

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Brevard Zoo, local veterinarian perform surgical first on bear cub

MELBOURNE, Fla., July 16, 2020 — Brody, a five-month-old Florida black bear cub living at Brevard Zoo, is recovering from a corrective surgery he received on July 9. The Zoo's veterinarians believe Brody is the first-ever bear to undergo this procedure.

In May, the underside of Brody's abdomen suddenly became sensitive to the touch, and he was repeatedly observed licking this area of his body.

The Zoo's veterinary team anesthetized Brody for a diagnostic exam and discovered evidence of a condition similar to hip dysplasia in dogs. It is not clear if the condition is congenital or the result of trauma sustained at a very young age. If left untreated, it could have caused severe pain and arthritis as Brody matured.

The procedure, called juvenile pubic symphysiodesis (JPS), was led by local veterinarian Dr. Jeffrey Christiansen of Superior Veterinary Surgical Solutions. It involved the fusion of a pubic growth plate to encourage a widening of the hip sockets, leading to better coverage of the femoral heads.

Dr. Christiansen also collected some of Brody's fat, which will be sent to a laboratory that will extract stem cells from the sample for use in injections that promote healing.

Brody has been recovering under close supervision at the L3Harris Animal Care Center. For the first five days after the surgery, animal care staff stayed overnight with Brody to keep him safe and comfortable.

"Young animals heal relatively quickly, so he should be running and climbing again fairly soon," explained Dr. Trevor Zachariah, the Zoo's director of veterinary programs. "The majority of the puppies that undergo JPS get a significant reduction in arthritis and other long-term consequences of hip dysplasia. Obviously, bears and dogs are different animals, but their hips are similar from a skeletal perspective."

Brody was brought to the Zoo by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in February at an estimated three weeks of age. He was found abandoned in Ocala National Forest with severe respiratory issues and nursed back to health by Zoo staff.

The procedure cost about \$7,500 between labor, drugs and other supplies. Those interested in covering these expenses can contact individual giving manager Sherri Law at slaw@brevardzoo.org or 321-254-9453, ext. 234.

Photos and video: www.dropbox.com/sh/yu822w4v9gsheg4/AACbCuZ1y5EA2YKaIX13hTaia

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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.