

Park warning after escaped python sightings

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Park visitors were urged not to approach the snake if they saw it

A snake thought to be a royal python is at large after its escape and has been spotted several times in a park.

People were urged not to approach the reptile if they saw it in Ley Hill Park, Northfield, Birmingham, but report sightings to the RSPCA.

Initially believed to be a boa constrictor, the manager of the Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park said the snake "appears" to be a royal python.

The snake was about five feet (1.5m) long and not thought to be dangerous but should be left alone, the Friends of Ley Hill Park group said.

Les Basford, manager of the Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park, which is based about five miles from Ley Hill Park, said: "If you went up to it and surprised it, it could strike but generally they are very passive."

"With all snakes it's best just to leave it alone and get professional advice.

"More than likely it's someone's pet. Snakes are like Houdini – they can escape from anywhere. Its teeth could break the skin if it bit properly but it would only be a defensive manoeuvre."

Several sightings in the park were reported last week, according to the Friends of Ley Hill Park's Facebook group.

One user of their Facebook page called the situation "scary" and the group advised dog walkers to keep an eye on their pets.

Anyone who found a snake they believed not to be native to their area should keep a safe distance and call the RSPCA's helpline, a spokesperson for the charity said.

"Many of the snakes the RSPCA's officers are called to collect are thought to be escaped pets... but sadly, we also have to deal with a lot of abandoned snakes," they added.



Graham Williams said he was wary of seeing any snake in the park

Graham Williams, who walks in the park with his dogs twice a day, told BBC Radio WM he had read about the snake online and was wary of seeing it.

"I've read a lot about it, my daughter's on about it - she's mad on snakes anyway but I'd run if I'd seen it, that's for sure," he said.

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