



Reptile Incidents

Jan 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006

This list represents a sample of known incidents involving captive reptiles in the United States in between January 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006. An incident is defined as a human injury caused by a captive reptile, the death of a captive reptile, the escape of a captive reptile, or the confiscation or displacement of a captive reptile (for example, an animal confiscated for reasons of neglect, or transferred to a facility following an attack or escape).

**January 17, 2005
Brookhaven, GA**

Iguana/lizard incident

"Dozens" of lizards and a 4 ½-foot iguana were rescued from a house fire. The animals were all legally owned with the necessary permits.

**January 19, 2005
Monroe County, MI**

Caiman incident

Animal control officers confiscated a 3 ½-foot caiman from a home. The owner did not have the necessary permits to keep the animal.

**January 20, 2005
Georgetown, MI**

Pygmy rattlesnake incident

A 20-year-old woman was hospitalized after being bitten on the hand by a friend's pygmy rattlesnake.

**January 22, 2005
New York, NY**

Sidewinder rattlesnake incident

A 38-year-old Bronx man was hospitalized after being bitten a sidewinder rattlesnake he had been keeping illegally. The man told police he had bought the snake off the street a year ago. The snake was transferred to a wildlife rehabilitator in Long Island

**February 6, 2005
Lykens Twshp, OH**

Rhinoceros viper incident

A 43-year-old man was flown to University of Cincinnati Medical Center after being bitten by a rhinoceros viper, one of a dozen venomous snakes he kept. There was no law restricting ownership of venomous snakes in this area.

**February 18, 2005
Laporte, IN**

Western diamondback rattlesnake incident

A 27-year-old man was hospitalized in intensive care after being bitten by his western diamondback rattlesnake. He had to be transferred to a separate facility because the hospital had no anti-venom. Police said the man could be charged with a misdemeanor for possession of an illegal pet, and that the snake would likely be destroyed.

**February 19, 2005
Englewood, FL**

Python incident

A 13-foot python was found lying in the road and captured by a passing motorist. It was turned over to animal control officers and taken to Suncoast Humane Society.

Reptile Incidents, 1/1/2005-6/30/2006

- February 25, 2005
Medina, WA** **Caiman/alligator incident**
A caiman or alligator was spotted loose in Lake Washington. The animal does not naturally live in the area and is assumed to be an abandon pet.
- March 7, 2005
San Antonio, TX** **Rhinoceros viper/tortoise incident**
Multiple rhinoceros vipers and tortoises were among dozens of animal confiscated from a private residents. The animals' caretaker had died the previous summer and his widow did not have the expertise to care for the animals, which were living in very poor conditions.
- Saturday, March 26
Rehoboth, MA** **Alligator incident**
A 3-foot alligator was clubbed to death by a boy who said the animal had attacked him near a lake. The boy told officers he saw a second alligator in the lake. Both animals are assumed to be abandon pets. The second alligator was not found and was expected to die of exposure due to water temperatures in Massachusetts.
- March 31, 2005
Albuquerque, NM** **Cobra/viper incident**
Two cobras and a viper were among 66 poisonous animals confiscated from after their owner died at home, apparently of natural causes. Police do not believe the owner had permits for the animals. They were taken to Eastside Animal Shelter.
- April 19, 2005
Florence, KY** **Alligator/turtle incident**
Two alligators and six turtles were among 30 animals confiscated from an auto body shop by officers investigating an animal cruelty complaint. The owners had a previous cruelty complaint against them and were expected to have charges filed against them.
- April 27, 2005
Williamsport, VA** **Alligator incident**
Two boys found an eight-inch alligator on the bank of the Potomac River. The alligator was eventually transferred to Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo. The animal is assumed to be an abandon pet; officials noted that the Potomac River's temperatures are not suitable for alligators.
- June, 2005
Jacksonville, FL** **Burmese python/monitor lizard incident**
Two Burmese pythons and five monitor lizards escaped from their owner's home; the exact date of the escape is not known. One python was captured on June 3rd and returned to a friend of the owner; it escaped again on June 7th. It was recaptured and taken to Jacksonville Herpetological Society Reptile Rescue where it is being held as evidence. Two misdemeanor charges were filed against the owner in connection with the original escape; one eight-foot python and all five lizards remain at large.

Reptile Incidents, 1/1/2005-6/30/2006

- June 10, 2005**
Sacramento, CA
- Burmese Python incident**
A 15-foot, 200-pound Burmese python named Miss Hiss escaped when its cage was punctured. It was later found and caught at a nearby warehouse. This was the snake's third escape.
- June 19, 2005**
Medford, OR
- Alligator incident**
A 3 ½-foot alligator was recaptured after escaping three days previously. The owner has been working in reptile rehabilitation for four months and expects to ship the animal to Colorado Gators, a home for reptiles, at the end of the summer.
- June 29, 2005**
Lancaster, PA
- Burmese python incident**
The owners of a 9-foot Burmese python willingly surrendered the snake to an animal control officer who came to the home following a call from a neighbor. The animal was turned over to Forgotten Friend Reptile Sanctuary in Lititz.
- July 3, 2005**
Meriden, CT
- Alligator incident**
A 3-foot alligator escaped from its enclosure and was recaptured later that day. The owner shared a home with his parents, who demanded after the escape that he remove the animals he kept as part of his private animal rescue group. The displaced animals were taken in by other volunteers.
- July 5, 2005**
Charleston, SC
- Alligator incident**
A three-foot alligator was confiscated from an apartment where police discovered a toddler sleeping in a nearby room and marijuana paraphernalia. Officers released the animal into the wild. Keeping alligators as pets is illegal in Charleston but the owner was not charged.
- July 6, 2005**
Texarkana, AR
- Alligator incident**
Two boys, ages 9 and 14, captured an alligator that had escaped from the home of a local schoolteacher. The animal was 3 years old and approximately 2 ½ feet long; it was missing for a week and a half before being caught and returned to its owner.
- July 10, 2004**
Saugus, MA
- Monitor lizard incident**
Police officers captured a 3- to 4-foot monitor lizard that walked into a Computer Depot store. The animal had cuts and abscesses on its body; officers speculate that the animal was abandon when it became too large for its owner to handle. Officials arranged for the animal to be transferred to Rainforest Reptile, a local exhibitor. Police stated that they were too busy to investigate how the animal came to be loose.

Reptile Incidents, 1/1/2005-6/30/2006

- July 14, 2005
Brockton, MA**
Alligator incident
An employee of Rainforest Reptile captured a 4 ½-foot alligator that was found loose in D.W. Field Park; a second alligator was seen but remained at large. Police were investigating whether workers from Florida-based Brockton Fair dumped the alligators; a \$500 reward was established for information about whoever abandon the animals.
- August, 2005
Los Angeles, CA**
Alligator incident
A 7-foot alligator was seen in Machado Lake beginning in August; as of mid-September all efforts to capture it have failed. A tip led to the arrest of two men suspected of dumping the alligator; in addition, police seized three alligators, four piranha, one rattlesnake, three desert tortoises, six tortoise eggs, one scorpion and about 10 pounds of marijuana.
- August, 2005
Grandville, MI**
Alligator incident
A 3-foot alligator was found trapped in the window well of a home, captured and taken to the Humane Society. Exact date of incident was not reported.
- August 1, 2005
Vernon, CT**
Alligator incident
A man voluntarily surrendered a 2-foot alligator to police because he felt he could no longer care for it. The animal was expected to be transferred to Rainforest Reptile in Massachusetts.
- August 1, 2005
Antioch, IL**
Alligator incident
A three-foot alligator was captured in East Loon Lake and taken to a licensed reptile rehabilitator. A state biologist speculated that the animal was an abandon pet.
- August 3, 2005
St. Louis, MO**
Burmese python incident
A United Parcel Service driver discovered a 9-foot Burmese python that had escaped from a package inside the UPS truck. The python was taken to the St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center before the intended recipient claimed the snake.
- August 3, 2005
Kauffman, PA**
Alligator incident
A 2 ½-foot alligator was captured near a farm; Catocin Zoo agreed to take in the animal. The alligator is assumed to be an abandon pet.
- August 5, 2005
Ann Arbor, MI**
Alligator incident
A unknown person left a 42-inch alligator in a box outside a veterinary clinic; no determination had been made at press time of the animal's eventual fate. The director of operations at the Huron Valley Humane Society noted that the Society had already rescued three alligators and six caimans that year.

Reptile Incidents, 1/1/2005-6/30/2006

- August 7, 2005**
White River Twnshp,
IN
- Alligator incident**
A 4 ½-foot alligator escaped from a home where it was being kept before its intended transfer to a Florida alligator exhibitor. Animal control officers captured the animal in a nearby retention pond the next day. The owner surrendered the animal, which will live at Battson's Wildlife Services, a local exhibitor. Owning alligators is legal in Indiana.
- August 17, 2005**
Lynn, MA
- Crocodile, alligator, turtle incident**
Police discovered a 3-foot crocodile, two baby alligators and a snapping turtle; state Environmental Police were called to confiscate the animals and the owner was charged with illegal possession of the crocodile and alligators. The turtle was being examined to determine if it is an endangered species, in which case possession constituted a federal offense. Police also discovered heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and enough Xanax to merit trafficking charges.
- August 24, 2005**
Clarksville, TN
- Alligator incident**
A four-foot alligator was discovered in a basement; it then escaped from the bed of a moving pickup truck while being transported. It was recaptured three weeks later and euthanized.
- August 28, 2005**
Fresno, CA
- Ball python incident**
A 12-year-old boy was bitten by an escaped ball python that had entered his family's home. The snake is not venomous. Animal control officers captured the snake; they did not know if it would be adopted or euthanized.
- September 5, 2005**
Brackenridge, PA
- Alligator incident**
A local girl captured a 2-foot-long alligator that had escaped from a resident's yard. The owner says that neighborhood cats opened the gate, allowing the alligator to escape. The animal was returned to its owner.
- September 8, 2005**
Los Angeles, CA
- Alligator incident**
The smaller of two alligators known to be loose in the Harbor City area of Los Angeles was captured. It is being held for a 90-day quarantine at the Los Angeles Zoo.
- September 16, 2005**
New Castle, DE
- Boa constrictor incident**
An 8-foot Argentina boa and three 4- to 6-foot boa constrictors were found abandon in an apartment where the tenant had recently been evicted. The snakes were taken to the Stanton SPCA.
- September 19, 2005**
Stanton, DE
- Boa constrictor incident**
The Stanton SPCA received its fifth constrictor in less than a week after a man was seen walking down the street with the snake. Police seized the animal because the owner did not have the necessary permit.

Reptile Incidents, 1/1/2005-6/30/2006

September 19, 2005 Lodi, CA	Caiman incident An animal control officer captured a three-foot caiman loose in a residential yard. It was expected to be moved to a Sacramento reptile house.
September 22, 2005 Deltona, FL	Monitor lizard incident An African Nile monitor lizard that had been loose for months was captured and taken to the Humane Society. It was later euthanized to make room for a snake that was deemed more adoptable.
September 30, 2005 New York, NY	Alligator incident An auto mechanic found two small alligators that had been abandon in an old car. He kept them for a week and a half before they discovered that it is illegal to keep alligators in New York and called authorities.
October 6, 2005 Philadelphia, PA	Alligator, crocodile incident Five alligators between 5 and 7 feet in length and a small crocodile were confiscated from the basement of a home in Philadelphia. Police also confiscated \$1.2 million worth of drugs, 20 weapons and \$7,000 in cash.
October 11, 2005 Miami, FL	African rock python incident A 7-foot African rock python was captured at a turkey farm in south Miami. Authorities planned to turn it over to a zoo.
October 15, 2005 Tyrone, PA	Reptile incident Over 50 exotic animals, mainly reptiles, were confiscated from a duplex; the house is expected to be condemned.
October 15, 2005 Gainesville, FL	Ball python incident A college student discovered a 2-foot ball python in a sink drain. The snake was captured and taken to the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Center.
October 15, 2005 Piscataway, NJ	Alligator incident A three-foot alligator was found in a residential back yard; it was caught by police, and later taken by the state Fish and Wildlife Service.
October 21, 2005 New York, NY	Snake incident Three snakes were among a group of exotic animals abandon after the owners were evicted from their Brooklyn apartment. All of the animals were collected by Animal Care and Control.
October 30, 2005 Wilmington, NC	Snake incident Five snakes, including king snakes and chicken snakes, were stolen from Tregembo Animal Park.

Reptile Incidents, 1/1/2005-6/30/2006

- November 18, 2005
San Francisco, CA** **Boa constrictor incident**
Two boa constrictors were confiscated from a street performer at San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf.
- November 21, 2005
Longmont, CO** **Alligator incident**
A 2-foot American alligator was photographed by passersby, who told reporters they intended to come back the next day to capture it. The eventual fate of the animal is unclear.
- November 30, 2005
Dublin, GA** **Burmese python**
A 7-foot Burmese python was captured by a Department of Natural Resources licensed snake trapper. The snake was originally found inside a pillowcase in a residential yard.
- December 2005
Deltona, FL** **Nile monitor lizard**
A monitor lizard believed to be a former pet took up residence in a pond. The lizard is believed to be responsible for decimating the pond's duck population.
- December 1, 2005
Jupiter, FL** **Alligator incident**
Two baby American alligators were stolen from Busch Wildlife Sanctuary. A third alligator was left behind.
- January 6, 2006
Green Bay, WI** **Snake incident**
An 11-foot snake was rescued from a house fire. The animal was temporarily housed at Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary while the owners sought new housing.
- January 16, 2006
Dallastown, PA** **Iguana incident**
The body of a 4-foot long iguana was found in a roadway. A police officer disposed of the corpse.
- January 22, 2006
Gainesville, FL** **Snake incident**
An African ball python and an Argentine boa constrictor were stolen from a classroom. A third, more dangerous snake, a Malaysian python, was not taken.
- February 8, 2006
Rexburg, ID** **Burmese python incident**
An 8 ½-foot Burmese python escaped from an apartment; the snake was captured a week later.
- March 14, 2006
Glenwood Springs, CO** **Snake incident**
A 7-foot snake was left behind when its owner was evicted from his apartment. The snake was turned over to Colorado Animal Rescue.

Reptile Incidents, 1/1/2005-6/30/2006

March 28, 2006 Naples, FL	Snake incident A man crashed his car when his snake, which he was carrying loose in the vehicle, bit him. He was charged with leaving the scene of an accident.
April 16, 2006 Woodbury, MN	Veiled chameleon incident A pet chameleon escaped from its enclosure; it was caught about one and a half blocks away on June 1 st , and later reunited with its owner.
April 25, 2006 Tampa, FL	Corn snake incident A corn snake was one of several animals confiscated from owner Michael Ray Gibson Jr. The owner was charged with felony animal cruelty due to the condition of 19 dogs that were also confiscated.
April 28, 2006 Madison, WI	Alligator incident A baby alligator was rescued from a house fire. The owner claims the animal is owned legally, but animal control officers say it violates the city's exotic animal ordinance.
April 30, 2006 Hendry County, FL	Alligator incident A 62-year-old man suffered two broken fingers and punctures to his hands after attempting to wrestle an alligator living on his private property.
May 8, 2006 Sutton, MA	Alligator incident An alligator was voluntarily surrendered to police by the owner's parent; transferred to Rainforest Reptile.
May 8, 2006 Dedham, MA	Alligator incident An alligator was seized by police for illegal ownership; transferred to Rainforest Reptile.
May 24, 2006 Paducah, KY	Ball python incident A ball pything was found inside a rental car; the snake was captured and held pending identification of its owner.
May 30, 2006 Pawtucket, RI	Alligator incident A two-foot-long alligator was captured near Slater Memorial Park.
June 1, 2006 Trenton, NJ	Alligator incident After biting a 12-year-old child, a baby alligator was surrendered by the teenage owner to the victim's mother, who gave the animal to a marine biologist.

Reptile Incidents, 1/1/2005-6/30/2006

June 7, 2006
Caldwell, ID

Alligator incident

A alligator was found a few blocks from its home; it was caught and the owner given two weeks to find new legal homes for the alligator and a coatimundi he also owned.

June 11, 2006
Rodeo, CA

Tortoise incident

A pet tortoise went missing from its owner's yard; neighbors reported seeing a man in an SUV take the tortoise.

June 13, 2006
Homestead, FL

Caiman incident

A caiman was found in a residential backyard; it was captured and taken to Everglades Outpost.

June 19, 2006
Pottstown, PA

Alligator incident

An alligator was discovered in a driveway by a newspaper carrier and captured by police.

June 29, 2006
Kiln Creek, VA

Alligator incident

An alligator was discovered and captured by residents, then taken by police to the SPCA.