

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 10, 2018

CONTACT

Elliot Zirulnik, Communications Manager

321-254-9453, ext. 236

ezirulnik@brevardzoo.org



Hundreds of tiny sea turtles find refuge at Brevard Zoo

MELBOURNE, Fla., October 10, 2018 — Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Healing Center is caring for nearly 300 green and loggerhead sea turtle "washbacks" pushed ashore when Hurricane Leslie disrupted their habitat.

"When sea turtles hatch, they rely on energy stores from a yolk sac to make the multi-mile swim to offshore weed lines—floating masses of *Sargassum* seaweed that provide shelter and food," explained sea turtle program manager Shanon Gann. "If the seaweed is disrupted by a storm or strong winds that wash them back to shore, the little turtles do not have the energy to make the long swim again."

Healing Center staff and volunteers are caring for the washbacks for a few days until open ocean conditions improve; at that time, they will be transported offshore in a boat and placed in weed lines.

Sea Turtle Preservation Society (STPS) volunteers are transporting the turtles to the Healing Center. Individuals who find washbacks should immediately call STPS at 321-676-1701 or Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-888-404-3922 for rescue instructions.

Photos and video:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7fv1baq4uxozwoy/AADXTfztFhC24YYxyWxjCSAca>

###

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.