

NewsyBITS



Victoria Butterfly Gardens

We have a new member of the team. Its name is Javier and it's a Cuvier's Dwarf Caiman.

Order: Crocodylia – Crocodilians

Why is it here?

This caiman is being cared for by the Victoria Butterfly Gardens on behalf of Environment and Climate Change Canada. This animal was found being held illegally without the necessary permits, and while legal proceedings are underway to determine its future this will be its temporary home.

Crocodilians of all species are not legal to keep as pets in BC. On top of that, they are extremely difficult and expensive to properly care for.

What is it?

The Cuvier's dwarf caiman is the smallest species of caiman, and a relative of alligators and crocodiles. Females reach a maximum length of four feet long, and males reach a maximum length of five feet long. This caiman is very young and still growing, its enclosure will be rebuilt as it grows to allow for optimum comfort and enrichment. In the wild they can be found throughout the southern half of South America in a variety of rivers and wetlands. Like all crocodilians they are carnivores, they will eat any small animals they can catch but their diet primarily consists of fish, shellfish, small amphibians, and insects.

The Cuvier's dwarf caiman can be found throughout the northern half of South America in swamps and waterways. While their population is considered to be stable in the wild at this time, their numbers have decreased due to illegal hunting and poaching for the pet trade, mining, agriculture, and other forms of human expansion.