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Earth Sex Geckos Face Death After Successful Control Experiment

By The Moscow Times

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A group of geckos that survived weeks living in space-like conditions on Earth while their reptile brothers perished on board a satellite are to be killed because they are no longer needed for the experiment.

Russia's "sex geckos" made headlines in July when they were sent into orbit as part of an experiment to monitor the effects of zero-gravity on their reproductive systems, but none of the creatures made it back alive.

Eight days after the geckos were launched into space, a similar 60-day control experiment was initiated on Earth that was completed without a glitch.

"They are all alive, unlike the space geckos. The reptiles eat the same food, they are in the same boxes, they experience the same temperatures, and they are alive," Sergei Savyelev, who heads the Institute of Human Morphology, told the Interfax news agency.

But despite their heroics, it seems the Earth-based reptiles will soon be going the same way as their space brethren.

"The control group will be put to death as the experiment is over," Savyelev was quoted as saying by Interfax.

Savyelev added that scientists were still unsure what caused the space geckos to die, but said there had likely been a temperature regulation problem with their containers.

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