

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2026

CONTACT

Lauren Delgado, Senior Communications Manager

321-254-9453, ext. 236

ldelgado@brevardzoo.org



Name A Leech This Valentine's Day

MELBOURNE, Fla., February 2, 2026 — Celebrate your serious attachments – or even the ones of the past – by symbolically naming a leech or barnacle this Valentine's Day. Or, if love really stinks: opt to name a rhinoceros poop for a loved one (or a turd, we won't judge).

[For a \\$5 donation](#), the Zoo will send adopters a special digital certificate of their symbolic adoption of one of these extra special critters (or poop) along with a fun social media graphic – all for the user to either gift or revel in.

Leeches and barnacles are commonplace sights at the Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Center at Brevard Zoo.

A leech adoption might be a good move for those marking a particularly draining relationship. Some see leeches as parasites, while others see them as medical treatments. For our Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Center, they can be both. While some sea turtle patients come infested with marine leeches, our veterinary team has also used medical leeches on patients to improve circulation in flippers constricted by fishing line. Leeches are also known to reduce inflammation, prevent blood clots, among other medical benefits.

Can't quite shake a loved one or old flame? Naming a barnacle for this relationship might offer some closure. Barnacles often crust the shells of sea turtle patients like Sloan, who was found struggling at the surface of the Indian River Lagoon in the New Smyrna Beach area. Barnacles can burrow into the shells of their sea turtle hosts or even weigh them down – an apt metaphor for someone wanting to honor (or dishonor) an extra clingy person in their life.

Thankfully for Sloan, their barnacles were able to be removed, and this sea turtle is in fair condition.

For the freshly dumped or those with a turd in their life, a rhino poop adoption may be the ideal choice. Brevard Zoo's three Southern white rhinoceros produce about 50 pounds of feces — each — a day. These feces, along with other excrement from some of the Zoo's herbivore residents, are used to create compost for onsite landscaping.

Interested in adopting one of these pests (or poop)? Visit [BrevardZoo.org](https://www.brevardzoo.org) for more information. Every donation goes toward the Zoo's work in animal wellbeing, conservation and education.

###

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](https://www.brevardzoo.org).