

constrictor snake escapes

Large Constrictor Snake Escapes

Children, parents, and authorities are finding released or escaped pet pythons, boa constrictors, and anacondas all over the country, where they endanger communities, threaten ecosystems, and in many cases suffer tragic deaths. Police departments have issued community alerts warning citizens of escapes and expended significant resources searching for loose constrictor snakes. Frightened residents have discovered these deadly predators lurking in gardens, attacking pets and wildlife in their yards, and hiding in bathrooms, furniture, car engines, delivery trucks, and rental cars. The snakes have been spotted climbing staircases, sunning themselves on picnic tables, curled up in swimming pools, abandoned in dumpsters, and slithering through hallways of apartment buildings and across streets, parking lots, and driveways. Following is a partial list of incidents where constrictor snakes have escaped or been released or abandoned.

“... a snake that size could ingest a baby or toddler and certainly a small dog or cat.”

New York state wildlife pathologist commenting on the capture of an 8-foot Burmese python in Albany

Constrictor snakes are wild animals who prefer to be left undisturbed in their natural habitat.

The average pet owner cannot provide the specialized care needed to maintain these animals in a humane and healthy manner.

Many pet snakes suffer from starvation, dehydration, parasites, respiratory infections, mouth rot, and other symptoms of neglect.

July 17, 2012/Bossier City, Louisiana: A couple found a boa constrictor, who measured more than 5-feet, underneath a vehicle in a parking garage at the Louisiana Boardwalk. Officers captured the snake.¹

July 14, 2012/Charlottesville, Virginia: A restaurant employee stabbed a 9-foot snake seen constricting small animals, including an opossum, near a dumpster at the Seminole Square Shopping Center. The wounded snake escaped into the underbrush toward a gully. The snake, believed to be a Burmese python, may have come from an exotic animal pet store that recently closed in the shopping mall.²

July 11, 2012/Augusta, Georgia: A man captured a 7-foot red-tailed boa constrictor he found slithering through his yard. The snake had escaped two months earlier from a home a block away when the girl who owned the snake left the animal unattended in her front yard.³

July 9, 2012/Hornell, New York: A woman and her son discovered a dead 6-foot, 20-pound boa constrictor while out walking their dog under a bridge along the Canisteo River. Police believed the snake was dead for a week and was killed by a blow to the head. Authorities had been searching the area after earlier sightings of the snake were reported.⁴

July 9, 2012/Santa Claus, Indiana: Authorities warned residents of the gated community of Christmas Lake Village to be on the lookout for a 13-foot albino python after state wildlife officials received a tip that someone released their unwanted pet snake in the area.⁵

July 9, 2012/York County, Virginia: Authorities searched for a 10-foot Burmese python who escaped for the second time in a month from a home in the Blackwell Trailer Court.⁶

July 5, 2012/Whitewater, Wisconsin: Police were searching for a 6 to 7-foot red-tailed boa constrictor who escaped from a home when the cage it was kept in was damaged during a burglary.⁷

July 3, 2012/Malden, Massachusetts: A man returning to this apartment discovered a 4-foot red-tailed boa constrictor curled up on his porch. Animal control authorities removed the snake.⁸



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“It’s quite common for owners of exotic animals to abandon pets in public places.”

County Animal Services Director in Illinois commenting after a Starbucks customer picked up a 4-foot Burmese python found sunning itself in the coffee shop’s parking lot

June 14, 2012/Shiocton, Wisconsin: Officials announced they were searching for a 10-foot python abandoned at the 15,000-acre Navarino Wildlife Center after a visitor encountered and photographed the snake over Memorial Day weekend.⁹

May 28, 2012/Bloomfield, Iowa: Police issued a code red alerting residents that a 6-foot red-tailed boa constrictor was on the loose. The snake escaped from a cage inside a high school classroom while a student was cleaning the cage. The snake was found in a container in the classroom about six weeks later, alive but suffering from extreme dehydration.^{10,11}

May 23, 2012/Wilton, Iowa: A school picnic was cancelled, law enforcement issued warnings to the local day care centers and a nursing home, and police crews spent days searching for a 7-foot albino Burmese python after the owner reported the snake had escaped from a cage. The snake was later found in a bedroom inside the owner’s home.^{12,13}

May 8, 2012/Hyde Park, New York: A police officer captured a 5½-foot Burmese python in a pizzeria parking lot. The snake was brought to the Dutchess County SPCA before being transported to the Bronx Zoo. The snake was described as hungry, covered in mites, suffering the adverse effects of the cold temperatures and may have had a skin condition or abrasions.¹⁴

April 4, 2012/Golden Pond, Kentucky: A 10-foot albino python was found at the Land Between the Lakes recreation area.¹⁵

March 30, 2012/Carlsbad, New Mexico: Animal Control officials posted warnings around the neighborhood that a resident’s pet boa constrictor was loose and urged people to keep a close eye on their pets, as the snake posed a possible danger to them. The 9-foot, 80-pound red-tailed boa constrictor escaped from an undersized crate and was found underneath the homeowner’s house about 10 weeks later.^{16,17}

March 14, 2012/Pensacola, Florida: A woman, who was preparing to drive cross-country to Washington state, brought her car to an auto mechanic to help remove her escaped 6-foot red-tailed boa constrictor from behind the car’s dashboard.^{18,19}

February 29, 2012/Brevard County, Florida: Two women unloading groceries from a rental car discovered a boa constrictor in the trunk. Animal control removed the snake.²⁰

January 18, 2012/Enfield, New York: A man doing work under his home found a 6½-foot boa constrictor. He took the snake to a local animal shelter.²¹

January 9, 2012/Sharpes, Florida: A 5-foot boa constrictor who had escaped from a tank in a mobile home was found by a neighbor in her garden.²²

December 25, 2011/Palmetto Bay, Florida: Officials with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue captured and removed a 13-foot Burmese python, believed to be a released pet, who was found in a resident’s swimming pool.²³

December 24, 2011/Melbourne, Florida: A 5- to 6-foot red-tailed boa constrictor, believed to be an escaped pet, was removed from a resident’s yard by humane



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“I have had some parents call, saying they don’t want their kids let out for recess.”

Principal of a West Virginia elementary school after learning a neighbor’s 9-foot reticulated python was on the loose

society officials. Large slither tracks indicated a second snake was on the loose.²⁴

November 14, 2011/La Paloma, Texas: A U.S. Border Patrol agent captured a 6-foot boa constrictor near the Rio Grande and turned the snake over to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife park ranger at the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge.²⁵

October 14, 2011/Clark County, Washington: A juvenile 5-foot boa constrictor was spotted by a tow truck driver along state Highway 14. An empty terrarium was nearby. Two troopers held onto the snake until an animal control officer arrived and transported it to a shelter.²⁶

September 30, 2011/Johnson, Vermont: Police warned residents that a 6-foot boa constrictor had been missing from a home in a trailer park for about a month.²⁷

September 27, 2011/Buena Park, California: A man found a 6-foot reticulated python slithering across a mall parking lot. Animal control retrieved the snake from underneath a car.²⁸

September 21, 2011/Williamsport, Pennsylvania: A red-tailed boa constrictor believed to be someone’s escaped or abandoned pet was rescued by two good Samaritans who found the animal struggling to cross a road. The snake was lethargic because of the cool temperature.²⁹

September 16, 2011/Tequesta, Florida: Police were called when several residents who were out walking found an 8-foot boa constrictor. The snake had been reported missing the day before.³⁰

August 25, 2011/Albuquerque, New Mexico: A motorist found a 6-foot boa constrictor underneath a car. The snake was taken to an animal shelter.³¹

August 21, 2011/McDowell, North Carolina: A couple driving home from church encountered an abandoned 9-foot, 5-inch pet python along the highway. Four people wrestled with the snake for several minutes to get the animal into a container found near the snake. The python was turned over to deputies responding to a report of a traffic jam caused by the snake.³²

August 17, 2011/Sedamsville, Ohio: A man discovered a 14-foot, 130-pound reticulated python wandering loose outside his home. He captured the snake and contacted the SPCA.³³

August 11, 2011/Trimble, Missouri: A couple found a nearly 8-foot red-tailed boa constrictor wandering through their backyard. The Missouri Department of Conservation was called in to remove the snake.³⁴

August 6, 2011/Albany, Georgia: Residents expressed concern for children and pets and animal control conducted a search after a 6- to 7-foot albino python was seen in a neighborhood backyard by a man mowing his lawn.³⁵

July 28, 2011/Jacobus, Pennsylvania: A 9-foot red-tailed boa constrictor, who had been missing for two weeks, was found in the basement of the owner’s home.³⁶

July 12, 2011/Longview, Washington: Citing that the animal was too dangerous, animal control seized an 8-foot anaconda after the snake, along with a 6-foot



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“I can’t even let my grandson run around the yard now.”

Pennsylvania man who discovered a 12-foot reticulated python stretched across the width of the street in front of his home

Burmese python and a 10-foot boa constrictor temporarily escaped from a residence.³⁷

July 12, 2011/Delafield, Wisconsin: A man who took his pet boa constrictor shopping with him found the animal missing when he returned to his car after visiting a store. The snake turned up eight days later on the back seat of the car.³⁸

July 11, 2011/Norwalk, Connecticut: A 6-foot boa constrictor was found dead on the side of the road. Animal control officials believed the snake was a pet who had either escaped or been turned loose. It was unclear how the snake died.³⁹

July 4, 2011/Oahu, Hawaii: Hunters came across a 9-foot, 3-inch female adult boa constrictor near the Waiawa Correctional Facility. A Department of Land and Natural Resources officer removed the snake and took her to the Honolulu Zoo.⁴⁰

June 28, 2011/Twin Rocks, Pennsylvania: A woman discovered an 8-foot python climbing a banister inside her house. Her 15-year-old grandson captured the snake and put it inside a plastic container with two cinder blocks holding the lid shut, but the snake escaped from the container and was not found again.^{41,42}

June 17, 2011/West Palm Beach, Florida: Police captured a 7-foot Burmese python found in the parking lot of an apartment building. The snake had escaped from an enclosure at a house near the downtown area.⁴³

June 17, 2011/Anderson Township, Ohio: A 6-foot Burmese python, sluggish but still alive, was discovered in a dumpster outside of a KFC restaurant by a trash collector. Deputies placed the snake in a container and turned it over to the SPCA.⁴⁴

June 6, 2011/Holyoke, Massachusetts: Police, responding to a call about a snake seen in an open lot, captured a large boa constrictor and turned the snake over to animal control.⁴⁵

June 6, 2011/Oakland County, Michigan: A man brought his 5-foot red-tailed boa constrictor on a camping trip to Addison Oaks County Park and the snake escaped from his backpack while he was napping. Park officials handed out fliers warning visitors a dangerous snake was loose and advising them not to go near it.^{46,47}

June 3, 2011/Tifton, Georgia: Authorities spent several hours searching for an escaped 11-foot albino Burmese Python and animal control issued a Code Red to keep neighbors on alert. She was found hiding underneath some debris near a rabbit pen the next day.^{48,49}

May 13, 2011/Teaneck, New Jersey: Police captured a 6-foot boa constrictor near Brett Park after an area resident reported seeing the snake slithering across a street.⁵⁰

May 6, 2011/Hershey, Pennsylvania: A 6-foot boa constrictor was found near a parking area of a cemetery. The snake was suffering from a respiratory ailment.⁵¹

April 6, 2011/Eunice, Louisiana: Police were searching for a 15-foot python that residents reported seeing loose around the city.⁵²

April 6, 2011/North Richmond, Virginia: A 3- to 4-foot long boa constrictor was seen



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“It’s not a cheap endeavor.”

Michigan police sergeant commenting on the expense of searching for an escaped pet boa constrictor in a county park

slithering across the living room while a couple was watching television. The police were called to remove the snake. It was subsequently discovered that the snake had been hiding in a used easy chair purchased the week before.⁵³

March 25, 2011/Greenwood, Indiana: A university student, investigating a noise in her bathroom, discovered a 4-foot baby python hiding in the ceiling vent. A maintenance crew removed the snake. It was determined that the snake had likely belonged to a former tenant who kept snakes in the apartment below.⁵⁴

March 22, 2011/Lewisville, Texas: An 11-foot reticulated python was found in the breezeway of an apartment complex.⁵⁵

February 17, 2011/Urbana, Missouri: Two men found a dead 14-foot Burmese python in a wooded area near Urbana.⁵⁶

January 27, 2011/Tarpon Springs, Florida: It took three police officers to capture a 14½-foot, 150- to 200-pound African rock python discovered sunning herself near an apartment complex. The snake had vanished from the Tarpon Springs Aquarium two years earlier and was described by the aquarium’s owner as “extremely aggressive.”^{57,58}

January 20, 2011/Irmo, South Carolina: The manager of a car wash found a dead 8-foot python in a drainage ditch while making a routine check of the property. A state wildlife official suspected the python was a released pet who died during a recent freeze in the area.⁵⁹

December 19, 2010/Liberty, Mississippi: A woman reported seeing an 8-foot snake, believed to be a Burmese python, near a culvert by the Amite River swamps while she was walking through the woods.⁶⁰

December 13, 2010/Melbourne, Florida: A 13-foot python was discovered by a contracting crew fewer than 10 feet from several back yards in a housing subdivision.⁶¹

November 17, 2010/Lancaster, California: Upon returning to her car after shopping, a woman discovered a 10-foot boa constrictor wrapped around the car’s engine. It took animal control authorities half an hour and the help of some cooking oil (to loosen the snake’s grip) to capture the python.⁶²

October 20, 2010/New York City, New York: While working in a Harlem park, a Parks Department employee came across a 6-foot Burmese python hiding in the bushes.⁶³

October 19, 2010/Palmetto, Florida: When a woman arrived home to find her two dogs frantically running around, she investigated and discovered an 8-foot boa constrictor coiled beneath a tree in her back yard. The woman expressed her concern for her two young grandchildren, as well as her dogs.⁶⁴

October 14, 2010/Palm Bay, Florida: A 6-foot, 70- to 80-pound boa constrictor was found alive inside a trash can.⁶⁵

October 14, 2010/Fairview Township, Pennsylvania: An 11-foot constrictor snake was found dead in the bed of a resident’s pickup truck.⁶⁶



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“No question that prevention is the answer. And that is keeping people from having them as pets.”

Wildlife professor at the University of Florida discussing pythons as an invasive species in South Florida

October 12, 2010/Traverse City, Michigan: A woman moving wood pallets behind a business was startled by a 4-foot boa constrictor. Police heard her screams and responded.⁶⁷

October 8, 2010/Orlando, Florida: A couple was cleaning out their garage when they found a 5½-foot Burmese python and called authorities to retrieve the animal.⁶⁸

September 28, 2010/Millville, New Jersey: A nearly 5-foot boa constrictor was living behind drywall and beneath an apartment floor. The resident said her brother lost the snake in the apartment four months earlier. A maintenance worker went into the crawl space and retrieved the snake.⁶⁹

September 18, 2010/Harris County, Georgia: Two hunters encountered and captured a 7-foot boa constrictor on the loose.⁷⁰

September 12, 2010/Cambridge, Massachusetts: A man found a 4-foot boa constrictor in his apartment. The animal has possibly entered through an open window, seeking warmth.⁷¹

September 3, 2010/Rutland, Vermont: Police were called to capture a 2-foot python who fell through a bathroom ceiling in an apartment building into a woman’s bathtub. The snake had escaped from a former upstairs neighbor.⁷²

September 3, 2010/Sicklerville, New Jersey: Management of an apartment complex posted fliers warning tenants a snake may be on the loose and police posted an animal control officer at the complex. One resident captured a 4-foot python, but a second one estimated to be 6 or 7-feet long remained at large.⁷³

September 2010/Maroa, Illinois: A 9-foot boa constrictor was reported on the loose. Three weeks later, the animal was found about a block away from a high school after being hit by a car.⁷⁴

August 29, 2010/Fayetteville, Arkansas: A woman stepped outside to walk her dog and found a 9½-foot Burmese python on her porch. The snake had escaped approximately one month previously from a home about a half-mile away.⁷⁵

August 29, 2010/Lafayette, Indiana: An 11-foot Burmese python was spotted by fishermen along a creek bank and in the vicinity of two families with young children playing. Authorities responded and shot and killed the snake.^{76,77}

August 29, 2010/North Royalton, Ohio: A 6-foot python was found sunning itself on a picnic table at a nature park. Park rangers captured the snake.⁷⁸

August 28, 2010/Fond du Lac, Wisconsin: A resident reported the escape of a 6-foot anaconda. The snake was found four days later in the owner’s garage.⁷⁹

August 25, 2010/Thousand Oaks, California: An 8½-foot, 50-pound Burmese python was spotted in bushes next to a condominium complex. It took three firefighters to remove the snake.⁸⁰

August 25, 2010/Salem, New Hampshire: Police were called when a 6-foot boa constrictor was found on a lawn outside a condominium complex. The snake was wet from rain and cold from temperatures in the 60s, as well as malnourished and thin.⁸¹



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“We don’t have kids. [Our dog] was our child. ... We lost our friend. We’re devastated.”

Florida man whose dog was attacked and killed by his neighbor’s escaped 11-foot python

August 23, 2010/Secaucus, New Jersey: A 7-foot boa constrictor was found in a drainage pipe at a warehouse.⁸²

August 18, 2010/Lawrence County, Alabama: A dead 9½-foot boa constrictor was found stretched along a country road near a drainage ditch.^{83,84}

August 12, 2010/Springfield, Massachusetts: A woman who was snake-sitting called police after a 6-foot anaconda escaped from an aquarium and she was unable to recapture the animal.⁸⁵

August 2010/Riverdale, Utah: Two boa constrictors were found stuffed into bins and abandoned in a dumpster. The 6-foot snake survived but the smaller one died.^{86,87}

July 29, 2010/Forest, Virginia: An 8-foot boa constrictor was found roaming loose in a neighborhood and was captured by wildlife officials after he went up a tree. The owner said the snake pushed through the top of his cage and escaped through a window.⁸⁸

July 27, 2010/Winnebago County, Illinois: An 8-foot boa constrictor was found along the side of the road on Bypass 20.⁸⁹

July 25, 2010/Covina, California: A 7-foot boa constrictor was spotted in the engine bay of a car in a store parking lot.⁹⁰

July 22, 2010/New York City, New York: Police captured a 5-foot python found at a Bronx gas station.⁹¹

July 21, 2010/West Palm Beach, Florida: A 6-foot Burmese python broke out of a cage at an auto body shop and was found crossing the street by a police officer.⁹²

July 12, 2010/Medina, Ohio: Police found a boa constrictor on the loose.⁹³

July 2010/Danville, Virginia: A 5-foot boa constrictor escaped from a woman’s car and was on the loose.⁹⁴

June 20, 2010/Centre County, Pennsylvania: Police issued a community alert warning residents to monitor pets and keep garages, doors and windows closed after someone reported their 10-foot python missing.⁹⁵

June 19, 2010/Oak Harbor, Washington: Officers on a drug raid were warned that a boa constrictor and python were loose in the apartment. The detectives found the 7-foot boa constrictor, but the python remained hidden behind the refrigerator.⁹⁶

May 8, 2010/Orlando, Florida: A woman found a 4-foot Burmese python under her car.⁹⁷

May 2010/Florence, Alabama: A couple walking along a nature trail found a red-tailed boa constrictor approximately 10 feet long.⁹⁸

April 30, 2010/Ravenswood, West Virginia: Police issued a community warning to keep a close watch on small children and pets after a resident reported that his uncaged 9-foot reticulated python had escaped from his home, which was located near a day care center and elementary school.⁹⁹



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“I’ve even looked under the kids’ bed at night.”

Mississippi mother after learning her neighbor’s 17-foot python was on the loose

April 1, 2010/Grants Pass, Oregon: An 8-foot boa constrictor was on the loose after the roommate of the snake owner mistakenly let the snake out.¹⁰⁰

March 29, 2010/Collier County, Florida: A man driving saw a Burmese python longer than 9 feet in the road. He captured the snake and cut off his head with a small pocket knife. This was the third python captured in the county within a month.¹⁰¹

March 29, 2010/Diehlstadt, Missouri: An exterminator working at a home came across what he described as a large python. The snake was gone by the time state conservation agents arrived. The snake did not belong to the homeowners.¹⁰²

March 18, 2010/Washington, DC: A boa constrictor was found in an abandoned apartment. A company hired to clean the apartment found the snake but accidentally turned off the heat lamp. The animal was without heat for about a day.¹⁰³

March 4, 2010/Collier County, Florida: A man on a tractor in Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve spotted an 11-foot Burmese python. He was able to capture the snake with the help of two other men, but two smaller snakes escaped.¹⁰⁴

January 21, 2010/Orlando, Florida: A woman found a 5-foot boa constrictor in the water heater closet of her apartment.¹⁰⁵

January 13, 2010/Osceola County, Florida: A 12-foot green anaconda was discovered in a drain pipe leading to a pond and captured by deputy sheriffs.¹⁰⁶

January 7, 2010/Riverside County, California: A resident discovered his neighbor’s 11-foot, 50-pound Burmese python wandering loose in his fenced yard. Animal control was called to remove the snake and returned it to the owner.¹⁰⁷

January 2010/South Florida: South Florida Water Management District personnel captured 25 Burmese pythons and five African rock pythons in the first three weeks of January.¹⁰⁸

December 22, 2009/Keauu, Hawaii: A homeowner discovered a 6-foot boa constrictor in his garage.¹⁰⁹

December 12, 2009/Indian River County, Florida: A family found an 8½-foot boa constrictor crossing a road and contacted animal control.¹¹⁰

December 6, 2009/Tampa, Florida: A woman spent several hours huddled in her car after finding an 11-foot Burmese python just outside her car. Two police officers and a firefighter captured the snake.¹¹¹

December 2009/Yuma, Arizona: Firefighters were called to remove an approximately 7-foot boa constrictor found in the backyard of his residence by a 14-year-old boy who was preparing to do yard work. The animal was found to have escaped from a nearby home.¹¹²

November 29, 2009/Carlsbad, California: A 5-foot red-tailed boa constrictor was found by hikers along the edge of a lagoon. The snake was turned over to animal control and found to be dehydrated, underweight, and infested with mites.¹¹³



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“These snakes can get big enough that they could easily kill children.”

Texas animal control officer after seizing three constrictor snakes, including one who attacked a woman, in separate incidents within a week

November 27, 2009/Yonkers, New York: Police responded to several calls about a snake in the street and found a 5-foot boa constrictor. The snake was captured by officials and taken to a pet store.¹¹⁴

November 2009/Cooper City, Florida: A 7-foot python was found in a resident's backyard and was captured by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officers.¹¹⁵

November 2009/Naples, Florida: A dead 9-foot boa constrictor was found in a ditch next to a condominium. The snake appeared to have been hit by a vehicle.¹¹⁶

October 28, 2009/Vero Lake Estates, Florida: A pregnant mother and her daughter found a 9½-foot, 40 pound Burmese python in their residential neighborhood and called 911.¹¹⁷

October 21, 2009/Crestview, Florida: Acting on a tip that a resident had a “large snake” that had previously escaped, authorities seized an 11-foot Burmese python, estimated to weigh more than 100 pounds, who was crawling loose in a man's home. Investigators also found evidence of children visiting or staying at the home, which one official described as “a disaster waiting to happen.”^{118,119}

October 17, 2009/Compton, California: A 7-foot boa constrictor was found wrapped around a car engine compartment. The snake was reportedly one of three that had been abandoned in a box on a street corner. One of the snakes was dead.¹²⁰

October 9, 2009/Wewahitchka, Florida: Charges were filed against a man after his 11-foot Burmese python escaped and was killed in a neighbor's chicken coop. The man had no cage for the snake, who crawled freely about his apartment.¹²¹

October 8, 2009/Fall River, Massachusetts: After being spotted for five days sunbathing on the roof top of a six-family apartment building, a 5-foot boa constrictor was caught in a makeshift trap. The landlord had recently found an empty aquarium left by a former tenant. The snake was reportedly sick with an upper respiratory infection and approximately 10 pounds underweight.¹²²

October 7, 2009/Brunswick, North Carolina: Two brothers found an injured 7-foot boa constrictor on the roadway and turned the snake over to a reptile exhibitor.¹²³

September 22, 2009/Largo, Florida: A dead 10-foot reticulated python was found in a pond near where children and families hike and picnic at the Largo Nature Preserve.¹²⁴

September 21, 2009/Durant, Florida: A 10-foot boa constrictor was on the loose in Hillsborough County. Wildlife officials said they were not going after the snake because so many people dumped pet snakes, and they didn't have the resources to go after them all.¹²⁵

September 18, 2009/Port Arthur, Texas: While doing home repairs, a contractor discovered an 11-foot Burmese python coiled around some insulation in the garage. Animal control was called to remove the snake. The snake's origin was unknown.¹²⁶

September 13, 2009/Elmira Heights, New York: Police warned area residents that a



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“I don’t really think people should have pets like that because they’re really dangerous, and if they escape they might be able to hurt somebody really bad, maybe even kill them.”

Arizona teenager who found a 7-foot boa constrictor while doing yard work at his home

10-foot Burmese python was on the loose. The snake was later found in the owner’s yard.¹²⁷

September 11, 2009/Springdale, Arkansas: Schools and day-care centers were alerted and authorities conducted a 12-hour search after a resident reported his 11-foot Burmese python escaped from a cage. The snake was found a half-mile away at an apartment complex and recaptured.^{128,129}

September 8, 2009/Myakka, Florida: A 7-foot reticulated python was found near a state park.¹³⁰

September 7, 2009/Placer County, California: Local authorities responded to reports from motorists of an 8-foot python found along a roadside. The snake was captured and determined to be malnourished.¹³¹

September 5, 2009/Bolingbrook, Illinois: A hiker and his dog found a 10-foot reticulated python at Greene Valley Forest Preserve. The snake was removed by law enforcement and animal control officers.¹³²

August 25, 2009/Great Bend, Kansas: A 14-foot reticulated python at the Great Bend Zoo escaped through a small hole in a fence left by a lawn mower. The snake was discovered stretched across a city street by a motorist who stopped before running over the animal.¹³³

August 20, 2009/Jacksonville Beach, Florida: Police called residents to warn them to take precautions with children and family pets because a 7-foot boa constrictor was on the loose.¹³⁴

August 12, 2009/Escondido, California: Firefighters responded when a red-tailed boa constrictor between 6- and 8-feet long was found on a road.¹³⁵

August 12, 2009/Manhattan, New York: A 4-foot boa constrictor was found in a Manhattan laundromat.¹³⁶

August 11, 2009/Eugene, Oregon: A 10-foot Burmese python was found on a road by a teenager who accidentally ran over the snake. The snake was later reclaimed by its owner, who planned to give it away.¹³⁷

August 5, 2009/Salt Lake City, Utah: A university student found an 8-foot Burmese python slithering across her driveway when she arrived home. She contacted animal control and monitored the snake as it crawled along the gutter until authorities arrived and removed the snake.¹³⁸

August 3, 2009/New Port Richey, Florida: A couple moving into a new home discovered an 8-foot, 40-pound red-tailed boa constrictor who had been left behind by the previous owner. The snake was underweight and sick.¹³⁹

August 1, 2009/Daytona Beach, Florida: Residents called 911 after spotting a 5-foot boa constrictor slithering across a road. The snake had apparently been hit by a car and died soon after capture.¹⁴⁰

August 12, 2009/St. Joseph, Missouri: A 9-foot Burmese python was spotted at a park and captured a few days later.¹⁴¹



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constrictor snake escapes

“The children would have been perfect prey for this snake.”

Georgia snake trapper, upon retrieving an abandoned 7-foot Burmese python from a family’s yard

July 30, 2009/Okeechobee, Florida: A 17-foot, 207-pound Burmese python was found on the grounds of a veterinary hospital. The snake was spotted by the 11-year-old nephew of the hospital owner. The veterinarian shot and killed the snake.¹⁴²

July 29, 2009/Lakeland, Florida: Two Burmese pythons, one 8 feet, one 9 feet, were captured after escaping from a home where they were being looked after by a 16-year-old.¹⁴³

July 24, 2009/Portsmouth, Rhode Island: Police and fire crew conducted a door-to-door search for a missing 8½-foot Burmese python. The snake was found hours later in the owner’s basement. It was unclear how the snake got loose.¹⁴⁴

July 16, 2009/Annville Township, Pennsylvania: A 9-foot reticulated python, the second of two snakes released on July 3 near a trailer park by a Cleona man who could no longer care for them, was captured. Police had warned residents to monitor children and pets when the first snake, a 9-foot Burmese python was captured in front of a laundromat, on July 10. Both snakes were malnourished. The snakes’ owner was cited for animal cruelty and introduction of non-native species into the wild.^{145,146,147,148}

July 14, 2009/Cypress Creek, Florida: A 12-foot plus Burmese python was found loose around a neighborhood of town homes.¹⁴⁹

July 7, 2009/Holiday, Florida: A 4-foot boa constrictor was found by a gardener hiding in the gutter of a vacant home. A reptile trapper removed the snake.¹⁵⁰

July 4, 2009/Yuma, Arizona: Firefighters and the local humane society responded to a call from a family who found a 6-foot python on their front porch. Officers went around the neighborhood trying to seek the snake’s owner, but no one claimed the animal.¹⁵¹

July 2009/Quincy, Illinois: An 8-foot boa constrictor was caught after escaping and being on the loose for almost three weeks in a neighborhood full of small children.¹⁵²

July 2009/Hope, Indiana: A 5-foot red-tailed boa constrictor escaped when the owners put the animal in the back yard while they cleaned his tank.¹⁵³

July 19, 2009/Hingham, Massachusetts: Authorities searched for three hours before locating a missing 10-foot boa constrictor underneath a boat and trailer in the owner’s driveway. The snake escaped after being left unattended on a patio.¹⁵⁴

May 12, 2009/Greenville, Maine: A 2-foot boa constrictor escaped from a cage in a high school. He hid in an old computer printer, and was not discovered until the school gave the printer to a student to take home and dismantle.¹⁵⁵

May 10, 2009/Punta Gorda, Florida: A police officer removed an injured 4½-foot python from an intersection. The snake suffered from a broken jaw and died soon afterward.¹⁵⁶

February 17, 2009/Brooklyn, New York: Two 7-year-old boys discovered a 4½-foot boa constrictor behind the cushions of a living room couch. Authorities speculated that the snake entered the first-floor apartment by way of a toilet.¹⁵⁷



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“Please take precautions with children and any pets left outside.”

Automated call from a Florida police department warning residents that a 7-foot boa constrictor was on the loose

February 3, 2009/San Luis Obispo, California: After searching for hours, the county’s search-and-rescue team located a missing 23-foot reticulated python weighing approximately 120 pounds in a nearby backyard. The owner reported two pythons had escaped. The smaller python was quickly located.¹⁵⁸

January 3, 2009/New York City, New York: Officials found a Burmese python in a field in Brooklyn. The cold weather had taken a toll on the animal who had lost an eye and developed an infection, causing some teeth to fall out.¹⁵⁹

January 2, 2009/New York City, New York: A 7-foot reticulated python escaped from an enclosure in a Queens’s apartment, and authorities were called to locate, capture, and remove the snake.¹⁶⁰

November 4, 2008/Punta Gorda, Florida: Church-goers discovered a 10-foot red-tailed boa constrictor slithering across the lawn. The snake crawled into a car engine and animal control officers spent 45 minutes trying to retrieve the animal.¹⁶¹

October 8, 2008/Springfield, Ohio: A family, alerted by neighbors that a snake was seen near their car, discovered a 7-foot boa constrictor under the hood of their vehicle. A family member untangled the snake and turned it over to a local humane society.¹⁶²

October 7, 2008/Jupiter Farms, Florida: A 12-foot, 100-pound Burmese python was injured by a vehicle while crossing a road near a shopping center. The snake was taken to Busch Wildlife Sanctuary.¹⁶³

September 19, 2008/Vero Beach, Florida: An animal control officer was called out at 2 a.m. to capture a 10-foot boa constrictor found on a busy road.¹⁶⁴

September 16, 2008/Post Falls, Idaho: Animal control officers removed an 8-foot, 50-pound boa constrictor found in a resident’s yard. The snake remained unclaimed a week later.¹⁶⁵

September 4, 2008/Myakka City, Florida: A homeowner found a 10-foot albino Burmese python in her driveway and contacted a wildlife trapper to remove the snake.¹⁶⁶

September 2, 2008/McAlester, Oklahoma: A woman found a 4-foot red-tailed boa constrictor in her motor home.¹⁶⁷

August 19, 2008/Port Sheldon Township, Michigan: A state trooper shot and killed a nearly 7-foot long Burmese python that had slithered onto a road and was lunging at passing motorists.¹⁶⁸

July 27, 2008/Lake County, Illinois: Animal experts urged caution when encountering wild animals in unexpected places and recalled a recent incident where a python crawled into someone’s bathtub through an open window.¹⁶⁹

July 19, 2008/Wilton, Maine: A man discovered an 8- to 9-foot reticulated python under the engine compartment of his pickup truck after he and his 9-year-old grandson stopped at a store. The snake had injuries on its upper jaw from being dragged. Animal control was called to remove the snake.¹⁷⁰



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constrictor snake escapes

“Pythons are a dime a dozen. If someone wants one, they can get one.”

New York animal control officer commenting after a 7-foot reticulated python escaped from a cage in a Queen’s apartment

July 18, 2008/Birch Bay, Washington: The sheriff’s office warned neighbors within a half-mile of a snake owner’s house that a 7-foot python, capable of killing children and pets, was on the loose. The snake had been missing for nearly a week before authorities were notified.¹⁷¹

July 14, 2008/New Britain, Connecticut: A family discovered a 9-foot, 30-pound python inside of their home. A Wildlife Control Officer was called to remove the snake and brought the animal to a wildlife sanctuary. A sanctuary representative commented, “Unfortunately this animal was probably released purposely by irresponsible owners.”¹⁷²

July 11, 2008/Ashland, Kentucky: A 12-foot Burmese python, apparently left behind by a previous tenant, was found by the landlord in the bathroom of a vacant rental home. Animal control retrieved the snake.¹⁷³

July 6, 2008/Concord, New Hampshire: Police captured a 6-foot python found on the side of a road. They were alerted to the snake by a caller who expressed concern for small children and pets. The snake had apparently been run over by a car and was taken to a veterinary hospital.¹⁷⁴

June 24, 2008/Key Largo, Florida: A woman found a 7-foot Burmese python in her yard. The snake was consuming a dove. She and a friend beat the snake to death with a tree limb and a 6-foot piece of metal rebar.¹⁷⁵

June 18, 2008/Elbridge, New York: A 12-year-old boy walking his dog along the Erie Canal found a 14-foot, 80-pound Burmese python, measuring 17-inches around. The snake was on the loose for two days after apparently being released by vandals from a cage in the front yard of a reptile rescue center. The community was alerted and state police launched a search for the missing python.¹⁷⁶

June 12, 2008/Rockford, Illinois: A woman found a 4-foot albino Burmese python sunning itself on the pavement near her car in a Starbucks parking lot. County animal control left the snake with employees of a nearby pet shop.¹⁷⁷

May 2008/Everglades National Park, Florida: Firefighters battling fires in the Everglades encountered pythons, boa constrictors, and other exotic animals.¹⁷⁸

April 27, 2008/New Fairfield, Connecticut: A 6-foot python escaped from a home and was found two days later in the bushes by an 8-year-old neighbor.¹⁷⁹

April 19, 2008/Everglades National Park, Florida: Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Lynn Scarlett found an 8- to 9-foot Burmese python while hiking in the Everglades.¹⁸⁰

April 3, 2008/Collier County, Florida: A Burmese python about 8-feet long was found in the rafters of a Marco Island Executive Airport hangar.¹⁸¹

April 3, 2008/Fairview Heights, Illinois: A red-tailed boa constrictor was among several snakes who escaped when a car crashed into a home and broke open the animals’ tanks. Most of the animals were recaptured.¹⁸²

February 4, 2008/Bradenton, Florida: A 13-foot reticulated python was seen in a



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constrictor snake escapes

“I want to move but the landlord won’t let me break my lease.”

Traumatized Indiana apartment dweller who found a python left behind by a former tenant in her bathroom

Wal-Mart parking lot. A rescue worker found the animal in a culvert more than two weeks later.¹⁸³

January 17, 2008/Helena, Montana: A man was driving with a 5-foot Burmese python when the animal crawled out of a pillow case and into the van’s duct system. Auto mechanics retrieved the snake.¹⁸⁴

December 7, 2007/Vero Beach, Florida: A man mowing the lawn for the county ran over and killed a 16-foot python. An animal control officer said the snake was among the largest of the 20 large pythons or boa constrictors he has found in the past decade in Indian River County, comparable in size to one found two years before.¹⁸⁵

December 2007/Metzger Marsh, Ohio: A 7-foot African rock python was found in the Metzger Marsh State Wildlife Area. The animal was alive although the weather at the time was 37 degrees and sleeting.¹⁸⁶

October 15, 2007/New York City, New York: A woman on the third floor of a Brooklyn apartment found a 7-foot python emerging from her toilet in the middle of the night. The fire department and her landlord responded. Plumbers had to tear apart the downstairs neighbor’s pipes to capture the snake. No one knows where the snake came from or how it climbed up three stories of plumbing.¹⁸⁷

September 27, 2007/Hendricks County, Indiana: A 14-foot Burmese python in a Plexiglas case was found by a repairman and sheriff’s deputies in an abandoned home.¹⁸⁸

September 26, 2007/Miami, Florida: A man out fishing called park rangers after his barking dog alerted him to the presence of an 12-foot red-tailed boa constrictor in nearby bushes in a park.¹⁸⁹

July 29, 2007/Albany, New York: An animal control officer captured a 4-foot albino Burmese python after a passer-by reported seeing it in the West Hill neighborhood. This was the second Burmese python picked up in Albany in a week.¹⁹⁰

July 27, 2007/East Penn Township, Pennsylvania: A resident called police and warned neighbors after he spotted a 12-foot reticulated python stretched across the full width of a road near his home. The snake, who had not been reported missing, escaped two months earlier from a neighbor who kept three reticulated pythons and three Burmese pythons.^{191,192}

July 26, 2007/Glassport, Pennsylvania: A couple strolling along the bank of the Monongahela River discovered a dead 16-foot reticulated python. The snake had been dead for a day or two and appeared to have been killed by a boat propeller.¹⁹³

July 25, 2007/Avondale Estates, Georgia: A 7-foot snake with a “very large” diameter was spotted by a resident in a wooded area in his yard near an elementary school. Based on a description from the witness, a reptile expert said the snake was likely a Burmese python.^{194,195}

July 22, 2007/Albany, New York: Someone called police after spotting an 8-foot, 60-pound Burmese python crossing Washington Avenue. An animal control officer



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“We are seeing double-digit increases of animals that need homes. Just this week I’ve had calls about corn snakes, a ball python, a Burmese python, frogs, [and lizards].”

President of a California reptile rescue group after a boa constrictor was found on the road

captured the snake and brought it to an animal shelter. The snake’s owner reported it missing after the snake was found and said it escaped from a second floor pen in the Pine Hills neighborhood. The snake had traveled nearly three blocks.¹⁹⁶

July 16, 2007/North Kingstown, Rhode Island: A man took a 6-foot boa constrictor to the police, claiming he found the snake along the road. The police discovered the snake belonged to the man, and he had tried to sell the animal to a pet store the day before. Though the store declined to buy the boa, the man purchased a small python even though he could no longer care for the larger snake.¹⁹⁷

July 16, 2007/Holly Hill, Florida: An approximately 15-foot reticulated python was found in a yard in a residential community. The police contacted a wildlife trapper to remove the snake.¹⁹⁸

July 13, 2007/Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: A boa constrictor, more than 5-feet long, emerged from the engine compartment of a man’s sport utility vehicle while he was pumping gas at a service station. The man had no idea where the snake came from. Police captured the snake as it slithered across the parking lot.¹⁹⁹

July 8, 2007/Memphis, Tennessee: A woman’s 5-foot boa constrictor escaped from her backyard near a golf course.²⁰⁰

June 13, 2007/Bristol Township, Pennsylvania: A 9½-foot albino Burmese python was captured in an industrial park but a second large snake remained on the loose.²⁰¹

May 27, 2007/Torrington, Connecticut: A 10-foot yellow anaconda, reported missing for more than a week, was found by a state wildlife official in the basement of the apartment building where the owner lived. The snake was given to a reptile exhibitor.²⁰²

March 30, 2007/Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Rental car employees discovered a 4-foot red-tailed boa constrictor in the glove compartment of a rental car. Animal control officers ripped apart the dashboard to retrieve the snake. The snake had disappeared two weeks earlier from two men who were renting the car. Someone else had rented the car before the snake was found.²⁰³

February 20, 2007/Albany, Oregon: A resident discovered an 11-foot albino python crawling up the stairs of an apartment complex and called police. The snake, who was kept in an ice cream cooler, had escaped twice before.²⁰⁴

January 30, 2007/Collier County, Florida: A yellow anaconda was collected from Big Cypress Swamp.²⁰⁵

September 27, 2006/Cookville, Tennessee: Animal control picked up two boa constrictors, both more than 6-feet long, within a two-week period. One was crossing a road and the second one was found in a park.²⁰⁶

September 12, 2006/Dayton, Ohio: A passerby captured a 6-foot boa constrictor who had stopped traffic while slithering across a road. Authorities took the snake to a local humane society.²⁰⁷

September 5, 2006/Sebastian County, Arkansas: The Sebastian County Humane



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“[Four men] fought with it for seven or eight minutes. It was obviously someone’s pet.”

North Carolina woman describing the capture of a python she found along the highway

Society reported they had custody of an escaped or released 8-foot python and were seeking the owner.²⁰⁸

August 25, 2006/Fort Lauderdale, Florida: A 9-foot boa constrictor was captured after having been spotted loose for several days by worried residents who were keeping an eye on children and pets.²⁰⁹

August 15, 2006/Tallahassee, Florida: A 9-foot Burmese python was found near the Tallahassee airport. After police initially captured and put the snake in a bag, the animal escaped from the back seat of the patrol car and had to be recaptured.²¹⁰

August 11, 2006/Miami-Dade County, Florida: A 6-foot red-tailed boa constrictor was captured and removed after a man discovered the snake in his backyard in a mobile home park.^{211,212}

August 8, 2006/Shelby Township, Michigan: A resident reported to police that their 6- to 7-foot, 60-pound boa constrictor was missing.²¹³

August 4, 2006/Lyon Township, Michigan: A man stopped to investigate after swerving to avoid hitting what appeared to be a tree branch on a residential street. The branch turned out to be an aggressive 10-foot African rock python. With the help of neighbors, he captured the snake, brought it home, and turned it over to a local humane society a few days later.²¹⁴

August 2006/Hamilton County, Indiana: Three boaters discovered a dead 19-foot python on the banks of the White River. Authorities speculated that the snake was a pet who had escaped or been discarded.²¹⁵

July 25, 2006/Lathrop, California: A man returned home to find a 4-foot boa constrictor in his garage. Authorities removed the snake and turned the animal over to a reptile exhibitor.²¹⁶

February 21, 2006/Rexburg, Idaho: After missing for two weeks, an 8-foot Burmese python was found in the bathroom ceiling of the apartment below the one from which she escaped, apparently through a hole in the wall. Some residents had refused to stay in their apartments after learning of the missing snake.²¹⁷

February 3, 2006/Boynton Beach, Florida: A man walking his dog—an 8-pound rat terrier—let the dog off the leash near his front door. A neighbor’s 11-foot pet python had gotten free from an apartment complex and grabbed the dog by the head, wrapping around him. The man used a golf club to get the snake to release the dog, but the dog ran away and was found dead the next day with injuries consistent with constriction.²¹⁸

December 28, 2005/Hawaii Kai, Hawaii: Residents called 911 after finding a 4-foot boa constrictor coiled behind a bag of rice in the laundry room of their home. The home was undergoing renovation and the door may have been left open during construction. State agriculture officials removed the snake.²¹⁹

November 30, 2005, Dublin, Georgia: A mother of two small children found an abandoned 7-foot, 56-pound Burmese python in a pillowcase in her backyard.²²⁰



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“It was obvious children were in and out of the house. With a snake that size, that’s just a disaster waiting to happen.”

Florida official after seizing an 11-foot, 100-pound python from a resident’s home

October 10, 2005/Miami, Florida: A 10-foot African rock python was found by a 77-year-old turkey farmer. The snake had crawled into a pen and eaten a turkey, and was then too large to fit back through the fence. Authorities removed the snake and planned to take it to a zoo due the snake’s aggression. According to a fire rescue official, “It launches at everything that tries to come near it.”²²¹

October 9, 2005/Miami Gardens, Florida: A woman looking for her pet Siamese cat instead found a bulging Burmese python in her backyard. X-rays showed that the snake had eaten the cat.^{222,223}

September 16, 2005/New Castle, Delaware: An 8-foot and three 4- to 6-foot boa constrictors were abandoned at an apartment complex after a tenant’s eviction. The local animal shelter was helping place those snakes, plus a fifth one about 5-feet long who was seized the same week from a man walking in the street with the snake around his neck.²²⁴

August 10, 2005/O’Fallon, Missouri: A UPS driver found a 9-foot Burmese python loose in his truck. The person who ordered the snake from a Pennsylvania dealer instead received an empty box.²²⁵

August 4, 2005/New York City, New York: A man who lived in a 16-floor apartment complex opened his closet to discover his brother-in-law’s missing 3-foot boa constrictor. The snake had escaped six months earlier. Five officers responded to the call to remove the snake and he was turned over to animal control.²²⁶

July 10, 2005/Sacramento, California: A 15-foot, 200-pound Burmese python was discovered by a teenage girl cleaning a warehouse. The animal belonged to a man who worked at an industrial building down the street and who had unknowingly poked a hole in the animal’s cage with a forklift. Animal control officers removed the snake. This was the snake’s third escape.²²⁷

June 2005/Turrell, Arkansas: Wildlife officials say there have been two sightings of yellow anacondas in the Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge. One, estimated to be 14-feet long, was seen by a person fishing in 2004 and a wildlife official recently spotted a 6-foot yellow anaconda.²²⁸

November 15, 2004/New Haven, Connecticut: Police searching for a 15-foot pet python who had been reported missing discovered that the animal’s owners also had two crocodiles and an Argentinean boa constrictor. The police didn’t find the python, but confiscated the other animals.²²⁹

September 27, 2004/Bay St. Louis, Mississippi: A 17-foot, 110-pound Burmese python missing for four days was lured out of hiding with a rabbit. The snake had escaped from a bathroom when the door was left open, and taken refuge underneath insulation in the attic of the apartment building.²³⁰

August 5, 2004/Brenham, Texas: Authorities reported they were in the third week of searching for a large snake, believed to be a released pet python or boa constrictor and described as long enough to stretch across a street. A 7-foot python believed to be a different animal was caught the previous week at a landscaping company.²³¹



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“When I brush my teeth, I’m looking over my shoulder.”

New York City apartment dweller after finding a 7-foot python emerging from her toilet

August 12, 2004/Collier County, Florida: A green anaconda was collected from Big Cypress Swamp.²³²

August 2004/Louisville, Kentucky: A yellow anaconda was found loose at the Louisville airport’s UPS facilities. The snake was captured and taken to a zoo.²³³

July 21, 2004/Vero Beach, Florida: A 16-foot Burmese python was captured on a city street after being spotted by a motorist. An animal control officer said he had picked up dozens of loose Burmese pythons and boa constrictors over the years, but this was the largest.²³⁴

March 25, 2004/Old Bridge, New Jersey: A man found an abandoned 10-foot tiger reticulated python inside a sack on the side of Route 9 and brought it to a local pet shop. The snake was later turned over to animal control.²³⁵

September 25, 2003/Chesapeake, Virginia: A 12-foot, nearly 100-pound Burmese python was found after being on the loose for more than three weeks. The snake had pushed open a window to escape and was one of three snakes kept in the home.^{236,237}

September 3, 2003/Bridgeton, New Jersey: A UPS driver discovered a 7-foot Burmese python loose in his truck. The snake was being shipped in a flimsy, cramped box from a dealer in Las Cruces, New Mexico, to a Bridgeton resident who purchased the snake on the Internet. Police and animal control were called to remove the snake.²³⁸

August 29, 2003/Everett, Washington: A man found an escaped 7-foot python passing through his yard. The week before, a park ranger found a similar-size python in a lake. The local animal shelter generally takes in about 10 loose snakes a year.²³⁹

August 27, 2003/Tampa, Florida: A 12-foot, 125-pound Burmese python escaped from a home and was found by a neighbor under a truck two days later.²⁴⁰

August 11, 2003/Daytona Beach, Florida: A woman was alerted by her barking dog that a 4-foot Burmese python was next to the sliding glass door in her backyard. An animal control officer removed the snake and took it to a shelter.²⁴¹

August 6, 2003/New Port Richey, Florida: A man called police after finding a 15-foot Burmese python among the patio furniture in his backyard. The snake had gone missing from a neighbor three weeks earlier.²⁴²

August 4, 2003/Bullhead City, Arizona: Authorities took a 12-foot Burmese python from a yard. The mobile homes on the property seemed to be vacant, and the animal appeared to be abandoned.²⁴³

August 4, 2003/South Elgin, Illinois: A man had driven more than 100 miles without knowing that a neighbor’s 6-foot boa constrictor was hiding under the hood of his van. The snake had been reported missing two days earlier. Officers used pepper spray to daze the snake and returned the snake to its owner.²⁴⁴

July 28, 2003/Manatee, Florida: A man reported his 12-foot Burmese python was missing and had not eaten for a week. A neighbor found the snake the next day



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“It was squeezing her to death and then it started to swallow her. And there wasn’t a thing I could do. It was so horrifying. I just don’t know how I’m going to get along without her. She was my life.”

74-year-old California woman who watched in horror as a neighbor’s escaped pet boa constrictor killed and ate her dog

crawling up her driveway and then to her front door. The python had a bulge in his stomach but it was unclear what he had eaten. A captain with the Manatee County Emergency Medical Services called for assistance to remove the snake.²⁴⁵

July 27, 2003/Tampa, Florida: Police were notified that a 6-foot, 50-pound boa constrictor who had not eaten in two weeks went missing from a backyard cage while the homeowner was at work. The snake had escaped before.²⁴⁶

July 21, 2003/Yonkers, New York: A retiree spotted a 4-foot Burmese python on his walkway as he was leaving his home. Two police officers were called to the scene to remove the snake.²⁴⁷

July 4, 2003/Glocester, Rhode Island: A resident reported that his 14-foot, 60-pound Burmese python escaped from a poorly secured tank and through a window screen. The snake was found five weeks later two miles away.^{248,249}

June 29, 2003/Glen Ellyn, Illinois: DuPage County Forest Preserve police were contacted after someone found a 5-foot boa constrictor under a picnic table at Churchill Woods Forest Preserve. Police turned the snake over to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.²⁵⁰

December 6, 2002/Rochester, New York: A group of 25 Girl Scouts was startled by an escaped 15-foot, 105-pound Burmese python while participating in a sleepover at Seneca Park Zoo’s Discovery Center.²⁵¹

November 13, 2002/Bloomington, Illinois: Two dead snakes—a 15-foot long Burmese python and a 7-foot boa constrictor—were found huddled near a fence at a truck stop by a customer. The snakes had apparently frozen to death.²⁵²

September 5, 2002/Powell, Ohio: A 10-foot Burmese python escaped and was on the loose for about three weeks. The snake was found in a vacant home being renovated, with a telltale bulge in its middle. X-rays showed the snake had eaten a small canine, possibly a fox or stray dog.²⁵³

September 28, 2002/Carter, Tennessee: A pet Burmese python approximately 8- to 10-feet long escaped for the second time from a barn. During the first escape, the snake was at large for about a month and was found by a neighbor out walking his dog.²⁵⁴

August 15, 2002/Bloomington, Illinois: Two residents reported seeing a 6-foot boa constrictor on the loose. An officer located the snake and placed it in a box in the trunk of his car. The snake escaped from the box and wrapped itself around some radio equipment in the trunk. Officers eventually removed the snake and turned the animal over to animal control.²⁵⁵

July 10, 2002/Abita Springs, Louisiana: A 12-foot Burmese python escaped from a camper and was recaptured a week later.²⁵⁶

July 3, 2002, Cumberland County, Maine: A sheriff’s deputy investigating an abandoned SUV was startled to discover a 5-foot boa constrictor loose in the back seat and another snake coiled inside a terrarium.²⁵⁷



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constrictor snake escapes

“I am worried about it because there’s a lot of little kids that walk around this area.”

Missouri man after learning a boa constrictor was still on the loose after finding his neighbor’s escaped pet python in his garden

June 27, 2002/High Point, North Carolina: A 12-foot, 100-plus-pound pregnant Burmese python was recaptured after being on the loose for two days. The snake was found near a pond behind a neighbor’s home. It took six men to move the snake to a truck. Officers warned the owner for allowing the animal to “run at large.”²⁵⁸

April 18, 2002/Pompano Beach, Florida: An 18-foot, 200-pound Burmese python who had been living for at least a year near a service plaza on Florida’s Turnpike was captured. A state crew mowing the grass in the area had reported seeing the animal a year before, and there had been several sightings since.²⁵⁹

October 14, 2001/Easton, Pennsylvania: A wildlife trapper reported that a company representative had recently removed a 13-foot boa constrictor, believed to be someone’s escaped pet, found wrapped around a hot water heater in a dentist’s office.²⁶⁰

October 4, 2001/Merced, California: A man called police to report his 200-pound python had escaped from a cage. The man later located the snake under his house. The python had a huge bulge after apparently consuming the man’s 30-pound pit bull, who was also missing.²⁶¹

August 27, 2001/Chicago, Illinois: A man who had three small children in the home called police after he encountered a 6-foot albino python in the hallway of his third floor apartment. A neighbor had moved in with a number of animals and it was believed that the snake may have crawled in from a window ledge. The police captured the snake.²⁶²

August 13, 1999/Woodbridge, Connecticut: A driver who stopped to move a branch out of the road discovered that the branch was actually a 15-foot python. Police officers captured the animal and surmised that he/she was someone’s pet.²⁶³

October 18, 1998/North Bergen, New Jersey: A startled neighbor found a 7-foot python sunning itself on her fence. Hours earlier the snake had been released into a city sewer by a teenager who could no longer keep it. Police brought the snake to a shelter where a worker determined the animal was underfed and in poor condition.²⁶⁴

August 9, 1997/West Hills, California: A 74-year-old woman watched in horror as her chihuahua was attacked and eaten by a 7½-foot boa constrictor. The pet snake had escaped from a neighbor and entered the woman’s enclosed patio.²⁶⁵

July 29, 1997/Keyser, West Virginia: Police went door-to-door warning residents that a neighbor’s 10-foot red-tailed boa constrictor was on the loose and was “capable of eating small animals up to the size of a 2-year-old child.”²⁶⁶

July 16, 1997/Westbury, New York: Nassau County police responding to a 911 call found a 6-foot boa constrictor in a resident’s back yard. The snake had escaped from a neighbor down the street.²⁶⁷

November 19, 1996/Mesa, Arizona: An 8-month pregnant woman who tried to unclog her toilet with drain cleaner and a wire hanger discovered the source of the clog was a 6-foot boa constrictor when the snake emerged from the toilet bowl.



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constrictor snake escapes

Police referred her to a wildlife rehabilitator who removed the snake.²⁶⁸

September 17, 1995/River Forest, Illinois: Police responding to a 911 call captured a 10-foot Burmese python who was eating a squirrel in a resident's backyard. One officer said, "It took three or four guys to uncoil the thing." Police suspected the snake was an abandoned pet and brought it to an adoption center.²⁶⁹

August 10, 1995/Phillipsburg, New Jersey: A woman resting in her first floor apartment heard a large thump and discovered a 10-foot boa constrictor had fallen through her drop ceiling. The woman, who did not own the snake, bolted out a front window and called for help. Police and town public works officials removed the snake.²⁷⁰

October 11, 1994/Houston, Texas: While relaxing on a flight from Houston to New York, a woman discovered a 6-foot python with his head about one-half inch from her 5-year-old daughter's leg. She quickly unbuckled her daughter's seat belt and the family fled to the back of the plane. The snake had escaped from a bag under the passenger seat in front of the girl. The girl suffered nightmares after the incident. The family later settled a lawsuit against Continental Airlines.²⁷¹

May 25, 1989/Coconut Creek, Florida: After flushing her toilet, a woman noticed the head of a boa constrictor pop out of the toilet bowl. She called authorities and a wildlife trapper pulled the 6-foot, 2-inch snake out of the toilet using a catch pole. The woman did not know who the snake belonged to.²⁷²

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