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CONTACT

Elliot Zirulnik, Communications Manager
321-254-9453, ext. 236
ezirulnik@brevardzoo.org

Endangered mice born at Brevard Zoo

MELBOURNE, Fla., February 8, 2017 — Just a few weeks into the new year, Brevard Zoo welcomed two endangered Perdido Key beach mouse pups as part of a conservation program that aims to maintain a healthy captive population. Many beach mice born at the Zoo have been released in their natural habitat.

The pups' parents, known internally as Hillary and Donald, were first paired in the heat of election season. The exact date of birth is unknown as beach mouse pups emerge from their underground burrows at 13-16 days of age, but staff speculate they were born in early January. The sex of each pup has not yet been identified.

"These mice are really important because they store seeds inside dunes. The seeds they don't eat sometimes grow into large plants that help maintain the dune's structure," said conservation coordinator Amanda Sanford. "Stronger dunes mean more protection for nearby buildings during hurricanes."

This subspecies of oilfield mouse is only found on Perdido Key, a small island off the Florida Panhandle. They are threatened by habitat loss, feral cats and a population decline caused by 2004's Hurricane Ivan.

The breeding and reintroduction program is a collaboration between the Zoo, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Park Service, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, Palm Beach Zoo and Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo.

Photos and video: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kaxhl6lpdmeehyd/AAA-rZNk1_WsrWCNwS-pb_zta

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Brevard Zoo is home to more than 800 animals representing 180 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.