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Alligator Found In Northwest Indiana Trailer Park Reptile Was Still Alive And Was Roaming Black Oak Park In Gary

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(CBS) GARY, Ind. They're certainly not native, but at this rate they'll soon be as common as a city sparrow.

Another alligator was found in Gary on Tuesday. Discovered in a Black Oak mobile home park, it was 3 feet long and still alive.

Neighbors told police they had seen it roaming the park on Monday, too.

"It's quite odd. You know, they're not natural to this area," said Gary Police Lt. Sam Roberts.

"It had been running around for at least that one day," Roberts said.

Animal enforcement officer Harold Lentner was driving along Ridge Road in the area of of Hendricks Street Tuesday when he was flagged down by a resident of the mobile home park, police said.

The resident led Lentner to 3887 Hendricks St.

No one in the park seemed willing or able to tell police where the gator came from, Roberts said.

"They knew nothing of it," Roberts said.

Police think the animal may belong to someone in the area. But they are illegal to own, and no one is stepping up to claim it.

Police took the alligator to Westchester Animal Clinic in Porter. Ashley Kirkpatrick, a veterinarian's assistant there, said the animal was healthy when it arrived, but cold.

Kirkpatrick, who sat in front of the clinic, cradling the gator in her arms, said the animal was no trouble to handle or to have around.

Crocodiles, Kirkpatrick said, are more aggressive than the alligator found in Gary.

"Of course," Kirkpatrick said, "you can't kiss him."

"I wasn't surprised at all. It's about the fourth or fifth one we've had," said Jackie Altizer of the Westchester Animal Clinic. CBS 2 was told this 3-year-old is so calm, at times you can even kiss him. But that can be deceiving. Most of these guys will chomp you in a minute, but they can become more used to human contact over time.

A 32-year-old gator has been sitting pretty at the clinic for years. His nails are polished and he takes daily spa baths.

"He would never make it in the wild. We could never release him, which is one of the reasons why he lives here," Altizer said.

That's because his previous owners fed him goldfish, which ruined his jaw and made it impossible for him to feed himself.

Animal experts say we are seeing more alligators like him because people do not realize most of them do not make good pets.

"For under a hundred dollars, you can get them at pet stores, swap meets. And a lot of people think that if you keep them in a small aquarium, they'll stay a small size and that's not true," said Steve Lakatos of the Westchester Animal Clinic.

The 32-year-old alligator will soon have a new habitat built for him at the new Westchester Animal Clinic. They say they will have to find a good home for the other alligator brought to them this week.

Reserve police officers in Gary found an alligator two months ago in Glen Park.

It was 4 feet long, but it was found dead and frozen in a Dumpster.

No one in the park seemed willing or able to tell police where the gator came from, Roberts said.



Ashley Kirkpatrick holds an alligator at Westchester Animal Clinic in Porter, Ind.

Lisa Schreiber / Post-Tribune



Gary police found the gator after it was seen roaming a neighborhood in Black Oak.

Lisa Schreiber / Post-Tribune

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Alligator captured in Indiana trailer park

GARY, Ind., March 21 (UPI) -- Animal enforcement officers in Gary, Ind., have captured an alligator found wandering in the city.

The 3-foot alligator captured Tuesday was found in a local mobile home park, the Gary Post-Tribune reported Wednesday. Residents said they spotted the alligator creeping through the park Monday.

"It had been running around for at least that one day," police Lt. Sam Roberts said.

Roberts said none of the park's residents knew how the alligator, which is not native to the area, ended up in the park.

Ashley Kirkpatrick, a veterinarian's assistant at the Westchester Animal Clinic in Porter, Ind., said the alligator was healthy but cold when police brought it in.

The incident follows a discovery two months ago of a dead alligator in a Gary dumpster.