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Endangered bird emerges at Brevard Zoo

MELBOURNE, Fla., June 12, 2019 — On June 8, an as-yet-unnamed wrinkled hornbill chick that hatched on April 12 emerged from its nest at Brevard Zoo. Its sex is not yet known. The youngster is the fifth offspring of female Morticia and male Gomez, both of whom are approximately 26 years old.

Prior to laying her eggs, the female wrinkled hornbill uses a mixture of fruit, feathers and feces to seal herself in a nesting cavity. Her mate delivers food through a tiny slit during the one-month incubation period and five-week-to-three-month nestling period.

"It's been seven years since Morticia and Gomez had their last clutch, so we were hopeful for more chicks, but didn't know if it was possible," said Michelle Smurl, director of animal programs at the Zoo. "The wrinkled hornbill's population is decreasing, and this chick is a glimmer of hope for its species."

Native to Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, the wrinkled hornbill is considered endangered due to habitat loss. As seed dispersers, these birds play an important role in rainforest ecology.

Photos and video: www.dropbox.com/sh/xjce1rx483j9hku/AAD33YdpWaSgKfulwhan1hh0a

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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.

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.