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St. Pete Organization Adopts Baby Crocodile

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An animal rehabilitation center is looking for a new home for a crocodile recently found in a yard in St. Petersburg.

A baby African crocodile discovered in a St. Petersburg yard in early March may be adopted by organizations tied to the local government, the head of a local quarantine center told The Moscow Times on Monday.

"We may keep the crocodile if someone takes responsibility for it," said Tatyana Skvortsova, director of the Leningrad region quarantine center Veles.

Veles is a private organization for the housing, treatment, rehabilitation and quarantine of wild animals, and it operates partly on donations and the work of volunteers, according to its website.

"There are organizations linked to the St. Petersburg government that showed their

willingness [to sponsor the crocodile's life]," Skvortsova said, without naming the organizations.

Alternatively, the animal may go to one of two zoos in other cities, which have also said they were interested in taking the crocodile in. Most likely, Veles will give the crocodile to its new home free of charge, she said.

"But we will not hand the animal over to private hands, that is for certain — even if someone asks for it, because a crocodile is not suited for it," Skvortsova said.

Before being transferred anywhere, the animal has to undergo a quarantine and more medical examinations, which can take about a month.

Veles employees have been regularly posting information about the crocodile's appetite, weight and sleep on the center's Vkontakte page, as well as photos of the animal.

"He is eating well, has gotten used to his new home and is already defending it," Veles founder Alexander Fyodorov wrote in his latest post about the crocodile on Friday.

A video of the crocodile posted on Vkonakte earlier that day showed the crocodile, named Gena Grazhdansky, lying on a brick near a small pool and hissing at the camera before jumping into water.

The crocodile appeared to be several dozen centimeters long, just as when he was found.

A Vkontakte user asked the center's employees what they were planning to do with the crocodile when it reaches a length of 2 1/2 meters within a year. Veles creative director Olga Berezina replied that they were planning to love the animal.

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