

134 Crocodiles Seized by Inspectors in Moscow

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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134 crocodiles were seized today at the All-Russia Exhibition Center.

Moscow authorities have shut down a “crocodile farm” at an exhibition center in the city on suspicion that the reptiles may have been smuggled into Russia, the city's environmental department said Monday.

The show at the All-Russia Exhibition Center, which opened last month, displayed four kinds of crocodile as well as pythons, anacondas, iguanas, monitor lizards and, somewhat incongruously, fennec foxes from the Sahara, according to the exhibition center's website.

The show's owner failed to provide documentation to confirm that the animals on display were obtained in accordance with the Control of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) rules governing wildlife trafficking, City Hall's environmental department said in a statement Monday.

The list of seized animals comprises 134 crocodiles, as well as 10 snakes, two monitor lizards and an iguana, the department said, making no mention of fennec foxes.

City officials chose not to remove the reptiles from their cages, a spokeswoman for the exhibit said, Metro newspaper reported.

She denied that the animals had been illegally trafficked, blaming the incident on a paperwork mix-up. Access to the animals will soon be restored for Moscow's reptile-loving public, she said.

The Crocodile Farm may soon face some stiff competition. According to Moskovsky Komsomolets, a marine public aquarium is due to open at the All-Russia Exhibition Center in 2014, becoming the fifth place in the world to host killer whales.

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