



CALM reserves officer Grant Prank makes friends with the python. Photo courtesy Kalgoorlie Miner

Grant placates a python, but where is the owner?

CALM wildlife officers in the Goldfields have returned a rare carpet python to the wild, still wondering how it came to town in the first place.

The two-metre python was found by Kalgoorlie police on the roof of a car parked outside the regional hospital a couple of months ago.

The police had been called out by the wife of the car's owner to help when the vehicle broke down.

CALM's district wild-

life officer, Bob Fitzgerald, said the python had apparently been inside the car, but had crawled through a window and onto the roof.

The police officers arriving to help move the car thought they had their work cut out for them, but quick inquiries found the snake was not dangerous.

Neither CALM nor the police have been able to find out where the owner of the car got the python, or what he was planning to do with the snake.

Carpet pythons are

gazetted as rare and endangered and there is a maximum fine of \$10 000 for keeping them without a licence.

Only two wildlife licences have been issued to people in the Goldfields, although traditional Aboriginal people are permitted to hunt native animals for food.

It's believed the owner of the car where the python was found is a traditional Aboriginal, but he hasn't been seen since police made the discovery.

"We're investigating to see if there's been any breach of the Wildlife Conservation Act, but we don't have much to go on at the moment," Bob said.

"It may just be that the python was sick or injured and this man was looking after it until it healed."

The female snake was in good health by the time it came to be in CALM's care - so much so that it was taken to visit local schools as part of a community education program before being released.

