

## THE NAPLES ZOO WELCOMES UNO

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The story of Uno, the Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens' Florida panther resident that was left for dead from shotgun blasts to its face and hindquarters, is gut wrenching, heartbreaking, and uplifting all at once. Blinded by the shotgun blasts, Uno was found in October near the Everglades, emaciated, surviving on road kill. After receiving emergency veterinarian care from the **Animal Specialty Hospital of Florida** and Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo (the first animal treated in its new veterinary hospital), Uno arrived at the Naples Zoo in December 2014, receiving care by the zoo's carnivore team in its behind-the-scenes facilities.



For eight months Uno was carefully monitored as he regained his strength, slowly adapting to his new surroundings and condition, as Director of Animal Programs Liz Harmon put it earlier this year:

"Along with direct observation, we use remote cameras to monitor Uno's activities during the day and night. While he preferred the indoor area at first, the videos show him exploring the outdoor area more and more..." "Given the trauma he experienced, he's adapting quickly and moving around very well."

Uno's unique circumstances deserves unique care, something the Naples Zoo is keen on providing. On Saturday, July 18, Uno will make his grand public debut in the Naples Zoo's new Panther Habitat. As the zoo's only Florida panther resident, Uno's story, as heartbreaking as it is, and condition will give the zoo an opportunity to show its hundreds of thousands of annual visitors the issues

that surround the Florida panther, one of the rarest animals on the planet, and how human impact is directly affecting their chance at survival.

The zoo's new exhibit, designed to mimic the natural habitat of the Everglades, complete with native plants and pool, not only doubles as a place for Uno to act as animal ambassador, giving the public a face to the plight, a must for Collier County—one of the Florida panther's most populated range, but will also include a separate behind-the-scenes holding pen for injured panthers to receive veterinary care and rehabilitation before release back into the wild. As a cooperative effort with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and



the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, this new facility will give the Southwest Florida panther population a much needed temporary care facility (before, panthers were either sent to Tampa's Lowry park Zoo or the White Oak Conservation Center near Jacksonville).

The zoo hopes that Uno's story resonates with visitors and donors in order to help support its plans to build a \$2 million veterinary hospital on the zoo's grounds. The hospital will help provide

topnotch care not just for Uno, but all the zoo's resident animal ambassadors, and animals in need from around the region.

- Uno's Florida panther exhibit will open on Saturday, July 18. Join the zoo as it welcomes this magnificent and resilient cat to the public. Admission costs \$19.95 for adults, \$12.95 for kids. For more information, visit [napleszoo.com](http://napleszoo.com).