

The Virgin Islands Consortium

D.P.N.R. Confirms Capture Of Three Caimans In St. Thomas

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The Department of Planning and Natural Resources confirmed on Thursday that at least three caimans (*Caiman crocodilus*) were captured in St. Thomas recently, and the department is advising the public to be aware, as there may be others in the wild.

Caiman crocodilus is a small reptile that grows up to 8 feet in total length over a period of 15 years and looks similar to crocodiles or alligators. D.P.N.R. said if approached, the reptiles can become aggressive despite their diet of small mammals, birds, freshwater fish, and reptiles.

In an ongoing effort to eradicate the small population of caimans that have appeared in freshwater pools on the eastern end of St. Thomas, D.P.N.R.'s Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is urging the community to report all sightings immediately to 775-6762 (STT) or 773-1082 (STX).

Due to caimans' propensity to live in subtropical climates, there are no good methods to manage or care for captive caimans in the Virgin Islands, D.P.N.R. said. The department stressed that that caimans are not good pets, and directed owners of captive caimans to call DFW at 775-6762 (STT) or 773-1082 (STX). D.P.N.R. said there will be no penalties for having a captive caiman at this time if the animal is reported and surrendered to DFW.

Feature Image courtesy: D.P.N.R., JP de Jongh, III.

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