

Port Canaveral expands sea turtle rescue efforts

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The Sea Turtle Preservation Society now has emergency transport at Port Canaveral for injured wildlife at Port Canaveral Wayne T. Price, FLORIDA TODAY

PORT CANAVERAL Injured sea turtles, and other wildlife, at Port Canaveral will have a much quicker way to get medical care.

The Canaveral Port Authority has teamed with the Sea Turtle Preservation Society to keep a marked Chevy Silverado stationed at Port Canaveral which will be used to shuttle injured wildlife to places like the Brevard Zoo, the Florida Wildlife Hospital & Sanctuary or some other treatment facility.

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The arrangement with the Indialantic-headquartered Sea Turtle Preservation Society adds to Port Canaveral's commitment of balancing millions of dollars in commerce with the wildlife teaming in the port's waters and along its land.

It has included wildlife training with many port staff and volunteers and additional signage on port property alerting people what to do in case of injured wildlife.

"We are just really pleased and proud to have the (Sea Turtle Preservation Society) as a partner and have them out here at the port with this new truck that's almost an emergency response unit," said Bob Musser, the port's director of environmental initiatives.

The society's Silverado will be parked at the port's maritime center and about 15 people will have access to it in case of a wildlife emergency.

It could mean saving valuable time in treating an injured animal. Previously someone from the Sea Turtle Preservation Society would have to drive 45 minutes or more from Indian River to Port Canaveral to pick up an injured animal for transport.

The Sea Turtle Preservation Society is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to maintaining one of Brevard County's most treasured wildlife resources. The county's Atlantic beaches and the Indian River Lagoon span its entire 72-mile length and serves as nesting and foraging sites for three species of sea turtles: the loggerhead, the green and the leatherback.

"it has been a wonderful partnership," Dave Cheney of the Sea Turtle Preservation Society said of its efforts with Port Canaveral.

"Without the cooperation we have here I think we would lose many more turtles," he said.

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