

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brevard Zoo Releasing Two Sea Turtle Patients at Ron Jon Beach 'N Boards Festival

MELBOURNE, Fla., March 7, 2023 —Brevard Zoo's first sea turtle patient of 2023, Spicy Hawaiian, is set to go home to the ocean along with the Zoo's 100th green sea turtle patient of 2022, Benjamin, at the [Ron Jon Beach 'N Boards Festival](#) on Friday, March 10 at 4 p.m.

The festival will be held at Shepard Park, located at 299 E. Cocoa Beach Causeway in Cocoa Beach. The public and media are invited to attend this release.

Although these turtles have differing rehabilitation stories, both were found sick or injured and brought to our Sea Turtle Healing Center for care.

Juvenile green sea turtle Spicy Hawaiian arrived at our Healing Center at the beginning of the year after a boater found them floating in the Banana River. They had symptoms of lethargy, stiffness and inappetence, and they were started on fluids and medications.

We don't know what situation Spicy was put in to cause these symptoms, but what we saw in their bloodwork is typically related to physical overexertion. They were experiencing what we might feel the day after a very strenuous workout, but more extreme. Sea turtles can experience this when trying to escape a predator or struggling to get free from a net.

It took a long time for this turtle to be less rigid and our Healing Center staff had to monitor their bloodwork closely. The breakdown of muscle enzymes into the body could cause kidney distress, so it was important we kept them hydrated to properly flush their system. Spicy received some vitamin E to help with the enzyme processing. After a few months of care, this sea turtle has been cleared for release.

Juvenile green sea turtle Benjamin was brought to the Healing Center toward the end of December 2022. Benjamin's name reflects their status as the 100th green sea turtle patient in 2022. Benjamin was caught by a recreational fisherman at Jetty Park. When the fisherman removed the hook from Benjamin's tongue, a second fishing line was seen coming out of the turtle's mouth leading into the stomach.

Our Healing Center team tried to gently remove the fishing line trailing into the stomach, but it was taut. The string was taped to Benjamin's head so it would not be swallowed before a scoping procedure the next day. When staff arrived the next morning, the line had come out of their mouth on their own. To ensure Benjamin didn't have any further fishing line complications, our care team kept Benjamin a bit longer for monitoring. We are happy to share that they have since been cleared for release.

All media personnel are asked to RSVP to Communications Manager Lauren Delgado prior to the event and check in with the Zoo's communications team upon arrival. The turtles will be released around 4 p.m. after the final surf competition heat with all surfers and guests out of the water. Parking may be limited, so please arrive early.

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About Brevard Zoo

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.