M.W. (2015) Thermal variation, thermal extremes and the
594 physiological performance of individuals. *Journal of Experimental Biology*, **218**, 1956-1967.
- 595 Evans, T.G., Diamond, S.E. & Kelly, M.W. (2015) Mechanistic species distribution modelling as a link
596 between physiology and conservation. *Conservation Physiology*, **3**, cov56.
- 597 Feder, M.E. (1987) The analysis of physiological diversity: the prospects for pattern documentation
598 and general questions in ecological physiology. *New Directions in Ecological Physiology*. (ed. by
599 M.E. Feder, A.F. Bennett, W.G. Burggren and R.B. Huey), pp. 38-75. Cambridge University Press,
600 Cambridge.

601 Frederich, M. & Pörtner, H.O. (2000) Oxygen limitation of thermal tolerance defined by cardiac and
602 ventilatory performance in the spider crab, *Maja squinado*. *American Journal of Physiology*, **279**,
603 R1531-R1538.

604 Garland, T.J. & Adolph, S.C. (1994) Why not to do two-species comparative studies: Limitations on
605 inferring adaptation. *Physiological Zoology*, **67**, 797-828.

606 Gatten, R.E. (1974) Effects of temperature and activity on aerobic and anaerobic metabolism and heart
607 rate in the turtles *Pseudemys scripta* and *Terrapene ornata*. *Comparative Biochemistry and*
608 *Physiology A*, **48**, 619-648.

609 Gilchrist, G.W. (1995) Specialists and generalists in changing environments I: Fitness landscapes of
610 thermal sensitivity. *American Naturalist*, **146**, 252-270.

611 Gillooly, J.F., Brown, J.H., West, G.B., Savage, V.M. & Charnov, E.L. (2001) Effects of Size and
612 Temperature on Metabolic Rate. *Science*, **293**, 2248-2251.

613 Gillooly, J.F., Charnov, E.L., West, G.B., Savage, V.M. & Brown, J.H. (2002) Effects of size and
614 temperature on developmental time. *Nature*, **40**, 70-73.

615 Grothendieck, G. (2013) *Nls2: Non-linear regression with brute force*. CRAN R-project.

616 Gurka, M.J. & Edwards, L.J. (2011) Estimating variance components and random effects using the Box-
617 Cox transformation in the linear mixed model. *Communications in Statistics - Theory and*
618 *Methods*, **40**, 515-531.

619 Halsey, L.G., Curran-Everett, D., Vowler, S.L. & Drummond, G.B. (2015) The fickle P value generates
620 irreproducible results. *Nature Methods*, **12**, 179-185.

621 Hayes, J.P. & Shonkwiler, J.S. (2006) Allometry, antilog transformations, and the perils of prediction
622 on the original scale. *Physiological and Biochemical Zoology*, **79**, 665-674.

623 Hertz, P.E. (1983) Eurythermy and niche breadth in West Indian Anolis lizards: a reappraisal. *Advances*
624 *in Herpetology and Evolutionary Biology: Essays in honor of Ernest E. Williams* (ed. by A.G.J.
625 Rhodin and K. Miyata). Harvard University Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge,
626 Massachusetts.

627 Hertz, P.E., Huey, R.B. & Nevo, E. (1983) Homage to Santa Anita: thermal sensitivity of sprint speed in
628 agamid lizards. *Evolution*, **37**, 1075-1084.

629 Huey, R.B. (1982) Temperature, physiology, and the ecology of reptiles. *Biology of the Reptilia*, **12**, 25-
630 91.

631 Huey, R.B. & Stevenson, R.D. (1979) Integrating thermal physiology and ecology of ectotherms: A
632 discussion of approaches. *American Zoologist*, **19**, 357-366.

633 Huey, R.B. & Kingsolver, J.G. (1989) Evolution of thermal sensitivity of ectotherm performance. *Trends*
634 *in Ecology and Evolution*, **4**, 131-135.

635 Huey, R.B. & Kingsolver, J.G. (1993) Evolution of resistance to high temperature in ectotherms.
636 *American Naturalist*, **142**, S21-S46.

637 Huey, R.B., Niewiarowski, P.H., Kaufmann, J. & Herron, J.C. (1989) Thermal biology of nocturnal
638 ectotherms: is sprint performance of geckos maximal at low body temperatures? *Physiological*
639 *Zoology*, **62**, 488-504.

640 IUPS Thermal Commission (2003) Glossary of terms for thermal physiology. *Journal of Thermal Biology*,
641 **28**, 75-106.

642 Izem, R. & Kingsolver, J.G. (2005) Variation in continuous reaction norms: quantifying directions of
643 biological interest. *American Naturalist*, **166**, 277-289.

644 Johnson, F.H., Eyring, H. & Polissar, M.J. (1954) *The Kinetic Basis of Molecular Biology*. John Wiley And
645 Sons, New York.

646 Kearney, M., Porter, W., Williams, C., Ritchie, S. & Hoffmann, A.A. (2009) Integrating biophysical
647 models and evolutionary theory to predict climatic impacts on species' ranges: the dengue
648 mosquito *Aedes aegypti* in Australia. *Functional Ecology*, **23**, 528-538.

649 Kearney, M.R. & Porter, W.P. (2016) NicheMapR-an R package for biophysical modelling: the
650 microclimate model. *Ecography*, doi: [10.1111/ecog.02360]

651 Kingsolver, J.G., Woods, H.A., Buckley, L.B., Potter, K.A., MacLean, H.J. & Higgins, J.K. (2011) Complex
652 life cycles and the responses of insects to climate change. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*,
653 **51**, 719-732.

654 Knies, J.L. & Kingsolver, J.G. (2010) Erroneous Arrhenius: modified Arrhenius model best explains the
655 temperature dependence of ectotherm fitness. *The American Naturalist*, **176**, 227-233.

656 Knies, J.L., Kingsolver, J.G. & Burch, C.L. (2009) Hotter is better and broader: thermal sensitivity of
657 fitness in a population of bacteriophages. *The American Naturalist*, **173**, 419-430.

658 Knies, J.L., Izem, R., Supler, K.L., Kingsolver, J.G. & Burch, C.L. (2006) The genetic basis of thermal
659 reaction norm evolution in lab and natural phage populations. *PLoS Biology*, **4**, e201.

660 Kooijman, S.A.L.M. (2010) *Dynamic Energy Budget Theory for Metabolic Organisation, 3rd Edition*.
661 Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

662 Kovac, H., Stabentheiner, A., Hetz, S.K., Petz, M. & Crailsheim, K. (2007) Respiration of resting
663 honeybees. *Journal of Insect Physiology*, **53**, 1250-1261.

664 Lassiter, R.R. (1975) *Modeling dynamics of biological and chemical components of aquatic ecosystems*.
665 . National Environmental Research Center, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Corvallis,
666 Oregon.

667 Lehman, J.T., Botkin, D.B. & Likens, G.E. (1975) The assumptions and rationales of a computer model
668 of phytoplankton population dynamics. *Limnology and Oceanography*, **20**, 343-364.

669 Lewandowski, W., Erickson, T.E., Dixon, K.W. & Stevens, J.C. (2016) Increasing the germination
670 envelope under water stress improves seedling emergence in two dominant grass species
671 across different pulse rainfall events. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, doi: **10.1111/1365-**
672 **2664.12816**

673 Licht, P. (1964) A comparative study of the thermal dependence of contractility in saurian skeletal
674 muscle. *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology*, **13**, 27-34.

675 Licht, P. (1965) Effects of temperature on heart rates of lizards during rest and activity. *Physiological*
676 *Zoology*, **38**, 129-137.

677 Lighton, J.R.B. & Fielden, L.J. (1995) Mass scaling of standard metabolism in ticks: A valid case of low
678 metabolic rates in sit-and-wait strategists. *Physiological Zoology*, **68**, 43-62.

679 Logan, J.A., Wollkind, D.T., Hoyt, J.C. & Tanigoshi, L.K. (1976) An analytic model for description of
680 temperature dependent rate phenomena in arthropods. *Environmental Entomology*, **5**, 1130-
681 1140.

682 Martin, T.L. & Huey, R.B. (2008) Why "suboptimal" is optimal: Jensen's inequality and ectotherm
683 thermal preferences. *The American Naturalist*, **171**, E102-E118.

684 Martinez-Abraín, A. (2008) Statistical significance and biological relevance: A call for a more cautious
685 interpretation of results in ecology. *Acta Oecologica*, **34**, 9-11.

686 Mason, L.D., Tomlinson, S., Withers, P.C. & Main, B.Y. (2013) Thermal and hygric physiology of
687 Australian burrowing mygalomorph spiders (*Aganippe* spp.). *Journal of comparative Physiology*
688 *B*, **183**, 71-82.

689 Moberly, W.R. (1968) The metabolic responses of the common iguana, *Iguana iguana*, to activity
690 under restraint. *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology*, **27**, 1-20.

691 Navas, C.A. (1996) Metabolic physiology, locomotor performance, and thermal niche breadth in
692 neotropical anurans. *Physiological Zoology*, **69**, 1481-1501.

693 O'Neill, R.V., Goldstein, R.A., Shugart, H.H. & Mankin, J.B. (1972) Terrestrial ecosystem energy model.
694 *Eastern Deciduous Forest Biome Memo Report*, **72**, 19.

695 Pörtner, H.O. (2001) Climate change and temperature-dependent biogeography: oxygen limitation of
696 thermal tolerance in animals. *Naturwissenschaften*, **88**, 137 - 146.

697 Pörtner, H.O. (2010) Oxygen- and capacity-limitation of thermal tolerance: a matrix for integrating
698 climate-related stressor effects in marine ecosystems. *Journal of Experimental Biology*, **213**,
699 881-893.

700 Pörtner, H.O., Bennett, A.F., Bozinovic, F., Clarke, A., Lardies, M.A., Lucassen, M., Pelster, B., Schiemer,
701 F. & Stillman, J.H. (2006) Trade-offs in thermal adaptation: the need for a molecular to ecological
702 integration. *Physiological and Biochemical Zoology*, **79**, 295-313.

703 R Core Team (2016) *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. R Foundation for
704 Statistical Computing.

705 Raftery, A.E. (1995) Bayesian model selection in social research. *Sociological Methodology*, **25**, 111-
706 163.

707 Ratkowsky, D.A., Olley, J. & Ross, T. (2005) Unifying temperature effects on the growth rate of bacteria
708 and the stability of globular proteins. *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, **233**, 351-362.

709 Ritz, C. & Streibig, J.C. (2008) *Nonlinear Regression with R*. Springer, New York.

710 Ritz, C. & Streibig, J.C. (2012) Dose response curves and other nonlinear curves in Weed Science and
711 Ecotoxicology with the add-on package drc in R.

712 Ritz, C., Baty, F., Streibig, J.C. & Gerhard, D. (2015) Dose-Response Analysis Using R. *PLoS ONE*, **10**,
713 e0146021. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0146021.

714 Schäuble, C.S. & Grigg, G.C. (1998) Thermal ecology of the Australian agamid *Pogona barbata*.
715 *Oecologia*, **114**, 461-470.

716 Scholander, P.F., Flagg, W., Walters, W. & Irving, L. (1953) Climatic adaptation in arctic and tropical
717 poikilotherms. *Physiological Zoology*, **26**, 67-92.

718 Schoolfield, R.M., Sharpe, P.J.H. & Magnuson, C.E. (1981) Non-linear regression of biological
719 temperature-dependent rate models based on absolute reaction-rate theory. *Journal of*
720 *Theoretical Biology*, **88**, 719-731.

721 Sharpe, P.J. & DeMichele, D.W. (1977) Reaction kinetics of poikilotherm development. *Journal of*
722 *Theoretical Biology*, **64**, 649-670.

723 Snyder, G.K. & Weathers, W.W. (1976) Physiological responses to temperature in the tropical lizard,
724 *Hemidactylus frenatus* (Sauria: Gekkonidae). *Herpetologica*, **32**, 252-256.

725 Somero, G.N. (2002) Thermal physiology and vertical zonation of intertidal animals: Optima, limits,
726 and costs of living. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, **42**, 780-789.

727 Somero, G.N. (2005) Linking biogeography to physiology: Evolutionary and acclimatory adjustments
728 of thermal limits. *Frontiers in Zoology*, **2**, 1.

729 Sommer, A., Klein, B. & Pörtner, H.O. (1997) Temperature induced anaerobiosis in two populations of
730 the polychaete worm *Arenicola marina* (L.). *Journal of Comparative Physiology*, **167B**, 25-35.

731 Spellerberg, I.F. (1972) Temperature tolerances of southeast Australian reptiles examined in relation
732 to reptile thermoregulatory behaviour and distribution. *Oecologia*, **9**, 23-46.

733 Suarez, R.K. (1996) Upper limits to mass-specific metabolic rates. *Annual Review of Physiology*, **58**,
734 583-605.

735 Thornton, K.W. & Lessem, A.S. (1978) A temperature algorithm for modifying biological rates.
736 *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society*, **107**, 284-287.

737 Tomlinson, S. (2016) Novel approaches to the calculation and comparison of thermoregulatory
738 parameters: Non-linear regression of metabolic rate and evaporative water loss in Australian
739 rodents. *Journal of Thermal Biology*, **57**, 54-65.

740 Tomlinson, S. & Phillips, R.D. (2012) Metabolic rate, evaporative water loss and field activity in
741 response to temperature in an ichneumonid wasp. *Journal of Zoology*, **287**, 81-90.

742 Tomlinson, S. & Menz, M.H.M. (2015) Does metabolic rate and evaporative water loss reflect
743 differences in migratory strategy in sexually dimorphic hoverflies? *Comparative Biochemistry*
744 *and Physiology*, **190**, 61-67.

745 Tomlinson, S. & Phillips, R.D. (2015) Differences in metabolic rate and evaporative water loss
746 associated with sexual dimorphism in thynnine wasps. *Journal of Insect Physiology*, **78**, 62-68.

747 Tomlinson, S., Dixon, K.W., Didham, R.K. & Bradshaw, S.D. (2015) Physiological plasticity of metabolic
748 rates in the invasive honey bee and an endemic Australian bee species. *Journal of Comparative*
749 *Physiology B*, **8**, 835-844.

750 Tomlinson, S., Webber, B.L., Bradshaw, S.D., Dixon, K.W. & Renton, M. (2017) Incorporating
751 biophysical ecology into high-resolution restoration targets: insect pollinator habitat suitability
752 models. *Restoration Ecology*, **26**, 338-347.

753 Tuff, K.T., Tuff, T. & Davies, K.F. (2016) A framework for integrating thermal biology into fragmentation
754 research. *Ecology Letters*, DOI: **10.1111/ele.12579**

755 van Berkum, F.H. (1988) Latitudinal patterns of the thermal sensitivity of sprint speed in lizards. *The*
756 *American Naturalist*, **132**, 327-343.

757 van Dijk, P.L., Tesch, C., Hardewig, I. & Portner, H.O. (1999) Physiological disturbances at critically high
758 temperatures: a comparison between stenothermal antarctic and eurythermal temperate
759 eelpouts (Zoarcidae). *Journal of Experimental Biology*, **202**, 3611-3621.

760 Warburg, M.R. (1965) The influence of ambient temperature and humidity on the body temperature
761 and water loss from two Australian lizards, *Tiliqua rugosa* Gray (Scincidae) and *Amphibolurus*
762 *barbatus* Cuvier (Agamidae). *Australian Journal of Zoology*, **13**, 331-350.

763 White, F.N. (1973) Temperature and the Galapagos marine iguana - Insights into reptilian thermo-
764 regulation. *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology*, **45**, 503-513.

765 Wilhoft, D.C. (1958) Observations on preferred body temperature and feeding habits of some selected
766 tropical iguanas. *Herpetologica*, **14**, 161-164.

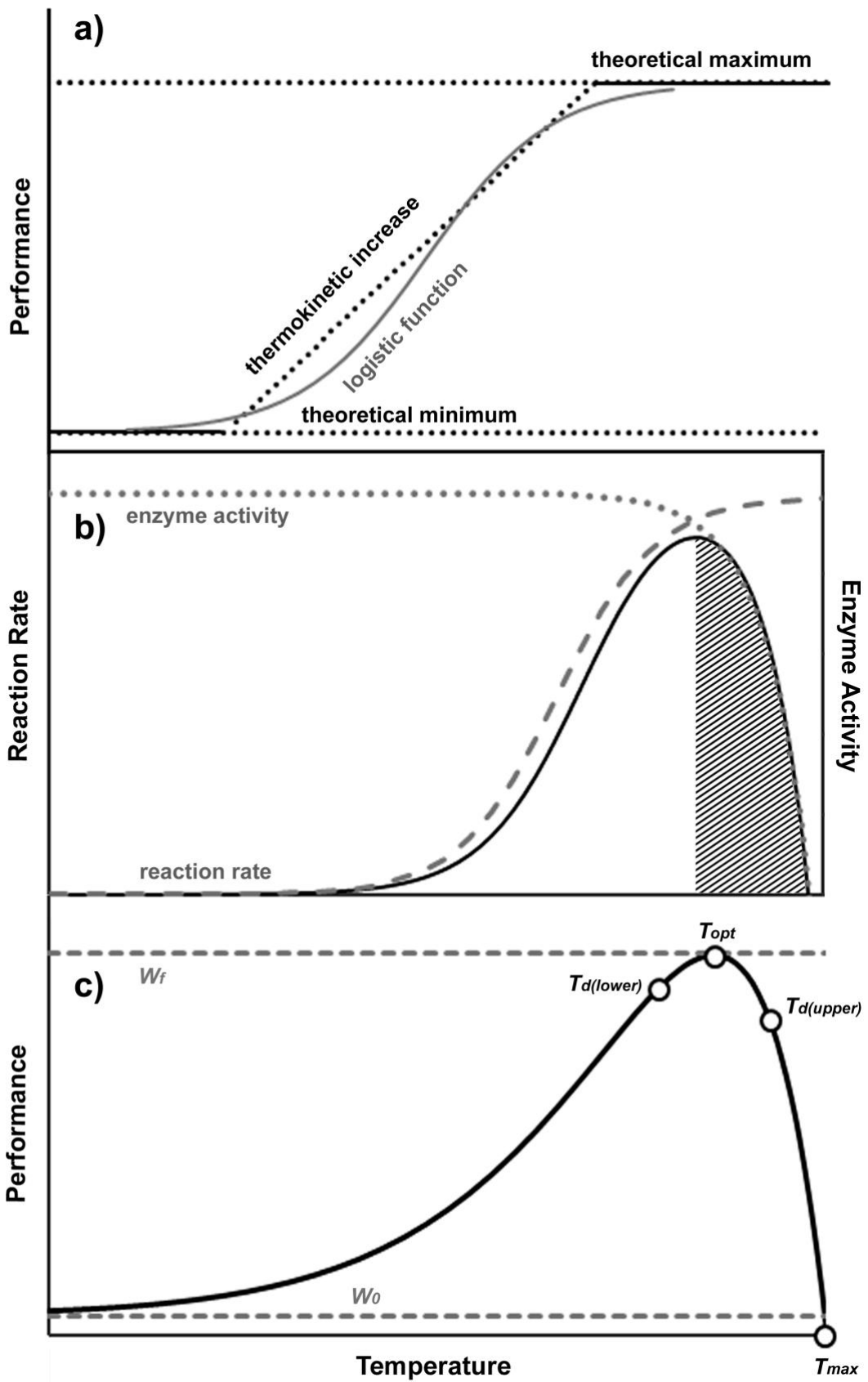
767 Wilson, K.J. (1974) The relationship of oxygen supply for activity to body temperature in four species
768 of lizards. *Copeia*, **1974**, 920-934.

769 Withers, P.C. (1992) *Comparative Animal Physiology*. Saunders College Publishing, Fort Worth.

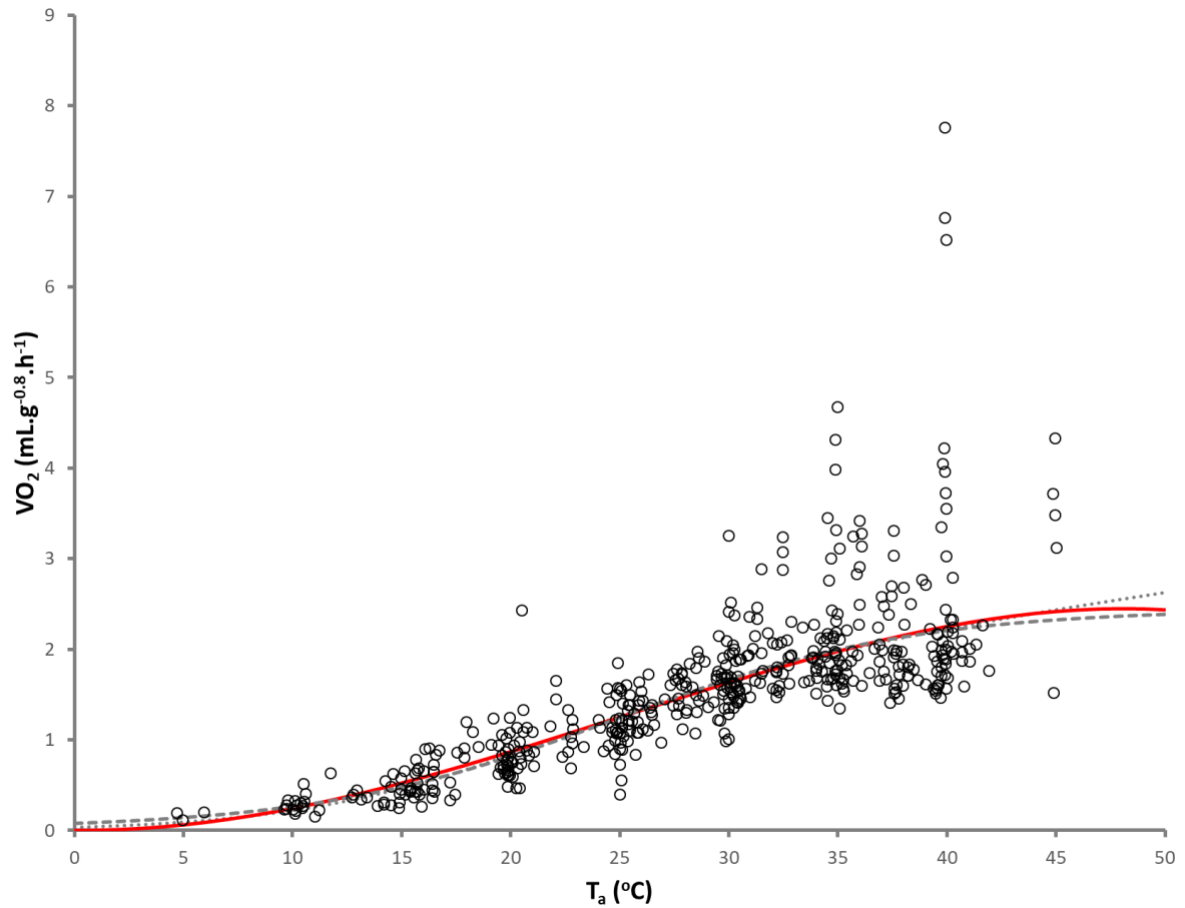
770 Wollkind, D.J., Logan, J.A. & Berryman, A.A. (1978) Asymptotic methods for modeling biological
771 processes. *Researches on Population Ecology*, **20**, 79-90.

772 Yan, W. & Hunt, L.A. (1999) An equation for modelling the temperature response of plants using only
773 the cardinal temperatures. *Annals of Botany*, **84**, 607-614.

774

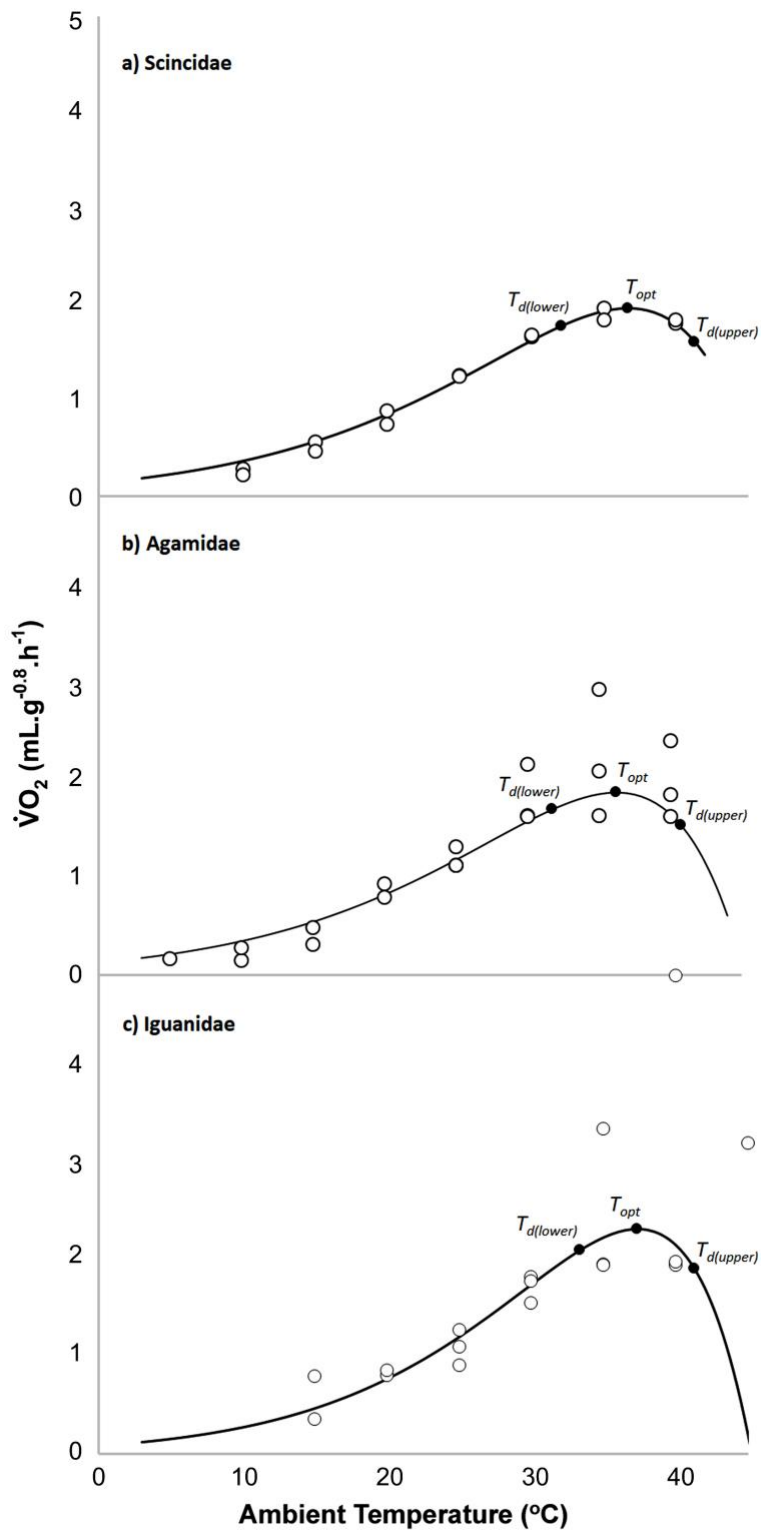


777 **Figure 1:** a) A schematic representation on the elements of thermal performance in ectotherms,
778 within the bounds of the thermal tolerance limits. There must be a theoretical minimum to
779 performance, and it must also increase with increasing temperature due to increased thermal kinetics
780 of reaction rates. There should also be a theoretical upper limit to performance imposed by structural
781 limitations. While these could be approached as a piece-wise series of linear fits, a more accurate
782 representation is made by a non-linear approach such as the logistic function shown b) When
783 converted to a non-linear paradigm, increased performance mimics the “s” curve of increasing
784 reaction rates with increasing temperature (dashed grey line). The addition of thermal inhibition of
785 performance implies that, while reaction rates increase, some aspect of physiological constraint is
786 imposed (cross-hatched area), here indicated by enzyme denaturation (dotted line). The interaction
787 between reaction kinetics and physiological constraint results in the characteristic unimodal,
788 asymmetrical performance curve. c) The proposed thermal performance functions examined here are
789 all characterized by some or all parameters that relate to physiological traits. These include a lower
790 limit, r_{min} , and an upper performance asymptote r_{max} . Critical to the question that I explore here, three
791 temperature thresholds can be resolved using these functions: T_{max} occurs at the only temperature
792 where the function is equal to zero, T_{opt} occurs at the peak of the function and two T_d thresholds can
793 be developed in unique ways from each function.



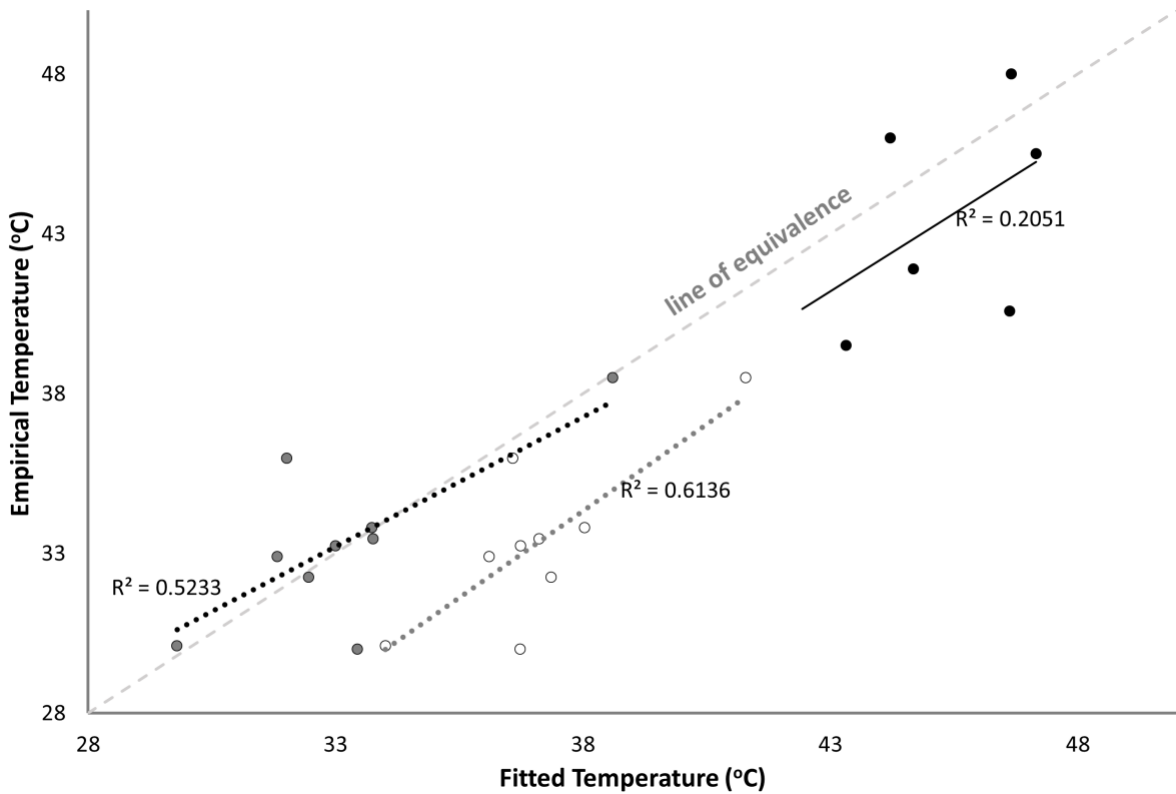
794

795 **Figure 2:** Fitted estimates of the four candidate functions, the Arrhenius curve (grey dotted line), the
 796 exponentially penalized logistic curve (grey dashed line), and the beta-distribution curve (red solid
 797 line), describing the thermal performance of exercise induced peak metabolic rates in reptiles. The
 798 beta-distribution function resulted in the most parsimonious fit ($\text{AICc} = 513.8$), however the
 799 exponentially penalized logistic ($\text{AICc} = 514.1$), and the Arrhenius function ($\text{AICc} = 515.1$) were
 800 statistical indistinguishable from it, with a ΔAICc less than 2.0 (Raftery, 1995). All the other functions
 801 tested fell beyond this limit.



802

803 **Figure 3:** Beta-distribution performance functions of allometrically corrected maximum metabolic
 804 rates for the nine reptile species examined here from **a)** the Scincidae, **b)** the Agamidae and **c)** the
 805 Iguanidae. The solid, black line represents the average beta-distribution function for each family. T_{max}
 806 is parameterized by the function directly, while T_d is parameterized by the first derivative of the
 807 function. The points are the average published metabolic rates measured for each species at each
 808 temperature.



809

810 **Figure 4:** Relationships between T_{opt} (○) and $T_{d(lower)}$ (●) values interpolated from the species-specific
 811 beta-distribution fits and published T_{pref} for each species, and between T_{max} (●) parameters resulting
 812 from the beta-distribution fits and published CT_{max} for each species. The lines represent simple
 813 correlations to indicate trends, however they serve to show that $T_{d(lower)}$ predictions fall much more
 814 closely upon the line of equivalence than T_{opt} predictions resulting from the beta-distribution function,
 815 while the T_{max} parameter is relatively consistent with published CT_{max} values.

816 **Table 1:** Mass and thermal characteristics of the nine species of reptile used to investigate the thermal performance of metabolic rates. Mass, T_{pref} and
 817 CT_{max} values were extracted from published literature sources, while T_{opt} and T_d were interpolated from fitted exponentially penalized logistic thermal
 818 performance functions. The number of data points contributing to each species is indicated in the column headed n. Breadth is calculated here as the
 819 difference between T_d and T_{opt} . Scope indicates the percentage of metabolic rates predicted at T_d of those predicted at T_{opt} , assuming that T_{opt} indicates the
 820 absolute maximal metabolic capacity of the species.

Family	Species	n	Mass (g)	T_{pref} (°C)	CT_{max} (°C)	T_d (°C)	T_{opt} (°C)	T_{max} (°C)	Breadth (°C)	Scope (%)	Sources
Scincidae	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	87	421	32.2	45.5	32.4	37.3	47.1	4.90	90.6	Warburg (1965); Wilson (1974); Bennett and John-Alder (1986)
	<i>Egernia cunninghamii</i>	105	257	32.9	41.9	31.8	36.1	44.7	4.284	90.7	Spellerberg (1972); Wilson (1974); Bennett and John-Alder (1986)
Agamidae	<i>Pogona barbata</i>	37	239	33.2	46.0	33.0	36.7	44.2	3.74	90.7	Licht (1965); Warburg (1965); Schäuble and Grigg (1998)
	<i>Physignathus leseuri</i>	71	549	30.1	-	29.8	34.0	42.4	4.21	90.7	Wilson (1974)
Iguanidae	<i>Sauromalus hispidus</i>	35	574	35.9	-	32.0	36.6	45.7	4.56	90.7	Bennett (1972)
	<i>Amblyrhynchus cristatus</i>	23	489	33.4	-	33.8	37.1	43.8	3.35	90.7	Wilhoft (1958); Bartholomew (1966); White (1973)
	<i>Iguana iguana</i>	42	794.5	33.8	40.6	33.7	38.0	46.6	4.29	90.7	Moberly (1968); Bruschi <i>et al.</i> (2016)
	<i>Dipsosaurus dorsalis</i>	29	35.2	38.5	48	38.6	41.3	46.7	2.68	90.8	Licht (1964); DeWitt (1967); Bennett and Dawson (1972)

821

822

823 **Table 2:** Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) comparison of the fitted models characterized according to a candidate set of ten published thermal
 824 performance functions. The function with the lowest AIC score, and hence a Δ AIC of zero, is deemed to be the most parsimonious model of the candidate
 825 set; in this case the beta-distribution function. Canonically, models within two AIC distances are considered statistically indistinguishable from the most
 826 parsimonious model (Raftery, 1995), in this case capturing three functions.

Performance Function	K	Δ AIC	Log Likelihood
Beta-distribution (Yan & Hunt, 1999)	4	0.00	-252.84
Exponentially-penalized logistic (Kovac <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	6	0.24	-250.96
Arrhenius (Sharpe & DeMichele, 1977)	7	1.31	-250.41
Skewed normal (Lehman <i>et al.</i> , 1975)	5	3.20	-253.42
Exponential power (Lassiter, 1975)	5	4.61	-254.12
two-way negative exponential (Huey & Stevenson, 1979)	4	7.74	-254.66
Modified cubic (Knies <i>et al.</i> , 2006; Knies <i>et al.</i> , 2009)	4	10.03	-257.85
Biexponential (Logan <i>et al.</i> , 1976; Tomlinson <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	6	26.42	-266.05
Logistic x logistic (Thornton & Lessem, 1978)	5	596.62	-549.15
Special Poisson (O'Neill <i>et al.</i> , 1972)	6	5423.69	-2963.66

827

828

829

830 **Table 3:** Beta functions of thermal performance of maximum metabolic rates for the nine species
 831 of reptile investigated.

Family	Species	Performance Function
Scincidae	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	$1.94 \times \left(\frac{47.1 - T_b}{47.1 - 37.3} \right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{37.3} \right)^{\frac{37.3}{47.1 - 37.3}}$
	<i>Egernia cunninghamii</i>	$1.99 \times \left(\frac{44.7 - T_b}{44.7 - 36.1} \right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{36.1} \right)^{\frac{36.1}{44.7 - 36.1}}$
Agamidae	<i>Pogona barbata</i>	$2.19 \times \left(\frac{44.2 - T_b}{44.2 - 36.7} \right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{36.7} \right)^{\frac{36.7}{44.2 - 36.7}}$
	<i>Physignathus leseuri</i>	$1.79 \times \left(\frac{42.4 - T_b}{42.4 - 34.0} \right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{34.0} \right)^{\frac{34.0}{42.4 - 34.0}}$
Iguanidae	<i>Sauromalus hispidus</i>	$2.10 \times \left(\frac{45.7 - T_b}{45.7 - 36.6} \right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{36.6} \right)^{\frac{36.6}{45.7 - 36.6}}$
	<i>Amblyrhynchus cristatus</i>	$2.89 \times \left(\frac{41.3 - T_b}{41.3 - 37.1} \right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{37.1} \right)^{\frac{37.1}{41.3 - 37.1}}$
	<i>Iguana iguana</i>	$2.10 \times \left(\frac{46.6 - T_b}{46.6 - 38.0} \right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{38.0} \right)^{\frac{38.0}{46.6 - 38.0}}$
	<i>Dipsosaurus dorsalis</i>	$5.12 \times \left(\frac{46.7 - T_b}{46.7 - 41.3} \right) \times \left(\frac{T_b}{41.3} \right)^{\frac{41.3}{46.7 - 41.3}}$

832

833