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FOUR MANATEES HEAD TO FLORIDA FOR FINAL STAGES OF REHABILITATION AS SIX MORE ARRIVE AT OHIO ZOOS FOR CARE

POWELL, OH – Four rescued manatees, three from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and one from Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, began their journeys to rehabilitation facilities in Florida on Monday, Oct. 12, 2026, bringing them another step closer to their anticipated release into their native Florida waters this winter. All four have since arrived safely at their respective destinations, marking an important milestone in a coordinated, multi-institution conservation effort.

As part of the same coordinated effort, six additional rescued manatees arrived in Ohio on Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2026, with three welcomed at the Columbus Zoo and three at the Cincinnati Zoo for continued rehabilitation.

The manatees were originally rescued through efforts involving the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and members of the Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP), a cooperative network of nonprofit, private, state, and federal organizations working together to rescue, rehabilitate, and ultimately return manatees to Florida's waters. The recent transfers were coordinated among participating organizations, including the Columbus Zoo, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, SeaWorld Orlando, East Coast Zoological Foundation (ECZF) at Brevard Zoo, Jacksonville Zoo and Botanical Gardens, and transportation partner DHL Express.

“The MRP and the organizations it is comprised of are honored to play such a crucial role in manatee rescue and rehabilitation. These transfers are a culmination of the

dedication and expertise of the experienced professionals that make up the MRP," said Patrick Berry, President of the MRP.

Three female manatees that had been receiving care at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium—Redrock, Rosalyn, and Erie—returned to Florida to continue their rehabilitation at East Coast Zoological Foundation's (ECZF) Manatee Rehabilitation Center at Brevard Zoo.

One additional manatee from the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden—Hundo—also departed Ohio for Jacksonville Zoo and Botanical Gardens in Florida.

At their receiving facilities, the four manatees will continue receiving specialized care as they prepare for their anticipated return to their native Florida waters.

"We're proud to welcome Redrock, Erie, and Rosalyn back to Florida to continue their rehabilitation journey with the goal of eventually releasing them back to their native waters," said Becca Downey, Senior Conservation Manager with ECZF. "So many organizations have been a part of this trio's journey—including SeaWorld Orlando and Columbus Zoo and Aquarium—we're ready to do our part in offering Redrock, Erie, and Rosalyn a chance to thrive in their Florida home."

"We are excited to follow Hundo's journey back to his native Florida waters and ready to begin the rehab process for the three new calves that are now in Manatee Springs," said Cincinnati Zoo's curator of mammals Kim Scott. "Every successful rehabilitation and release is a testament to the power of collaboration between AZA organizations and our shared commitment to protecting manatees for future generations."

Transporting the manatees required careful coordination among animal care, veterinary and transportation teams. DHL Express provided air transportation between its global hub at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport and Orlando, Florida, while specially equipped trucks operated by the participating zoos and SeaWorld handled ground transportation. Members of the Columbus Zoo's Animal Care and Conservation Medicine teams accompanied the manatees on both DHL Express flights, monitoring their health, comfort, and wellbeing throughout the journeys.

Given the size and weight of the transport crates, DHL Express used a specialized loading plan to secure them for flight and ensure proper weight and balance for the safety of the manatees and crew. The crates also required specialized forklift equipment for handling.

The manatees traveled in custom-built containers designed to support their safety and comfort. Each container included an 8-inch-thick bed of foam to support each manatee's body. Care teams used wool and space blankets to help maintain appropriate body

temperatures, using laser thermometers, and regularly misted the manatees with water beneath their blankets to keep their skin moist throughout the journeys.

“Having supported multiple manatee transports, we understand how important safe, carefully coordinated journeys are to these remarkable animals’ recovery and continued rehabilitation as they move closer to returning to the wild,” said Laurice Bancroft, SVP Network Operations, DHL Express Americas. “We’re proud to bring our global network and logistics expertise to this effort and work alongside our conservation partners to help ensure these manatees receive the care they need every step of the way.”

The Columbus Zoo welcomed three female manatees—Celine, Poplin, and Gingham—from SeaWorld Orlando for continued rehabilitation at its Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Center. The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden welcomed three males, Smidge, Tuglet, and Zimomo, also from SeaWorld Orlando, for continued rehabilitation at its Manatee Springs habitat.

At the Columbus Zoo, the new arrivals will receive care at the same facility as longtime resident Stubby, who has often voluntarily assumed the role of a surrogate mother to younger manatees. Due to injuries sustained in a boat strike, Stubby is considered conditionally non-releasable and has provided a familiar presence for many rescued manatees receiving care at the Zoo.

“Helping rescued manatees recover and return to their native waters is at the heart of our conservation work at the Columbus Zoo,” said Becky Ellsworth, curator of the Columbus Zoo's Shores and Aquarium region. “Our Animal Care and Conservation Medicine teams invest tremendous expertise, time, and care into giving each manatee the best possible chance of returning to the wild. Seeing them reach this milestone is incredibly rewarding, and welcoming the next group reminds us that our work to protect this threatened species continues.”

Through the MRP, participating facilities provide specialized care and rehabilitation based on each manatee's individual needs. This includes several facilities in Florida providing critical care, including urgent veterinary treatment, while additional facilities in and outside of Florida serve as second-stage rehabilitation facilities, providing temporary homes, specialized care, and veterinary support as manatees recover.

Including the manatees involved in these recent transfers, the Columbus Zoo has returned 45 manatees to Florida since opening its Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in 1999. The Cincinnati Zoo has cared for 38 manatees and helped release 31 since 1999.

Florida manatees face natural and human-caused threats, including seagrass loss, red tide, cold stress, disease, boat strikes, injuries from flood gates or locks, and entanglement in or ingestion of fishing gear.

Manatees transferred back to Florida from Ohio to complete final stages of rehabilitation:

Manatee Departure (from Columbus Zoo)	Rescued	Current Status	Arrived
Redrock (female)	May 10, 2024 Rescued as an orphaned calf in the Indian River Lagoon, Titusville, Fla. Weight at rescue: 49 pounds	Weight: 528 pounds	Brevard Zoo
Rosalyn (female)	December 2, 2024 Rescued as an orphaned calf in the Banana River, Cocoa Beach, Fla. Weight at rescue: 50 pounds	Weight: 624 pounds	Brevard Zoo
Erie (female)	January 9, 2025 Rescued as an orphaned calf with cold stress in the DeSoto Canal area in Cocoa Beach, Fla. Weight at rescue: 110 pounds	Weight: 648 pounds	Brevard Zoo

Manatee Departures (from Cincinnati Zoo)	Rescued	Current Status	Arrived
Hundo (male)	March 11, 2025 Rescued at Crystal River in Citrus County, Fla. Weight at rescue: 119 pounds	Weight: 546 pounds	Jacksonville Zoo

Manatees transferred to Ohio from Florida to continue rehabilitation:

Manatee Departures (from SeaWorld Orlando to Columbus)	Rescued	Arrived at Columbus Zoo
Celine (female)	August 10, 2025 Rescued as an orphaned, emaciated calf in Indian River in Martin County, Fla. Weight at rescue: 48.5 pounds	Recent Weight: 420 pounds
Poplin (female)	December 29, 2025 Rescued as an orphaned calf in the Blue Spring Run in Volusia County, Fla. Weight at rescue: 101 pounds	Recent Weight: 304 pounds
Gingham (female)	February 3, 2026 Rescued as an orphaned calf with signs of cold stress from Eau Gallie River in Brevard County, Fla. Weight at rescue: 133 pounds	Recent Weight: 317 pounds

Manatee Departures (from SeaWorld Orlando to Cincinnati)	Rescued	Arrived at Cincinnati Zoo
Tuglet (male)	March 15, 2025 Rescued as an orphaned calf from Banana River, Cocoa Beach, Fla. Weight at rescue: 42 pounds	Recent Weight: 365 pounds
Smidge (male)	April 15, 2025 Rescued as an orphaned calf from Key Largo, Fla.	Recent Weight: 353 pounds

	Weight at rescue: 43 pounds	
Zimomo (male)	May 27, 2025 Rescued as an orphaned calf from St. Augustine, Fla. Weight at rescue: 47 pounds	Recent Weight: 368 pounds

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About the Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP)
The Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP) is a group of non-profit, private, state, and federal entities dedicated to advancing manatee conservation through collaborative partnership. MRP partners participate in the rescue, rehabilitation, release, and post-release monitoring of manatees. This network of institutions includes acute care facilities that provide treatment to orphaned, sick, and injured manatees with the hope of one day returning them to the wild. MRP researchers collect invaluable data through manatee monitoring efforts to improve the understanding of manatee biology and health. By partnering cooperatively, MRP members work to promote stewardship and financial support of manatee conservation efforts through public education. For more information, visit us at manateerescue.org
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About the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
Home to more than 600 animal species from around the world, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium leads by making a positive impact on people, wildlife, and wild places. The Zoo complex is a recreational and education destination that includes the 22-acre Zoombezi Bay water park and 18-hole Safari Golf Club. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium also manages The Wilds, a 10,000-acre conservation center and safari park located in southeastern Ohio. The Zoo is a wildlife conservation organization with regional, national and global impact, annually supporting conservation and research projects locally and worldwide. For more information, please visit ColumbusZoo.org.
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About Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden
The world-famous Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden is committed to inspiring visitors to care about wildlife and wild places. It was voted the #1 Best Zoo and the #1 Best Botanical Garden in USA TODAY reader polls and has also received rave reviews from Child Magazine, Parents Magazine, Newsweek, and TripAdvisor. Over 1.8 million people visit the Zoo's award-winning habitats, 400 animal and 3000 plant species annually. The Zoo, an accredited member of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) for more than 30 years, is internationally known for its success in the protection

and propagation of endangered animals and plants and engages in research and conservation projects worldwide. Known as the #GreenestZooInAmerica, the Zoo is doing its part to conserve natural resources that are critical to saving wildlife and its habitats and is committed to greening its daily operations and reducing its impact on the environment with rain gardens, recycled building materials, solar panels and more. The Cincinnati Zoo is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For more information, visit us at CincinnatiZoo.org.
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About East Coast Zoological Foundation, Brevard Zoo
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.
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About Jacksonville Zoo and Botanical Gardens

For over 100 years, the Jacksonville Zoo and Botanical Gardens has aimed to inspire the discovery and appreciation of wildlife through innovative experiences in a caring environment. Starting in 1914 with an animal collection of one red deer fawn, the Zoo now has more than 2,000 rare and exotic animals and 1,000 species of plants, boasting the largest botanical garden in Northeast Florida. The Jacksonville Zoo and Botanical Gardens is a nonprofit organization and a portion of every ticket sold goes to the over 35 conservation initiatives Jacksonville Zoo and Botanical Gardens supports around the world, and here in NE Florida. The Zoo is proud to be an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit jacksonvillezoo.org.

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About SeaWorld
SeaWorld is a leading marine life theme park and accredited zoo and aquarium that provides experiences that matter while educating and inspiring guests of all ages to care about marine life. Welcoming millions of guests every year, the parks offer fun and enriching experiences from up-close animal encounters and year-round educational programs to award-winning marine-life-themed rides and attractions, special events,

and exciting entertainment. For more than 60 years SeaWorld has advanced the conservation of marine life in and outside its parks through science, education, and exceptional animal care that is Humane Certified by American Humane and accredited by the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. SeaWorld is one of the largest marine animal rescue organizations in the world, helping more than 43,000 animals to date. The SeaWorld Conservation Fund, a non-profit foundation established in 2003, has provided more than $20 million to nearly 1,400 organizations to advance critical research on every continent. A portion of park proceeds goes toward supporting these longstanding conservation commitments. SeaWorld parks are in Orlando, San Antonio, San Diego, and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE). SeaWorld is part of the United Parks & Resorts Inc. (NYSE: PRKS) portfolio of theme park brands. For more information, visit us at SeaWorld.com.
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About DHL

DHL is the leading global brand in the logistics industry. Our DHL divisions offer an unrivaled portfolio of logistics services ranging from national and international parcel delivery, e-commerce shipping and fulfillment solutions, international express, road, air and ocean transport to industrial supply chain management. With approximately 389,000 employees in more than 220 countries and territories worldwide, DHL connects people and businesses securely and reliably, enabling global sustainable trade flows. With specialized solutions for growth markets and industries including technology, life sciences and healthcare, engineering, manufacturing & energy, auto-mobility and retail, DHL is decisively positioned as “The logistics company for the world”.

DHL is part of DHL Group. The Group generated revenues of approximately 82.9 billion euros in 2025. With sustainable business practices and a commitment to society and the environment, the Group makes a positive contribution to the world. DHL Group aims to achieve net-zero emissions logistics by 2050.
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