

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2023

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Brevard Zoo Welcomes Howler Monkey Infant

MELBOURNE, Fla., May 5, 2023 — Brevard Zoo’s black howler monkey troop welcomed a new baby recently. Fourteen-year-old Baya gave birth overnight on April 30 and the newborn was discovered in the early morning of May 1 by keepers. While the Zoo’s animal care team does not yet know the baby’s sex or name, they are delighted that the infant appears to be healthy and alert.

This youngling joins a family unit of howler monkeys that includes their mom, Baya; their dad, 18-year-old Stormy; half-siblings Batata (7) and Beatle (6); as well as their full sibling, a 9-month-old male born to Baya and Stormy in August 2022.

“We’ve confirmed the baby nursing,” said Rainforest Revealed Area Supervisor Michelle Johnston. “The little one has a strong grip onto mom, which is a good indicator that they are strong and doing well.”

The Zoo’s young male born last year to Baya is still spending a lot of time around mom, learning to “share” with his newest sibling. “He is also becoming so much more independent these days,” said Michelle.

All infant howler monkeys are born with blonde hair in order to “blend in” with their mothers. Because the Zoo’s animal care team prefers to be as hands-off as possible with new additions, they do not know the sex of the baby at this time. If the newborn is a male, their hair will turn black when they are around two-and-a-half years old!

This little one is Baya’s seventh offspring and second here at our Zoo. Baya and her older daughters, Batata and Beatle, came to the Zoo in late 2021 as a part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ Species Survival Plan (SSP) for their species. SSPs manage the populations of animals within AZA-accredited zoos to ensure healthy, genetically diverse groups.

Female howler monkeys care for their young for around 12 months. After that, the young stay with their natal group and will continue to be around mom and other family members. This species has been known to have other females in the group help care for the young and even carry, groom and protect them.

Although black howler monkeys are not considered endangered, they are threatened in their natural range due to habitat loss, agricultural development and human hunting. Here are a few tips to help:

- Drinking bird friendly coffee supports farms that grow coffee in a way that helps migratory birds – and other forest dwelling animals – live their best lives in healthy habitats.
- E-waste, or electronic waste from old phones, computers, cords and similar products, is one of the fastest growing types of waste in the world, and when not disposed of properly, it can cause environmental harm. Bring your old phones and tablets to Brevard Zoo to recycle through eco-cell. A drop-off point is just outside the Zoo's front entrance.

Baya and the newborn are currently on habitat in the Zoo's Rainforest Revealed area, where they share a large space with their troop as well as macaws, scarlet ibises, river turtles, red-legged seriema and roseate spoonbills.

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About Brevard Zoo

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.