

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lions Arrive at Brevard Zoo

MELBOURNE, Fla., May 1, 2022— Brevard Zoo has welcomed its newest species: lions!

Three young male lions arrived on Wednesday, April 27 from Naples Zoo. The 2-year-old brothers continue to be carefully monitored by our animal care team to ensure their comfort. They were given full access to their habitat on Sunday, May 1.

The lions' temporary habitat will be in our Wild Florida loop while a permanent living space is built in Expedition Africa. To make this space as comfortable as possible for our trio, the habitat contains large platforms, plenty of trees for safe climbing and large enrichment devices like boomer balls for them to play with.

The trio was born May 14, 2019, to first-time mom Shani and her mate, Masamba, at Naples Zoo. This was the first time lion cubs had been born at Naples Zoo in over 30 years. Shani and Masamba were recommended to breed starting in 2013, making this long-awaited birth even more special.

Brevard Zoo and Naples Zoo worked hard to make this change happen. The move was recommended by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Species Survival Plan, which suggests animal pairings and moves with the goal of ensuring healthy, genetically diverse animal populations in AZA-accredited zoos.

In their natural range, male cubs would remain with their pride until they are around 2-3 years old. At this point, they leave to form a new pride or take over an existing one. The SSP helps replicate this natural behavior. This move allows their parents to possibly breed again and gives the trio a home until they are also paired with potential mates.

Every Zoo birth is a safeguard against the extinction of their species. African lions are classified as vulnerable to extinction. Overall lion numbers continue to decline due to illegal hunting, decreases in the populations of lion prey and habitat loss.

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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.