

## **The New Paper**

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### **Python Stuck in Drain**

*By Chai Hung Yin*

Jurong East residents who spotted a python near their block on Sunday morning tried to take matters into their own hand.

They made a lot of noise to shoo the reptile away and some even tried to catch the python themselves.

But all they did was scare the 2m-long python into squeezing into and hiding in a pipe nearby.

The python was finally rescued by Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) after four hours.

Mr Tan Gim Chay, 58, engineer, said he was on his way to the market at about 9am when he heard from his friends that a big python had been seen about 2 blocks from his flat.

He quickly went home and grabbed his camera. But by the time he rushed to the scene, he saw the people from ACRES were already there.

“When I reached there, I saw that the entrance to the pipe where the python had slithered into was covered up with a gunnysack,” he said.

Initially, the snake was spotted near the drain, he said. But the commotion then made the python take refuge in a pipe, not knowing how else to escape.

Mr Hafizzan Shah, 25, an animal care officer who was part of the two member rescue team from ACRES, said they were alerted around 9.30am of a python being spotted at the void deck near the lift lobby at Block 319, Jurong East Street 31.

### **No Escape**

He said: “We did a site survey and noted that there are no other escape routes for the snake.”

They then had to drill open one side of the cement over the pipe and cover it with a towel.

He said: “We cannot rescue a snake by pulling its tail because it will hurt its spine. So we had to cut the pipe above the ground on the other end to reduce the stress on the snake.”

They had earlier covered the entrance into the pipe with a gunnysack.

Mr Hafizzan said: “This creates a dark space for the snake to slide into and it was the only way out for the python.”

When they finally managed to get the hold of the reptile, they had to coax the python to slide out by itself.

Mr Hafizzan said: "The initial plan was to drill the whole pipe out, but it would cause too much stress on the python. So we did a waiting game instead."

After drilling, it took an hour to coax the snake to come out from hiding.

Mr Hafizzan, who was seen holding on to the tail portion of the reptile, said: "I was helping to manoeuvre the snake to head towards the right direction, which was the entrance with the gunnysack."

He said the normally, a python would turn its back to attack whoever catches hold of its tail.

"But this python was in a difficult situation. We had to apply a bit of pressure on it to make sure it goes the right way."

As the drama heightened, some 30 curious onlookers, including children and elderly, had gathered.

Mr Tan said: "There was a lot of excitement. Many people were whipping out their phones to take pictures."

Finally the python managed to slither out from hiding.

While his colleague, Ms Charlene Tan, 30, grabbed hold of its head with a white towel, Mr Hafizzan injected a microchip into its tail.

He said: "It is to keep track of pythons that have been rescued as well as keep track of its population."

The drama was finally over at 1.30pm.

But Mr Hafizzan advised people to let the experts do the work, or call ACRES 24-hour hotline: 9783 7782.

He said: "The members of public tried to catch the python themselves, that's why the python was in a difficult situation."