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Huge Turtle's Healing Journey Included a Visit to Wellington's Palm Beach Equine Clinic



Veterinarians from Palm Beach Equine Clinic and Loggerhead Marine Center teamed up to help Pennywise the sea turtle. Photo courtesy of Dr. Karen Beste

Being brought to the Loggerhead Marinelife Center in Juno Beach, FL, earlier this month was pivotal for Pennywise, a huge, 302-pound adult loggerhead turtle with significant (and partially healed) blunt force trauma to her shell — likely from a boat strike about a month prior.

“She was found up in the St. Lucie area by Inwater Research Group. They brought her to us,” said veterinarian Dr. Heather Barron, chief science officer at the facility.



The teams prepare Pennywise to enter the Canon Aquilion CT Scanner at PBEC. Photo courtesy of Dr. Karen Beste

However, when they tried to see what was going on inside of her, the equipment at Loggerhead wasn't big enough. So, they took her to Jupiter Medical Center, and she was still too big. That is when she made a trip to Wellington, to use the large-animal equipment available at the Palm Beach Equine Clinic.

“We haven't done any exotic animals or marine life before this, but we have been open, offering our services to Lion Country Safari if they had any animals in need,” said Dr. Karen Beste of Palm Beach Equine Clinic. “We're really lucky to have this CT [scanner]. It's extremely versatile. It's a very powerful machine, and it's obviously big enough to get some animals that wouldn't normally have imaging options. We're really happy to be able to help this turtle. Anything we can do to help any animal in need, if that's some service that we can provide, then that's going to be something we really look forward to doing.”



Along with spinal cord damage and bone infection, the CT scan on Pennywise showed that she was carrying more than 100 eggs. Photo courtesy of Dr. Karen Beste

The CT scan showed there was some damage involving Pennywise's spinal column, and that there was an infection that was eating away at the bone.

“But the good news is that her spinal cord seems to be functioning normally,” Barron said.

Nesting has been going on for the last month or so for loggerheads, she added, and if they can get Pennywise recovered quickly, she can go out and lay her 100-plus eggs, as shown in the CT scan.

[Read More at The Town-Crier](#)

Hurricane Season Returns

Hurricane season has begun, but for horse owners it's always the season to be prepared for severe weather. Palm Beach Equine Clinic is available for all emergencies 24/7. In case of an emergency, please call the main line at 561-793-1599. PBEC also suggests some important steps for owners to take for their horse's well being before a storm hits.

Severe Weather Equine Preparedness Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure farm is clear of debris that may take flight	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure you can have enough vehicles and trailers for evacuation
<input type="checkbox"/> Know your evacuation and stay-put plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Have your horse microchipped
<input type="checkbox"/> Have halter tags with contact info ready	<input type="checkbox"/> Store all horse information in a watertight envelope
<input type="checkbox"/> Have medications filled	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice loading on a trailer
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a first aid kit	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure barn door locks are operational and easily opened

With this checklist, you can be prepared before inclement weather arrives. Be safe!

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- Suggestions for safety include:
- Prepare evacuation and stay-put plans
 - Call local animal control to flag your property so it's on the radar of emergency officials for assistance
 - Clean up around the barn for debris that may take flight
 - Prepare halter tags stating the horse's name and contact number in case they get loose for the duration of the storm
 - Ensure locks on barn doors are operational and easily opened in an emergency
 - Ensure you have enough vehicles and trailers to move horses
 - Microchip your horses and include information about your horse along with photos in your important papers -- including Coggins tests, medical history, and emergency phone numbers -- in a watertight envelope and keep the envelope in a safe place that is easy to access
 - Practice loading your horse on a trailer so they are comfortable with the procedure
 - Prepare a basic first aid kit with medications filled

Summer Equine Healthcare Reminder: Hydration and Anhidrosis

As the summer heats up around the country and especially in Florida, Palm Beach Equine Clinic reminds all equine owners to keep their horses well hydrated. The average horse drinks between 5 to 10 gallons of water per day. It is important to provide clean, fresh water at all times and be aware of increased water requirements during extremely hot days.



Sodium in the horse's diet is essential to maintaining proper hydration. Providing a salt block or supplementing with electrolytes can help ensure that the horse is meeting its sodium requirements and encourage drinking.

Especially in extreme summer heat, it is important to observe the amount of sweat the horse is producing. Anhidrosis, or the inability to sweat normally, can be a common challenge for our equine partners in the summer months, particularly in hot, humid climates. A horse with anhidrosis is often called a “non-sweater.”

In addition to lack of sweat, signs of Anhidrosis can include increased respiratory rate, elevated temperature, areas of hair loss, or dry, flaky skin. If any of these signs are noticed, contact a veterinarian immediately.

The treatment of Anhidrosis includes a few simple changes. All horses should have access to and cool water throughout the day. Any exercise should be scheduled when the temperatures are lower, usually earlier or later in the day. Turnout should be limited to the night or cooler portions of the day. Fans can be provided indoors during extreme heat and the supplementation of electrolytes can be very helpful. Another common treatment for Anhidrosis is adding dark beer to their feed, such as Guinness. Some cases require more significant treatment, and commercial products are available to help as well.

Contact a veterinarian at Palm Beach Equine Clinic by calling 561-793-1599 to learn more about effective treatments for dehydration and Anhidrosis.

Palm Beach Equine Clinic: Make Us a Part of Your Team

