

REPTILE NEWS

Volume 5, Issue Summer 2010

We Care About the Environment

Smuggler Caught at Canadian Border *Man Guilty of Smuggling 1000 Reptiles*



Smuggled turtles enjoy a meal at the Indian River Reptile Zoo, their new home.

A Niagara-on-The-Lake resident pleaded guilty in a St. Catharines court to illegally loading up his GMC Safari Van with more than 1,000 tortoises, turtles, boa constrictors and pythons and trying to sneak them across the Canada – USA border into Ontario.

Canadian Border guards at Queenston-Lewiston Bridge found the reptiles hidden behind panels of the vehicles during a search on September 15 2009.

Included were seven types of endangered species; 15 Red-Footed tortoises, 3 Leopard tortoises, 2 Elongated tortoises, 14 African-Spurred tortoises, 2 Forsten tortoises, 3 Macklot pythons, and 6 Rainbow boa constrictors.

The seized shipment also included 203 Southern painted turtles, 1,220 Red-eared slider turtles, 3 pond turtles and 4 kind snakes which are not endangered species, but the accused did not have the proper documentation to import them into Canada.

Andrew Fruck, 32 pleaded guilty to seven counts of unlawfully importing an endangered animal into the country and four counts of unlawfully importing an animal without proper permits.

He also pleaded guilty to one count of making a false statement to customs officer and breaching probation order banning his possession of animals.

Both Andrew and his wife Tricia have previously been convicted of cruelty to animals when they lived in Napanee, Ontario.

Some of the animals seized at the border were transferred to Indian River Reptile Zoo near Peterborough for quarantine, care and feeding. The 1200 turtles were returned to their original home in Louisiana.

Sentencing is still before the courts.

New Discovery: Common Musk Turtle Breathes Through Its Tongue



New born at the Zoo Musk Turtle recently hatched from egg of smuggled mom.

their tongues are clumsy at manipulating food, which is always dropped during the attempt. The only way they can eat the food is to first drag it into the water.

They studied the turtle's tongue with scanning electron microscopes and light microscopes to find out why. After carrying out further tests the researchers found the tongue plays an important role in gas exchange when the turtle is underwater, drawing in oxygen from the water through the tongue.

Some freshwater turtles must come to the surface to breathe, while others breathe underwater through their skin or using cavities in their rear ends called cloacal bursae. Marine turtles must come to the surface to breathe every few hours. The common musk turtle has until now baffled scientists because it's skin is too thick to breathe through and is poorly supplied with blood, it does not have cloacal bursae, and does not come up for air. Heiss said in a BBC News interview that they "knew that organs for aquatic respiration must be present somewhere but [we] finally have discovered it accidentally.

The North American common musk turtle (*Stemotherus odoratus*) is a pretty ordinary sort of turtle except for one thing newly discovered by Austrian scientists: it can breathe through its tongue, which allows it to remain underwater for months.

Researchers Egon Heiss and colleagues from the Department of Theoretical Biology at the University of Vienna in Austria

were using high speed video to study the feeding habits of the musk turtle, a reptile from the eastern U.S states and southern Canada, where it lives in freshwater bodies such as lakes and rivers. They discovered the adults spend most of their lives submerged but young turtles sometimes venture on land to look for food. They noticed the turtles can grasp food on land using their jaws but

Summer Events

July 14 PAINT A SNAKE

Bring a branch and paint a snake contest

See details page 6

Aug 10 PHOTO CONTEST

Enter your best photos of animals

See details page 6

August 14 PAINT A SNAKE

August 18 COLOUR SMUGGLERS

Prizes and entries by August 15th

August 23 SMUGGLERS PHOTO DAY

Take your own photos of Smuggles at the Zoo



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Stanley Cup visits Zoo



Lacy loves the cup!

As part of the last year fundraising events Lord Stanley's famous cup was available for viewing by visitors at the Reptile Zoo.

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Smuggles Joins Zoo Staff *The Saga Of Smuggles*



Bry Loyst curator of the Indian River Reptile Zoo, is pleased to announce the appointment of 'SMUGGLES' as official zoo mascot and Turtle in charge of reptile rescue.

Samtestudoignavus (Latin for big lazy turtle) was living a life of luxury in a small exclusive pond in South Carolina. Suddenly, his life changed forever.

One sunny spring day "Sam" (all his friends called him Sam, as who could pronounce his full name!) Sorry, back to the story. Sam was sun bathing, taking in a few rays, sipping a cold drink. He was set upon by a mean spirited masked animal smuggler. A net was thrown over Sam, he was picked up and tossed into the back of a large vehicle and taken to a secret animal compound.

While the bad guy was making phone calls looking for a buyer for his new rare turtle, Sam was allowed to wander within the high fenced compound.

Sam quickly made new friends who filled him in on the facts of animal trade and smuggling. "Wild caught animals are sold and smuggled in and out of most countries", said Greco the large grizzly bear. "Yeah it is a big business", said Bart a small black bear. "I could end up in a circus", he added. "Or much worse", said Carter the wise old camel. "They could sell you for parts"; "your spleen and gall bladder are valuable commodities on the black market in Asia. He paused and said – "Sam you better get out of here before you are sold for soup."

Sam had never moved so fast in his life. Late that same

night he dug under the compound fence and scrambled to freedom. All the next day he walked and walked and walked some more along the back roads, hiding in a nearby ditch when cars sped by.

Exhausted, he came upon a small green river and decided to stay and rest awhile. Sam soon settled into his lazy old ways and once again he was relaxing on the river bank in the warm afternoon sun.

Unbeknownst to Sam the smuggler had found a buyer in Canada for the rare, endangered Samtestudoignavus species and had been searching desperately for the escaped turtle for several days. He knew Sam would head for the nearest water and once again he stalked and recaptured the snoozing turtle. "Oh no, not again" Sam sighed.

He was stuffed in the back of a silver SUV, the smuggler headed straight for the Canadian border at Niagara Falls.

"Anything to declare?" said the customs agent. "Not a thing", said the smuggler.

As the vehicle pulled away "Sam" waved at the agent from the back window. The quick thinking agent called border patrol and after a brief pursuit of flashing lights and loud sirens, the SUV was pulled over.

The smuggler was arrested. They found Sam in the back and 100 baby turtles hidden behind panels in the truck. One large suitcase contained 20 snakes in canvas bags and 12 young geckos were in a bag under the seat. Serious smuggling.

Canada wildlife officers arrived, identifying and seizing the various animal species. They then called Bry Loyst at the Indian River Reptile Zoo to make arrangements for care and feeding of the reptiles until a date for the trial was set. Following the trial animals are occasionally returned to their country of origin, but since the actual home location is rarely known; most illegally imported reptiles remain in Canada. Many find sanctuary and a new home at Indian River Reptile Zoo. Sam was sent to the reptile zoo.

Sam made two decisions. First he wanted to make his new home at Indian River Reptile Zoo and second he wanted to stop animal smuggling. He now realized that people who caught live animals, mammals, reptiles or birds, and smuggled them out of their country of origin were contributing to the death of most of these animals which unfortunately could lead to the extinction of the species.

Sam had a cause! He was going on a crusade to stop animal smuggling!

Sam decided that like most super hero's

he needed a memorable name; something distinct.

"How about Super Turtle?" said Chompsy the alligator - "No" said Sam.

He remembered a distant cousin who had taken a former USA President's name when he became famous, but Sam was now Canadian and he decided that his new name would be 'SMUGGLES'. He was going to help the Zoo inform and educate children and adults about the harm caused by the illegal trade in wild caught and endangered species. Smuggles would lead the way. Smuggles made many friends at the zoo and realized that all of them were rescued animals. And like Sam the Indian Reptile Zoo was their sanctuary. Without the zoo and generous donations from supporters many of these wonderful reptiles would perish.

"Smuggles is 'all heart'; he has good intentions and his cause is just", Bry Loyst says, "but sometimes Smuggles is a little over zealous and gets into mischief. So when you come to visit the reptile zoo watch out because Smuggles sometimes can be found in strange places or he may surprise you when you least expect to see him."

Smuggles is now excited about becoming part of the zoo's Outreach Program and is available for events to help the zoo with fund raising.

Illegal Trade In Ontario Species Results In Jail Term And \$4,000 Fine

Emanuele Tosoro of Waterdown has been sentenced to two 90-day sentences in jail to be served concurrently, two years probation and fined \$4,000 for violations related to the illegal trade of species at risk.

On October 15th, 2008, as a result of an ongoing undercover investigation into the illegal trafficking of species at risk, Tesoro was arrested in the State of New York by U.S. authorities. The investigation disclosed that Tesoro had crossed the Canadian/U.S. border illegally transporting a total of 35 Eastern Massasauga rattlesnakes and one spotted turtle during two trips taken between May and October 2008. These reptiles

had been taken from the wild in Ontario and hidden behind panels in his van to cross the border.

Tesoro pleaded guilty to the terms outlined in a global plea agreement and was convicted of offences relating to the illegal capture, possession, transportation and buying and selling of species at risk. Charges against Tesoro by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation are still before federal and state courts in the U.S.

'Operation Shellshock' was a joint international investigation into the illegal trade of species at risk between Canada and the United States. The multi-agency investigation was conducted by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Conservation officers, and officers from Environ-



The Eastern Massasauga rattlesnakes (like the one shown) are listed as a threatened species in Ontario and were illegally transported across the border to U.S.A.

ment Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

Justice of the Peace Mitchell Baker heard the case in the Ontario Court of Justice in Hamilton on May 11th, 2009.

To report a natural resources violation, call 1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667) toll-free anytime or contact your local ministry office during regular business hours. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)

Zoo Is A Sanctuary

The Indian River Reptile Fund Needs Your Support

The Toughest Job in the World is Raising Money to Save Snakes



The Indian River Reptile Zoo is the only reptile zoo in Canada that does not sell reptiles and is not a pet store.

Many people do not realize that reptiles are abandoned just like cats and dogs. Sadly, over 90% of people that purchase reptiles at other reptile "zoos" and pet stores do not keep the reptile. Reptiles frequently die due to improper care, are given up because they have grown too large, lived too long or are too difficult to care for. When animals are seized by Wildlife

Canada, The Ministry of Natural Resources, OSPCA, Humane Society Officers, the reptiles are brought to Indian River Reptile Zoo. In order to house and care for these animals and others that we rescue, we have started a non-profit corporation called The Indian River Reptile Fund.

This fund will also support the expansion of enclosures for the animals at the zoo and the construction of an enclosure to house the Perentie Monitors gifted to us by the Australia Zoo and Tourism Australia.

To donate send a cheque or money order to Indian River Reptile Fund, 2206 Hwy 7, RR#3, Indian River, Ontario, K0L 2B0



ZOO NEEDS YOU Enter to Win Cash & Prizes



Enter Now Win Up To \$100.00 Cash & Prizes

Help the zoo raise funds. It sure looks like this turtle is excited about our photo contest! Please enter early and often. See details below. You can win prizes and help save and protect reptiles. Animal photos only.

Photo Contest Rules:

This photo contest is open to all ages. There is a \$10.00 donation fee to the Reptile Fund for each entry. You can enter as many photos as you wish at \$10.00 each. All submissions must be received at the Reptile Zoo by 12:00 pm Sunday August 8th, 2010 for judging on August 10, 2010. Prizes will be awarded as follows and winners will be contacted by telephone:

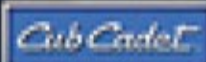
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Gator search comes up empty



Equipped with ropes and his bare hands, Bry Loyst spent Tuesday traversing a shallow, murky pond in Confederation Park searching for an elusive crocodile or alligator.

After several hours, the daytime search was called off in favour of a nighttime search, where Loyst's crew and Hamilton Conservation Authority staff hoped to catch the reptile's eyes that glow when flashed with light.

But after nearly another hour Tuesday night, no such luck.

The pond leads into the Red Hill Creek, which leads into the Windermere Basin and eventually Lake Ontario — though that would be quite the journey for a cold, scared reptile, experts said.

Loyst, curator of the Indian River Reptile Zoo near Peterborough, was called in to find the crocodilian species after a local birder, Tom Badeau, discovered the reptile and sent a photo to the conservation authority Monday. The distant photo shows what looks like a small gator poking its head out of the water.

Despite no sightings yesterday, Loyst said he is quite sure based on the photo and a far away sighting Monday that it was one of 23 crocodile or alligator species.

But he and authority searchers were satisfied after last night's effort that it is no longer in the area.

No further searches are planned unless there are new sightings.

The animal must have been released from captivity, he said, adding that unfortunately peo-

ple who keep reptiles as pets often release them when they get too big.

And though he cautioned the public to stay away from the suspected gator if spotted, he said there is no serious public risk.

The greater concern is the survival of the reptile.

Crocodilian species do not eat in temperatures below 18 C and the cold temperatures make them slow, Loyst said. They can survive a year without food, but cannot survive winter temperatures.

Conservation authority assistant ecologist Lisa Jennings said it's hard to say how often animals are dumped into local ecosystems since offenders are rarely caught.

Last year, the spawn of illegally dumped goldfish had to be removed from ponds in the Dundas Valley because they ate the eggs of endangered Jefferson salamanders and other native amphibians.

In the same pond where crews searched for the gator, there was also an exotic turtle species — a red ear slider — that had to have been dumped, Jennings said.

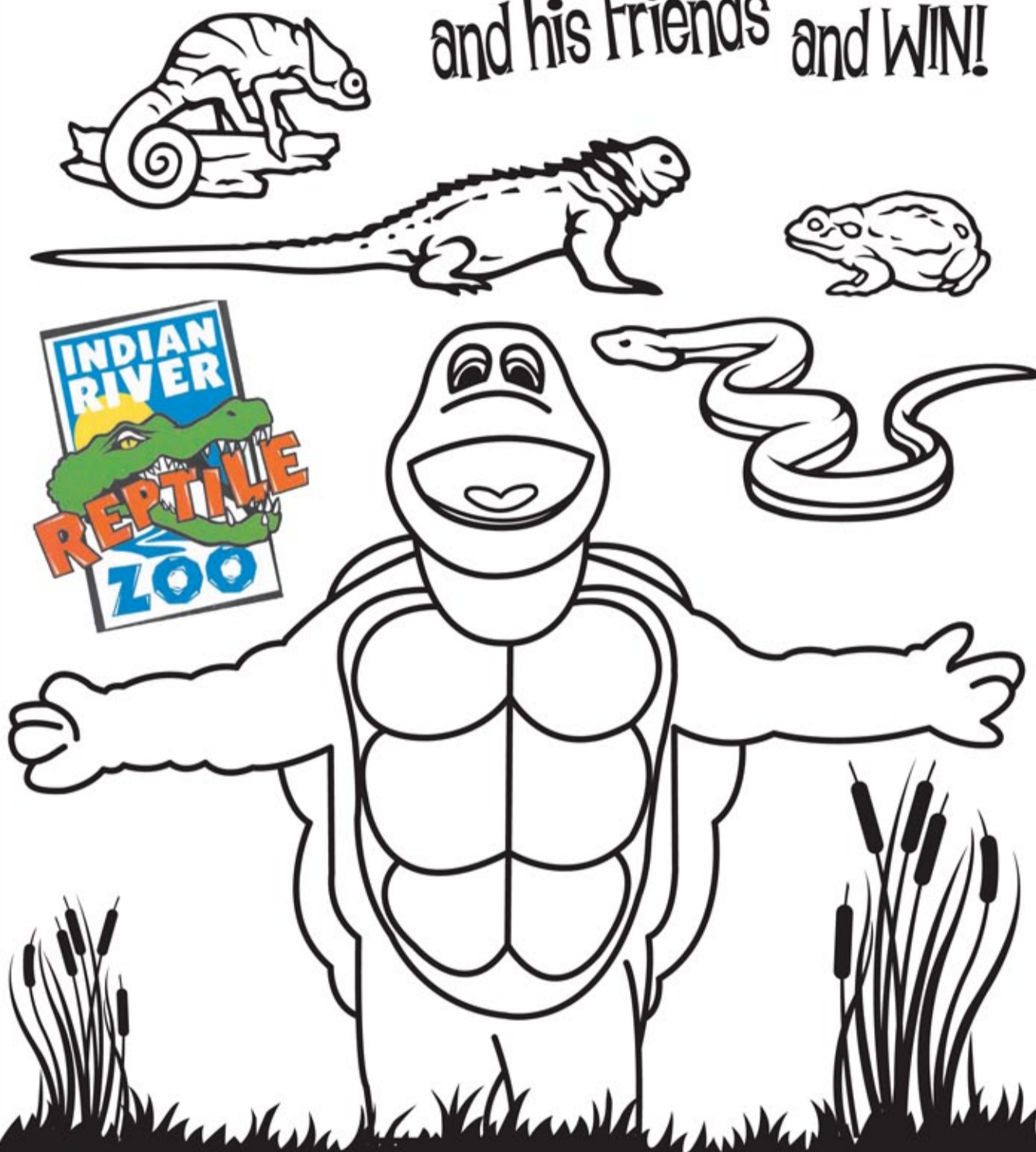
"Education is No. 1 when it comes to owning exotic species," she said. "Take it too a zoo, the SPCA, where you purchased it."

The Confederation Park pond is also home to many birds, carp — which could be seen spawning in the shallow water — and turtles, including snapping turtles, a "species of concern" under the Endangered Species Act. But a gator would be of no threat to them.

COLOURING CONTEST

COLOUR SMUGGLIES

and his friends and WIN!



CONTEST STARTS JULY 1ST & CLOSSES AT 5:00PM AUGUST 19TH

RULES: Contest is open to all children everywhere. Entries will be judged in age categories. Age 5 & under, Ages 6-8, Ages 9-12, Ages 13-87. Entry fee is a \$1.00 donation to the Zoo. Enter as often as you wish. You may reproduce/copy this colouring page to enter often. Judges decision is final. Winners will be phoned August 19-25. Prizes must be picked up at the Zoo by September 20, 2010. Winners will be published on the Zoo Facebook page. Crayons or markers can be used to colour. Mail or deliver to the Zoo at R.R. #3, Indian River, Ontario K0L 2B0.

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Turtle, Snake Smugglers Busted

A cargo of fresh fruits shocked even the most seasoned customs officials at Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport on February 4th, 2010 when they discovered at least 700 snakes and over 3,400 pig-nosed turtles inside.

"The document just said 'fresh fruits,'" said Gatot Sugeng Wibowo, chief of investigations at the customs office.

Gatot said the illicit cargo was being exported and was scheduled to be shipped to Hong Kong on a Cathay Pacific flight.

"These snakes and turtles are mostly used to make soups and sex-enhancing drugs," he said.

It was revealed that at least 25 bags contained Chinese rat snakes and six other bags contained 3,492 pig-nosed turtles, worth about \$60,000 USD.

The smugglers violated a 1990 law on the conservation of natural resources and a 1992 law on animal-quarantine regulations. They could face five years in prison plus fines.

In December, police arrested a man accused of smuggling 10 rare kangaroos by boat from New Guinea Island.

Five of the kangaroos died and the surviving five were given to a Surabaya animal sanctuary.

Illegal trade in rare and exotic animals is rampant in Indonesia, owing to poor law enforcement and the wide range of exotic species found there.

QUESTIONS

Snakes In My House

Question: In April, I saw a garter snake in my basement. Where did it come from and what should I do if I catch it?

Answer: Snakes are amazing animals, simply for their ability to get in and out of places that we least expect. This particular garter snake may have chosen your basement as an ideal place to hibernate. In autumn, it would have found a crack in your foundation or slipped under your basement door to spend the entire winter there undetected. The chances of seeing the snake again are minimal; snakes do not like people and would prefer to remain hidden. Once warmer weather comes, the garter snake will make its way back outside. Moving a reptile outdoors while it's still cool could be lethal.

If you prefer not to have a snake in your basement again, patching any cracks or holes in your foundation during the summer is an effective way of preventing them from returning. Additionally, keeping the grass around the house cut short will also discourage snakes from entering your house.

World Class Reptile Zoo

The Indian River Reptile Zoo is gaining world recognition for its high safety standards and protocol as well as its husbandry standards, wildlife officer training course and the founding of the Ontario Antivenin Bank.

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2009 Paint a Snake Event



A successful event, over 50 children participated in the Zoo's Paint a Snake event last year. This year two days have been set aside, so bring a stick and paint a snake July 14 or August 14.

QUESTIONS

Turtles On My Property

Question: What should I do with a turtle I've found in my backyard? There's a pond near my house, should I put it in the water?

Answer: It's easy to assume that turtles would be happier near the water – that's where they spend most of their lives! However, during the spring and summer, female turtles venture from their ponds, lakes and rivers to travel to a nesting site to deposit their eggs. Often they must travel long distances over land to get to these sites, so from May until September it is very common to see turtles walking across backyards, fields and even highways. The sides of roads can be a nesting place.

Turtles have a very good sense of direction (better than humans!) and quite often, females will travel from their pond to the same nesting site, year after year. Moving turtles to a location that is unknown to them is very hazardous to their health; they won't know where to hibernate come winter, and egg-laying females may not know where to nest.

The best thing you can do for the turtle that is traveling through your yard is to leave it alone and keep it safe from any household pets, snap a few photos and enjoy nature's process.

Turtles Crossing The Road

Question: Every spring on the way to the cottage we see many squashed turtles on the paved roads and gravel side roads. Sometimes we stop and remove live turtles from the roadway. Is this the right thing to do?

Answer: It is sad to see dead turtles on the road and hopefully soon our government will take action and provide turtle crossing like many European countries have done already.

A helping hand to highway crossing turtle could be very dangerous for you and your family. Other drivers may not be as observant as you and parking to assist or walking on to a busy roadway sound be avoided. On less busy back roads there is still danger from other vehicles, but if you really want to make sure the travelling turtle gets safely across the road you should park well off the road and switch on your flashing lights. Stand on the side of the road facing traffic away from your vehicle and wave to drivers to slow down. They will see the turtle and it will slowly cross the road. Do this only in broad day light, never at night.

Oh yes, never take an Ontario turtle home with you, it is illegal and you could be subjected to a \$5000.00 fine!

"Bring a Branch & Paint a Snake" EVENT

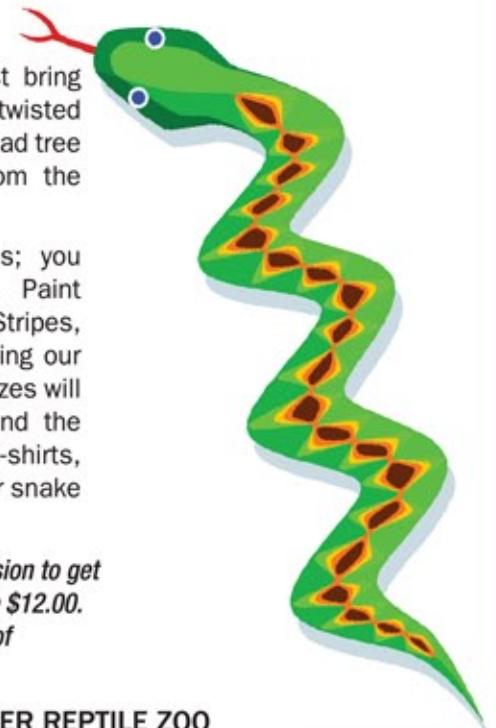
**Wednesday July 14th, 2010
& Saturday August 14th, 2010
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

**Bring a crooked branch, Bring the kids
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HERE'S HOW IT WORKS: You must bring your own branch. Try and make it a twisted or curved snake like branch from a dead tree (no live trees need be harmed) from the forest or your yard.

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The event is free, but you must pay admission to get into the Zoo. Children are \$4.00, adults are \$12.00. Paint and supplies are free. Compliments of Color Your World.



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- Aprons Reg \$14.98.....sale \$4.00
- Reed Fragrances Reg \$9.99.....sale \$2.00
- Stepping Stones Reg \$19.99.....sale \$3.00
- Dreams & Wishes Candle Holders Reg \$19.99.....sale \$4.00
- Many, many, many more items to choose from!

FREE

Bring this ad and get a free fridge
MAGNET
with any purchase!

Sale is now on at the Indian River Reptile Zoo Property and all funds go to feed and care for abandoned or smuggled reptiles living at the Zoo.

See below for map and discount admission coupon.

Standing Stones Sculpture Garden



These unique sculptural shapes are solid belmont rose pink granite. Each stone weighs over 2 thousand pounds and is placed to create a stonehenge atmosphere. This sculpture garden is a now a picnic area for zoo visitors and monolithic stone lovers. We are looking for corporate sponsors and will name the gardens in their honour. Call Dianne Loyst to discuss details 416-222-4092.

New Walking Nature Trail & Picnic Area

Just opened for your family enjoyment is our 2 km nature trail and enlarged picnic area. Your zoo admission allows you to walk this trail and experience flora and fauna of a unique land formation created 10,000 years ago by the last retreating glacier. Experience

an old growth cedar forest, visit our new turtle territory and be sure to see our new picnic site.

Take a long walk then enjoy our standing stones picnic area surrounded by giant Stonehenge-like monolithic granite arches.



Things To See

- Crocodiles and alligators sunning themselves outside
- Educational demonstrations featuring live reptiles, pythons, lizards, turtles.
- Canada's largest rattlesnake collection: tiny pygmy to large diamondback
- Other venomous snakes including cobras, mambas, vipers and more

Things To Do

- Safe and educational fun for the whole family
- Walk our Nature Trail
- Enjoy our new picnic area
- Visit our outdoor reptile exhibits
- Shop in our gift store
- New outdoor turtle exhibits
- New educational centre



Canada's largest Reptile OutReach Program

When Bry Loyst, curator of the Indian River Reptile Zoo first opened the zoo in 1998, he had no idea that the Outreach Program would become a major part of the zoo's annual activities. Indian River Reptile Zoo is the only accredited reptile zoo (CAZA) in Canada and is not subject to the normal bylaws restricting other facilities. This fact enables Indian River Reptile Zoo to display and teach in public areas whereas it is illegal for other zoos/wildlife educators to do so in most municipalities.

THE ZOO COMES TO YOU

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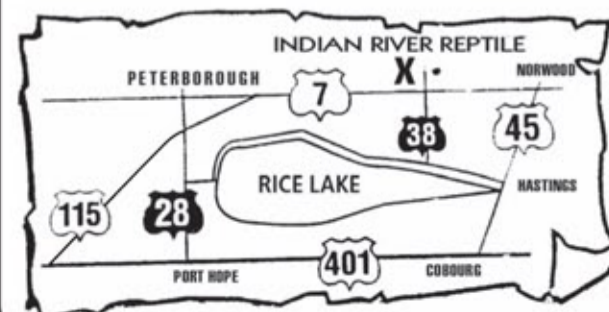
Our Thanks

To You For Helping
The Reptile Zoo Since 1998

\$3 OFF
ADULT
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\$2 OFF
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How to Find The Reptile Zoo



Come & Visit



East of
Peterborough
16 km on Hwy. #7
At Cty. Rd. #38
Summer
Hours Daily
10 am - 5 pm
Phone
705-639-1443

Take A Look At Us
www.reptilezoo.org