

Slaney River Trust

2010 News

Huge python found during river survey

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A routine river survey took an unexpected twist today after scientists pulled a 10ft monster python from the water in Co Wexford.

Relieved fisheries staff hauled in their nets on the River Slaney to discover the dead reptile – believed to be an aggressive African rock python.

Experts said the giant snake had not eaten for some time but may have only died recently.

Dr Cathal Gallagher, Central Fisheries Board director of research, warned about keeping exotic and dangerous animals.

“The real message from our point of view is that we have a lot of problems with invasive and non-native species,” he said.

“Although this is very unusual.”

The exotic Slaney snake was pulled out of the river estuary near Enniscorthy and is believed to have been about 10-years-old and recently dead.

It is thought to be an African rock python, a large snake more at home on the Savannah which kills prey by squeezing it to death. It’s usual diet as an adult in the wild is small mammals such as antelope but it can live on rats and rabbit.

The pythons can grow to more than 20ft long making it third largest snake in the world.

They are regarded as aggressive, mean and worryingly they can also live for one year without feeding, if their last meal is large enough.

Ben Lyons, owner of Reptile Haven in Dublin, said this breed of python was relatively cheap to keep with food costing about €25 a month.

“The last rock python I had I donated it to the zoo about 20 years ago – it was psychotic,” Mr Lyons said.

“They are not necessarily a great pet. This is a bit of a generalisation but they are known for being temperamental and angry.”

Despite being in the water it had not yet begun to decompose or rot.

Nature and wildlife experts were said to be debating what to do with the dead creature.

The possibility of stuffing and mounting the giant reptile has been discussed but it is understood that is unlikely.

The snake has been frozen and taken to Dublin where it will be stored for tests with experts in the zoo and universities believed to be keen to examine it.

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