

MIAMI BEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, FL 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

OFFICE OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS, Tel: 305.673.7575

Tonya Daniels, E-mail: tonyadaniels@miamibeachfl.gov

Melissa Berthier, E-mail: melissaberthier@miamibeachfl.gov

MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11, 2019

Take Flight on a Pelican's Journey of Perseverance

— *At a Public Bird Release this Saturday at 11 a.m.* —

WHO/WHAT:

Rarely in life are we given the chance to witness nature's extraordinary moments first hand. The City of Miami Beach in partnership with Pelican Harbor Seabird Station invites you to celebrate a remarkable journey of survival and perseverance at a public pelican release tomorrow at 11 a.m. at Maurice Gibb Park.

Rescued by volunteers Matt O'Brien and Annie Kowalski, this injured creature was discovered on the shores of Miami Beach unable to walk or fly and received refuge at Pelican Harbor Seabird Station. The pair provided the pelican with proper care and rehabilitation at the wildlife sanctuary after exhibiting classic signs of Botulism poisoning, a naturally occurring neurotoxin that when ingested causes weakness and eventually paralyzation. Nearly a month later, the incredible creature has regained his strength and is ready to continue his journey independently.

Mayor Dan Gelber and Commissioner Mark Samuelian will assist in the release — marking the first time the pelican will fly free after his 25-day rehabilitation at the station and the organization's 40th anniversary.

Recognizing the non-profit's impact in preserving the unique wildlife of Miami Beach, the City awarded the organization with a grant for conservation last year and has partnered with them to provide education to the public on humane resolution of human-wildlife conflicts.

"We are deeply grateful to the City of Miami Beach's commitment to the environment and for their \$17,000 in financial support over the past two years," shared Pelican Harbor Seabird Station Executive Director Christopher Boykin. "These funds help us to continue rescuing and treating the hundreds of injured wildlife patients from Miami Beach each year."

As one of the first stop-off points for birds soaring along the Atlantic Flyway, Miami Beach receives a myriad of winged creatures migrating south. In 2018, the wildlife sanctuary treated over 190 patients from Miami Beach.

WHEN: Saturday, January 12 at 11 a.m.

WHERE: Maurice Gibb Memorial Park
1700 Purdy Avenue

###

To request this material in alternate format, sign language interpreter (five-day notice required), information on access for persons with disabilities, and/or any accommodation to review any document or participate in any city-sponsored proceedings, call 305.604.2489 and select 1 for English or 2 for Spanish, then option 6; TTY users may call via 711 (Florida Relay Service).