The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Cheeky Raccoon Busts Out of Animal Exhibit, Prompts 2-Week-Long Rescue Effort

October 07, 2014



A raccoon that broke free from a touring animal exhibition in the Smolensk region has finally been found after a volunteer search party spent two weeks scouring the city for him.

The raccoon, Venya, had outsmarted his human masters by hiding in the one place least likely to be checked: the very building where the "World of Animals" exhibition was being held.

"A few days ago, [the building's] administrator notified us that in the theater where the animals were being exhibited, strange things had started to happen," the organizer of the exhibition was cited as saying Monday by local news outlet Smolenskaya Gazeta.

"The food was disappearing, then somebody was scattering talcum powder around," the organizer, identified only as Alexei, told the publication.

After nearly two weeks searching the city streets after Venya's disappearance on Sept. 24, he

was spotted in a small crook in the ceiling above the movie theater screen.

"Raccoons can climb up trees to a height of 30 meters. They live in burrows and hollows, and at night they come down in search of food. So with Venya, it seems, his natural instincts were awakened," the organizer told Smolenskaya Gazeta.

As of Monday afternoon, Venya was still hanging out in the building's ceiling, as the exhibition's organizers had failed to coax him down.

Russian animals have a long, sordid history of running free from circuses and exhibitions.

In 2011, a rare albino ostrich escaped a traveling circus in a town in Russia's Far East, prompting an informal state of emergency when the circus organizer warned residents that the animal was "stupid and aggressive" and "capable of maiming."

Earlier that year, a ferret described by its owner as a "terrible glutton" escaped a circus in Siberia, along with several other animals. News of the animals' escape went viral when the circus director said the ferret had fled because it was depressed.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/10/07/cheeky-raccoon-busts-out-of-animal-exhibit-prompts-2-week-long-rescue-effort-a40147