



## Our romantic massasauga rattler enters private life

*Casanova sheds his  
old identity*

**L**ike an excited cottager celebrating the arrival of summer, Casanova was slipping out of his winter wear when Killbear Provincial Park researchers plucked him from his wetland hangout. The eastern massasauga rattlesnake that *Cottage Life* adopted last winter through the park's Rescue-A-Rattler program had survived winter hibernation, returned to his old summer foraging area in a remote part of the park, and was shedding his skin when herpetologist Chris Parent found him on a sunny Friday morning in June. "Casanova's certainly got his new coat on in time for the breeding season," observes Patrick Walsh, park superintendent, who has documented

our rattler's numerous exploits with serpents of the female persuasion.

Unfortunately, funding cuts this year mean the research team can no longer track Casanova because his haunts are too remote, so Parent removed his radio transmitter. Meanwhile, *Cottage Life* has put in an application to adopt another rattler. While waiting for news of our new adoptee, we like to imagine Casanova passionately embracing a new life of anonymity. "It probably cramped his style to have Chris tramping behind him and scooping him up all the time," concurs Walsh. "Now he can romance the ladies without interruption."

-Amber Nasrulla