

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brevard Zoo Welcomes New Primate Species

MELBOURNE, Fla., January 8, 2026 — A new species of primate, the black-and-white Colobus monkey, is the latest to come swinging into Brevard Zoo.

This move helps support the Association of Zoos and Aquarium's (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP) for Colobus monkeys, which are vulnerable to extinction due to habitat loss and fragmentation and human predation in their native range of central Africa.

"We're proud to be able to help contribute to the growing, healthy population of these incredible primates in human care that will act as a safeguard population and ambassadors for their native counterparts," said Keith Winsten, CEO of East Coast Zoological Foundation, the parent organization of Brevard Zoo.

Females 7-year-old Naia and 6-year-old Zuba came from Nashville Zoo at Grassmere in Tennessee. The sisters arrived at Brevard Zoo a few weeks ago for a quarantine period and to get to know their animal care team. They have since moved onto an island off the Zoo's Expedition Africa area. Their new habitat underwent some modifications ahead of their arrivals, including the construction of a nighthouse and new landscaping.

A male Colobus monkey is expected to join the duo in a few months after his move was unexpectedly delayed.

Colobus monkeys are known for their iconic black and white coats. Most of the native population of these leaf-eating primates are found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There, they live in dense rainforests where they spend their days in the canopy leaping through trees and snacking on tasty greens.

These monkeys positively contribute to their ecosystems through their role as seed dispersers. After munching on plants, the monkeys distribute plant seeds through their droppings, promoting healthy and necessary plant growth. There is a correlation between an abundance of colobus monkeys in a location and the health of that ecosystem, and their absence can often be detrimental.

The community can support Colobus monkeys in their native range by bringing old phones and tablets to the Zoo to recycle through Eco-Cell. Colobus' native habitat in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is rich in coltan, a resource used to make electronics. The mining of coltan disrupts their natural range. By recycling electronics properly, the demand for coltan is lowered, helping preserve this habitat.

Another way to help this species: Support AZA-accredited organizations like Brevard Zoo to help bolster safeguard populations of this species.

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Brevard Zoo is home to more than 700 animals representing 170 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 BrevardZoo.org.

About East Coast Zoological Foundation

Driven by a mission to answer the call, East Coast Zoological Foundation (ECZF) is focused on educating, engaging and empowering the community to take action for conservation. The 501c(3) nonprofit located in Melbourne, Fla., includes Brevard Zoo and Bowen Aquarium campuses. ECZF works directly with Florida species and the community to develop programs and workshops to make a difference locally and around the world. From sea turtle rehabilitations and releases, building living shorelines along the Indian River Lagoon, providing scholarships and grants to the community and more, the Foundation creates opportunities for guests to connect with nature and make an impact in conservation and education. Founded in 1986, ECZF is governed by a volunteer board of directors and receives no recurring operating funds from any city, county or state government, relying on donations from people and companies to continue answering the call for wildlife and the environment along Florida's Space Coast and beyond. To learn more, visit OurLegacyCampaign.org.