

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brevard Zoo Releasing Green Sea Turtle After 11-Month Rehabilitation

MELBOURNE, Fla., July 24, 2023 — Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Healing Center will be releasing sub-adult green sea turtle Roadhouse after an 11-month rehabilitation that included an innovative new treatment for fibropapillomatosis.

This release will be held at 10 am. on Wednesday, July 26, at James H. Nance Park in Indialantic. The public are welcome to attend; this release will take place rain or shine.

Roadhouse was incidentally captured during routine research netting by UCF's Marine Turtle Research Group south of the Sebastian Inlet State Park in the river on August 18, 2022. The severity of Roadhouse's fibropapillomatosis (FP) tumors led this turtle to be brought to our Sea Turtle Healing Center by the [Sea Turtle Preservation Society](#).

Roadhouse had a large FP tumor on their neck along with tumors in their inguinal and axial areas. Roadhouse also had a tumor on their right eyelid. FP is a [debilitating disease](#) with no cure that causes external and internal tumors to grow all over a turtle's body. The size of the vascular tumors made Roadhouse anemic, which initially kept the sea turtle from being a candidate to have the tumors surgically removed.

The tumors were instead treated with electrochemotherapy by one of the Zoo's veterinarians, Dr. Kyle Donnelly. Thanks to a generous grant from the Sea Turtle Grants Program, our Healing Center purchased an electroporator last year as an alternative treatment to traditional surgery for FP patients. The ECT machine was funded in whole by a grant awarded from the Sea Turtle Grants Program. The Sea Turtle Grants Program is funded from proceeds from the sale of the Florida Sea Turtle License Plate. Learn more at www.helpingseaturtles.org

The device is designed to deliver electrotherapy into these tumors. Electrotherapy makes the tumors more permeable, allowing them to absorb even more chemotherapy and eventually causing the tumors to become necrotic and fall off. Although electroporation is mostly used as a veterinary treatment in domestic animals such as cats and dogs, it is fairly new to sea turtles.

After two rounds of electrochemotherapy, Roadhouse's tumors had either shrunk or fallen off. The largest tumor had even shrunk to about half of its overall size. The sea turtle's anemia improved, allowing our veterinary team to surgically remove the remaining tumors. This turtle is now considered tumor free!

Our Healing Center would like to thank Rockledge Regional Medical Center for Roadhouse's multiple CTs to monitor for internal FP growth. Along with the treatment noted above, Roadhouse was also treated with rest, an e-tube for two months, an ophthalmologic eye solution for the site of their previous eye tumor, and care from the Healing Center team including our volunteers.

Since Roadhouse was found on the birthdate of Patrick Swayze, the sea turtle was named in the actor's memory.

All media personnel are asked to RSVP to Communications Manager Lauren Delgado prior to the release and check in with the Zoo's communications team upon arrival.

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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.