

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 15, 2021

CONTACT

Elliot Zirulnik, Communications Manager

321-254-9453, ext. 236

ezirulnik@brevardzoo.org



Sloth born at Brevard Zoo

MELBOURNE, Fla., April 15, 2021 — On the morning of April 8, Brevard Zoo’s animal care staff were greeted by a tiny Linnaeus’s two-toed sloth. Born to 15-year-old mother Sammy and 18-year-old father Dustin, this little one is the third sloth baby in the Zoo’s history and the first in over two years.

The baby, which has not yet been named or sexed, is tightly clung to Sammy’s underside. Both mother and child appear to be thriving and are sometimes in public view, but they have ample behind-the-scenes space to which to retreat if Sammy chooses.

Keepers used positive reinforcement techniques to train Sammy to stay still for ultrasound exams, enabling veterinarians to monitor the development of the fetus during the 10-month gestation period.

Linnaeus’s two-toed sloths are native to the rainforests of northern South America. In their natural range, sloths help disperse native plants by swallowing seeds in one location and defecating them elsewhere.

Although they are objectively adorable creatures (especially as babies), experts caution against keeping sloths as pets.

“Sloths are high-maintenance animals that need professional care, and they don’t belong in the home,” said Michelle Smurl, the Zoo’s director of animal programs. “They have long claws and sharp teeth that they won’t hesitate to use if they’re scared or stressed. If you can’t make the trip down to South America, the best way to get your sloth fix is to visit your local accredited animal care facility.”

Photos and video: www.dropbox.com/sh/f3ylgp7lprxmz3i/AADUJqaMMohX9mfU9SqGg5DJa

###

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.