

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Brevard Zoo staff raising orphaned bear cub

MELBOURNE, Fla., March 25, 2020 — In late February, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) personnel responded when a member of the public found a weeks-old black bear cub alone on a dirt road in Ocala National Forest. FWC staff took the cub with them as they searched the area for his mother, and they kept the cub overnight as temperatures were forecast to drop into the thirties. FWC set up a remote camera over a blanket with the cub's scent on it overnight, but no adult female was observed.

FWC had the cub examined by a veterinarian and cared for the cub for several days, which involved placing him in an incubator and bottle-feeding him every few hours.

The cub had an "uncoordinated suck," which made him difficult to nurse and may have been the reason why he was abandoned. This condition and resulting abandonment have been observed in domestic animals.

Because he was abandoned at such a young age, the cub is not a candidate for release back into the wild, and FWC staff transferred him to the Zoo for long-term care.

The cub, who is an estimated six weeks of age, is now healthy, feeding well and has opened his eyes. His primary caretaker, Lauren Hinson, has successfully hand-raised several other Zoo animals. The young bear is fed every four hours around the clock—including during the night.

Interested parties can follow the cub's journey on the Zoo's social media channels.

As a not-for-profit organization that receives no recurring public funds, the Zoo has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak in what is typically its busiest season of the year, and it stands to lose one third of its annual income. Community members can support the Zoo by visiting www.brevardzoo.org and donating, purchasing a membership or symbolically adopting an animal.

Photos and video:

www.dropbox.com/sh/rlqp2fg0555q95y/AABACiwWfpp5hLZC6RPu6NRea

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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.

The Aquarium Project is a plan to construct a world-class aquarium and conservation center at Port Canaveral. More information is available at www.theaquariumproject.org.