



We dedicate our lives to providing rescue, shelter
and adoption services for reptiles
and amphibians in Nova Scotia

Ssafa Haven Society

for Reptiles and Amphibians

Denise McKay
dryder@eastlink.ca

Lisa Balcom
lisabalcom@eastlink.ca

For more information please visit
www.petfinder.com/shelters/NS17.html

Denise McKay developed an affinity for reptiles and amphibians as a young child, spending countless hours in her backyard catching toads, salamanders and garter snakes. Her true passion for reptiles bloomed during her preteen years when she was first introduced to Louie, her uncle's Asian Water Dragon. She vowed that when she moved out on her own, she would have her own pet lizard to love and care for. At age 22, Denise adopted her first reptile, Ozzy, a young female Iguana that had been relinquished to the SPCA Metro Shelter. At that time, there were no local resources for assistance or education so after Ozzy's untimely passing due to egg dystocia (an inability to lay her eggs), Denise was determined to learn as much as she could to help prevent this and other husbandry problems from causing illness and early demise of other reptiles and amphibians.



Now 18 years later, she still cares for a wide variety of reptiles and amphibians with a special interest in boa constrictors, monitor lizards and tegus. Denise is a consultant to and has fostered reptiles and amphibians for the SPCA Provincial office, Animal Services, the SPCA Metro Shelter and Canadian Wildlife Services. She is a Certified Reptile Specialist (CRS) through the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) in Ottawa, ON. She is trained as a first responder to assist with setting up shelters for family pets in disaster situations and is secretary to the Disaster Animal Response Team of Nova Scotia (DART-NS).

As Chair of the Ssafa Haven Society for Reptiles and Amphibians, Denise strives to teach the public about reptile husbandry and alleviate fears through education and hands-on reptile shows. Denise has hosted reptile presentations throughout the years in schools, children's groups, churches, the Nova Scotia Hospital, the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, Exhibition Park, Chapters, St. Margaret Sailing Club, the Veterinary Assistant Program at Maritime Business College and Saint Mary's University. She and her team work together to



organize the Halifax Reptile Expo which has become a very successful annual event. Denise has been providing rescue and rehabilitation, fostering and adoption services for reptiles and amphibians for approximately 18 years. The Ssafa Haven Society for Reptiles and Amphibians enables reptiles and amphibians across Nova Scotia to find the good home they deserve, as well as to provide education to the public.