



Reptile Incidents

Jan 1, 2005 through Oct 15, 2005

This list represents a sample of known incidents involving captive reptiles in the United States in 2005. 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).

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| 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 Twnshp, 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 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. |

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- 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.
- 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.
- July 3, 1005**
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.

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- 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.
- 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.

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- 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.
- 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.

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- 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.
- 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.