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Janitors Find Baby African Crocodile in St. Petersburg

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St. Petersburg janitors have discovered a baby African crocodile beside garbage cans in a local yard.

The creature, which is just a few days old and under 50 centimeters long, lives in temperatures of 25 degrees Celsius and higher and was all but frozen to death when the janitors spotted it on Tuesday, Itar-Tass reported Thursday.

The animal might have gotten into a trash bag by accident and been thrown away by the garbage's owner, a municipal housing official told RIA Novosti Thursday.

Alternatively, the crocodile could have been brought to Russia as an egg, which its owners could have mistaken for the egg of an ostrich and thrown away after seeing that what hatched out didn't look like a bird, experts at the local zoo said, local news website Fontanka.ru reported late Tuesday. The news report did not comment on the relative strangeness of

hatching an ostrich.

Municipal housing officials gave the animal a temporary shelter in their office, placing it in an aquarium filled with sand and feeding it beef and water. The crocodile swallowed the meat whole, washed it down with some water and became more energetic, the officials said.

The animal is to be transferred to quarantine center Veles in the Leningrad region on Friday for temporary keeping until a permanent home is found for it.

The local zoo and aquarium refused to take the beast as well, with the zoo officials saying it would grow to be three to four meters long and the zoo's premises had no capacities to keep such a big animal, Fontanka.ru reported.

The quarantine center will also look to move the animal. “We don't need crocodiles, especially the African ones: they are angry,” Veles director Alexander Fyodorov said.

The African — or Nile — crocodile is the biggest of the three types of crocodiles that inhabit Africa. It grows to become four to six meters long, weighing up to 500 kilograms and can develop a speed of 12 to 14 kilometers per hour.

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