

Neil

Once again I put pen to paper to tell the tale of yet another rescue animal we've had over the years.

This one is unique in that Neil was rescued twice. First some background. Neil is – or was - a Plica Plica, they are from South America usually in the North East e.g. Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, Ecuador. Depending where you go they have different names including collared tree lizard, collared tree runner, and harlequin racerunner. Our favourite name is from Guyana where it's known as wakanama 😊

So how come Neil was rescued twice? Well if there's one thing you shouldn't do when looking for exotic animals to keep it's to buy or otherwise procure 'wild caught' animals. All this does is deplete the population in the wild and as we've seen over a number of centuries, it rarely ends well!

Rescue 1

Well, we had a call from a friend of ours Carl a marine biologist with an interest in herpetology (amphibians and reptiles). Carl has taken advantage of us before – remember Rex?! Through his work in the field he'd collected a wide range of contacts from across the globe many of whom worked or were based in the UK. To cut a long story short, he was approached by one who had just rescued a wild caught plica-plica and who was stuck with what to do with it. His partner was definitely not happy for him to look after it. Carl accepted however, as it turned out his then wife was also definitely not OK with him bringing it home.

Rescue 2

No prizes for guessing what happened next! Not wanting to give Neil to a pet shop and wanting a home where he would be managed properly – this is code for an approach with adult wild caught animal which allows them to, as far as possible maintain their wild behaviour. This minimises the stress on them, maximising their quality of life. Usually this means bigger enclosures than usual, as little handling as possible and the right food/light/heat. None of which by the way comes cheap!

In fact, Neil became so stress free that he often gave the impression of being one of the most laidback animals we've had.



He could often be seen hanging half off the bark/branches in his vivarium like he'd not a care in the world. At times I think we've all caught ourselves going in to just try and absorb some of his laidback take on the universe as he completely ignored our presence.

I don't think any of us ever left the room without a big smile on our face

Sadly Neil died six or seven years ago however we're pleased we could give him some peace after what must have been a horrendous journey from his home in South America to the UK