

## Much-needed sea turtle hospital planned at Brevard Zoo

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A new sea turtle hospital has just been announced for [Brevard County](#).

Right now several injured or sick sea turtles are transported to SeaWorld Orlando for treatment.

But that hour drive can sometimes mean life or death for the threatened species.

“(Brevard County has) the most number of turtles, but we also drive the furthest to get these guys to any kind of care,” said David Hochberg with the Sea Turtle Preservation Society.

It’s even worse for green sea turtles that develop tumors from a herpes-type virus. The closest care is in Palm Beach.

But now that’s all about to change. Plans are in the works to develop a sea turtle hospital at the Brevard Zoo, making it the first stop for injured and sick turtles.

It would be adjacent to the zoo’s current veterinary facility, which opened one year ago.

The non-profit, Brevard County-based Sea Turtle Preservation Society was instrumental in getting a facility set up.

There are more loggerhead and green sea turtle nesting sites in Brevard County than anywhere else in the country.

“We will continue to work with SeaWorld, as will the zoo,” said Dave Cheney with the Sea Turtle Preservation Society. “The zoo is going to be an acute treatment facility. If a turtle needs long-term rehabilitation, they may go to SeaWorld or another facility, but in the meantime, they will have had immediate treatment to increase their chances of survival.”

The money for this hospital, close to \$40,000, is coming from specialty sea turtle license plates that are sold throughout the state.

Zoo leaders said they’ll still need to raise tens of thousands of dollars to get the facility up and running in hopes of taking in its first patients in October.

The Sea Turtle Preservation Society was able to secure some tanks for the turtles from Marineland.

They plan to use the annual Turtle Krawl race in September to support the treatment facility year-round.