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Penguin Freed in Georgian Flood Crosses into Azerbaijan

June 17, 2015



An African penguin that escaped from the zoo in Georgia's capital Tbilisi during recent flooding, has been found at the country's border with neighboring Azerbaijan, news portal Georgia Online reported Wednesday. The penguin was found on a bridge over the Khrami river, which separates the two countries. The distance from Tbilisi to the bridge is about 60 kilometers.

A representative of the zoo stated that someone has been dispatched for the penguin and it will soon be brought back to Tbilisi.

According to radio station Moscow Speaks, the Tbilisi Zoo refused assistance from their Moscow colleagues in retrieving the escaped penguin. “We negotiated with the director of Tbilisi Zoo...they thanked us for the offer and said for the moment it was not necessary,” said Olga Vainshtok, director of communication for the Moscow Zoo.

As a result of heavy rains on the night of June 14, the Vera river in central Tbilisi overflowed its banks, causing serious flooding. Many zoo animals escaped their enclosures, including bears, tigers, wolves and a lion. A hippo was also found wandering the streets of the Georgian capital.

Several of the animals were shot by animal control officials, but one person was killed by a tiger.

The government has promised to compensate the families of those killed or injured in the flooding approximately 10,000 lari (around $4,400). Fifteen people died and 37 were injured in the floods.

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