

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brevard Zoo Releasing Out-of-this-World Sea Turtle Vader

MELBOURNE, Fla., June 13, 2025 — Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Healing Center will be releasing an out-of-this-world green sea turtle named Vader on World Sea Turtle Day.

Vader will be released on Monday, June 16, from Pelican Beach Park, 1525 Highway A1A, in Satellite Beach. **Flippers will be in the water at 9:30 a.m., so media are advised to arrive early.**

Named after the notorious Star Wars villain, Vader the sea turtle will be receiving an out-of-this-world send-off from guests from a galaxy far, far away. To celebrate Vader and World Sea Turtle Day, multiple booths will be onsite from other vendors and turtle-related groups.

All parking fees will be waived only during the duration of the release, which will be held rain or shine, although we may delay or cancel the release if lightning is in the area.

In April, the green sea turtle Vader was found in the Indian River Lagoon struggling to swim with commercial fishing line wrapped around their throat. The line was wrapped so tightly it prevented Vader from breathing properly, making raspy breaths akin to Darth Vader. Another 7 pounds of discarded fishing line and rope were found dragging behind Vader, likely for a few weeks.

Vader was brought to the Zoo's Healing Center from [Coastal Connections](#). At the Healing Center, a CT scan revealed that the pressure from the fishing line caused a partial collapse of Vader's trachea, also known as the windpipe. Vader received anti-inflammatory medication for neck swelling as well as nebulizing treatments for pneumonia.

Despite the rough circumstances this turtle was found in, Vader remained curious and calm, said Jess Patterson, Sea Turtle Healing Center coordinator. This sea turtle was also always ready for their next meal.

The Healing Center sees many patients injured by derelict fishing gear. Even the smallest pieces of fishing equipment can seriously injure marine life. Anyone enjoying fishing should be sure not to leave any equipment behind - line, hooks, etc.

“In a lot of these cases, the turtles lose their limbs from being tangled in the line for too long or require extensive and invasive surgeries to remove the line from the GI tract,” Patterson said.

Anyone who finds a sea turtle affected by fishing line, can call the Sea Turtle Preservation Society immediately at 321-206-0646. Even cases seeming minor should be reported, as there is a chance the turtle swallowed fishing line. Please never try to help a struggling animal. Even the most well-meaning attempts can cause further harm to animals.

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

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Brevard Zoo is home to more than 800 animals representing 170 species from all across 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.