

SHELL SHOCKED

A Tyrannosaurus Is Loose In Sanibel

By Art Stevens

Could it be? Can the impossible be happening to Sanibel? Last week's newspaper reported that a 4 ½ foot Nile Monitor lizard was seen on Periwinkle. It had been detected but had slithered away before certified lounge lizards were able to capture it.

Is this the beginning of Sanibel's own version of Jurassic Park? Today 4 ½ feet, tomorrow 40 ½ feet. Sound the alarms. Bring in the Feds. Bring in the biologists. Something is going awry in our local ecology.

Does this have anything to do with the secret experiments going on at CROW? Have mad scientists infiltrated the ranks? Or is this a prank being devised by the Sanibel Chamber of Commerce to attract visitors who want to see real life dinosaurs? It's no secret that rare shells have occasionally been placed on our beaches so that elderly couples from Minnesota can find them, be photographed by our newspapers and return home to ticker tape parades.

Why not capture ten foot lizards and export them to Sanibel from Brooklyn so that tourists will get a thrill of a lifetime? For that matter, why not find a modern day forty-foot ape, call it King Kong and bring it to Sanibel? I think you get the drift of my meaning.

Clearly, our new bridge isn't enough. We need to find ways to distinguish Sanibel from Miami Beach so that we can get lots of tourist dollars. There's a raging

battle going on between our Chamber of Commerce and theirs. The battle plan to attract visitors away from Miami Beach is to go with our strengths: ecology, nature, wild life preserves, etc. But are these enough in these most competitive times? No. We've got to come up with bigger and better.

A photo of a 4 ½ foot Nile Monitor lizard is merely step one. Watch our newspapers in the coming weeks and you'll see the battle plan in action. I've been told in confidence that in two weeks a photograph will appear of a thirty-foot alligator sitting at the bar at Doc Ford's.

After that a twenty-foot egret will be found on the beach hitting golf balls. Then a fifty-foot sea turtle, a sixty-foot rabbit, a see-em no see-em, and a giant shrimp will be conveniently placed throughout Sanibel. And this is all a prelude to what the CROW scientists are really working on – a one-hundred foot tyrannosaurus and our own King Kong.

While all this may be good for tourism are we letting nature run wild in Sanibel? The signers of the original Sanibel Plan to preserve and protect our fragile ecology surely never envisioned this possibility. Will we now have to defer to King Kong in order to get into Mucky Duck? Imagine coming home from a nice relaxing dinner and finding a tyrannosaurus in your swimming pool sipping a Margarita? That could be unnerving.

We have to stop these mad scientific experiments. The Sanibel City Council must pass a bill that prohibits the laboratory creation of monster animals. All animals that exceed the natural size parameters for their species must be immediately relocated to Disneyworld to be paraded alongside Mickey Mouse and Goofy. We must start with the 4 ½ Nile Monitor lizard and make an example of it.

We must capture it at all costs and parade it up and down Periwinkle and show it who the boss is. And we must find other ways to attract tourists to Sanibel. If our sea shells, restaurants, shops, theaters, beaches, and wild life preserves aren't enough then we might consider hosting the Super Bowl.

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