

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MAY 15, 2019**

**CONTACT**

Elliot Zirulnik, Communications Manager

321-254-9453, ext. 236

[ezirulnik@brevardzoo.org](mailto:ezirulnik@brevardzoo.org)



**Itsy-bitsy spiders confiscated, find home at Brevard Zoo**

MELBOURNE, Fla., May 15, 2019 — Eight young tarantulas, or “spiderlings,” were brought to Brevard Zoo on Wednesday, May 1 after being confiscated from an importer by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The small spiders, which are each about the size of a quarter, include four Brazilian whiteknee tarantulas and four Brazilian salmon pink bird-eating tarantulas.

The spiders came through Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, which took in a total of 250 tarantulas from USFWS. It is likely that the spiderlings were bred from illegally wild-caught adults because Brazil does not permit the export of fully grown tarantulas.

“We hope to use these arachnids to help Zoo guests learn more about the importance of spiders and the impacts of wildlife trafficking,” said Michelle Smurl, the Zoo’s director of animal programs. “When Rainforest Revealed—our new exhibit featuring Latin American wildlife—opens later this year, guests will have the chance to see them during keeper chats.”

Until then, the spiderlings will be housed in a behind-the-scenes area.

Brazilian whiteknee tarantulas can grow to a leg span of eight and a half inches. Unlike many larger tarantulas, this species is very colorful in appearance due to the white stripes that adorn its knees.

Brazilian salmon pink bird-eating tarantulas are among the largest in the world, reaching a leg-span of 11 inches. Aside from what its name suggests, this species also feeds on various insects, lizards and frogs.

Photos: [www.dropbox.com/sh/rc6yvrijozl11r5/AACGXm0mXUh3zz2r3qKv5LrKa](http://www.dropbox.com/sh/rc6yvrijozl11r5/AACGXm0mXUh3zz2r3qKv5LrKa)

###

*Brevard Zoo is home to more than 900 animals representing 195 species from all over the world. As a not-for-profit organization, it is a leader in the fields of animal wellness, education and conservation. More information is available at [www.brevardzoo.org](http://www.brevardzoo.org).*

*Treetop Trek features five aerial obstacle courses that whisk guests above parts of the Zoo and through lush Florida landscapes. More information is available at [www.treetoptrek.com](http://www.treetoptrek.com).*