



MEDIA CONTACT

April Tellez
Public Relations and Social Media Manager
619.255.0189 | atellez@sdnhm.org

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THE NAT ANNOUNCES NEW EXHIBITIONS, PROGRAMS THIS WINTER AND SPRING

The San Diego Natural History Museum (theNAT) debuts a brand-new National Geographic photography show and a larger-than-life dinosaur exhibition, a new film series, and an immersive 3D film

NEW! REEL SCIENCE FILM SERIES (Begins January 7)

Cult sci-fi films meet real science in this new film series titled [Reel Science](#). This January, join [Digital Gym Cinema](#), Film Geeks SD, the San Diego Natural History Museum, and a lineup of San Diego scientists for a month-long film series that explores scientific themes in cult cinema and provides audiences with the science behind the fiction.

Here's how it works: We're pairing cult sci-fi favorites with local scientists for an evening of mind-expanding fun. Before each film there will be games, trivia, door prizes, and the ability to interact with our guest scientist who will contextualize the scientific themes explored in the movie by providing corrective commentary, explaining what the filmmakers got right and, in some cases, so very wrong, in portraying concepts from the bleeding edge of scientific inquiry.

This program will take place on Saturdays in January, with theNAT and Digital Gym hosting the program on alternating weekends. [Learn more](#).

Program dates and details:

- January 7, 7 PM: *Altered States* with neuroscientist Dr. Bradley Voytek (Rated R), hosted at Digital Gym
- January 14, 7 PM: *Weird Science* with geneticist Dr. Adam Haberman (Rated PG-13), hosted at theNAT
- January 21, 4 PM: *Donnie Darko* with physicist Dr. Daniel Sheehan (Rated R), hosted at Digital Gym
- January 28, 7 PM: *Flash Gordon* with Curator of Entomology Dr. Michael Wall (Rated PG), hosted at theNAT

OPENING THIS MONTH! Photography Exhibition—*Photo Ark* (December 17, 2016 through April 30, 2017)

National Geographic's [Photo Ark](#) is a multiyear project with a simple goal—to create portraits of the world's species before they disappear and to inspire people everywhere to care. Featuring the work of photographer, speaker, author, teacher and National Geographic Society Fellow Joel Sartore, the exhibition will display approximately 30 inspiring photographs that have resulted from this noble, decade-long project. TheNAT is the first venue in the world outside of the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C., to present *Photo Ark*, which is organized and traveled by the National Geographic Society. [Learn more](#).

COMING SOON! Special Exhibition—*Ultimate Dinosaurs* (February 25 through September 4, 2017)

Cutting-edge 21st century technology puts a new twist on prehistoric creatures beginning February 25 when [Ultimate Dinosaurs](#) opens at theNAT. Based on groundbreaking research from scientists around the world, the exhibition reveals a new breed of dinosaurs that evolved in isolation in South America, Africa, and Madagascar—dinosaurs unfamiliar to popular imagination and virtually unknown to most North Americans. Feel the exciting and intimidating presence of these exotic creatures as you wander among 16 life-size casts and numerous prehistoric specimens. From the tiny Eoraptor to the massive Giganotosaurus (*T. rex*'s bigger, badder cousin), *Ultimate Dinosaurs* is a fascinating study of species you haven't met before. *Ultimate Dinosaurs* was created and produced by the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, and is being toured by the Science Museum of Minnesota. [Learn more.](#)

COMING SOON! 3D Film Experience—*Sea Monsters* (January 2 through September 4, 2017)

National Geographic's film *Sea Monsters 3D* brings to life the extraordinary marine reptiles of the dinosaur age. From the giraffe-necked *Styxosaurus* and 20-foot "bulldog" fish *Xiphactinus* to the *T. rex* of the ocean—the 40-foot super-predator *Tylosaurus*—these wondrous beasts defy imagination. *Sea Monsters 3D* weaves together spectacular photorealistic animation with standout finds from paleontological digs around the world—treasures that shed light on the film's incredible cast of characters. Narrated by Tony Award-winning actor Liev Schreiber, this 3D film experience takes viewers on a remarkable journey into the relatively unexplored world of the monstrous reptiles that lurked beneath the water.

NAT TALKS

The 2016-2017 season of NATtalks continues. Talks take place on the third Tuesday of every month (except December). Visitors are invited to join us once a month for thoughtful, engaging talks on the latest in scientific research. This program is made possible with generous support from media partner [KPBS](#).

A Walk in the Park with David Vassar

Tuesday, January 17

In celebration of the National Parks Service Centennial, join Academy Award nominee and multiple Emmy Award winning director and writer David Vassar for *A Walk in the Park*, a retrospective of his filmmaking career spanning four decades. This talk will feature clips and stories from his award-winning films featuring Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Yellowstone, and Death Valley National Parks. Tickets available soon.

Sex and Nature featuring Scientists from theNAT's Biodiversity Research Center of the Californias Tuesday, February 21

In honor of Valentine's Day, join curators from the San Diego Natural History Museum for an amorous and lighthearted discussion about "the birds and the bees." Most relationships in the natural world don't start with a hallmark card, a box of chocolates, or a bouquet of roses. The Museum's own curators within the Biodiversity Research Center of the Californias (our research hub) will talk about the complex ways mating and reproduction happen in the wild. Tickets available soon.

Birding in the Age of Dinosaurs with Luis Chiappe

Tuesday, March 21

This talk tells a story of amazing paleontological breakthroughs worldwide. Dr. Luis Chiappe, vice president of research and collections at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and director of the Dinosaur Institute, explains how numerous fossil discoveries of the last few decades have transformed our understanding of the diversity and lifestyles of the birds that lived with the large dinosaurs of the Mesozoic Era. This talk features a remarkable menagerie of fossils—preserved in exquisite detail—which holds the clues for understanding the evolution of the unique adaptations of living birds. Dr. Chiappe is a paleontologist who is best known for his discovery of a massive sauropod nesting site in the badlands of Patagonia in 1997. Tickets available soon.

Discovering the Amphibians and Reptiles of Baja California**Tuesday, April 18**

What makes Baja so special? The mystique of the Baja California peninsula is borne from its complexity and diversity. Join Curator of Herpetology Brad Hollingsworth for an exploration of the region's amphibians and reptiles and gain an appreciation for some of the bizarre traits that emerge from animals evolved in isolation, ready to meet the challenges of the area's many rugged habitats. Tickets available soon.

Tickets for all [NATtalks](#) are \$9 for members and \$12 for non-members. Museum doors will open at 6:15 PM, with each of the lectures beginning at 7 PM in the giant-screen theater.

OTHER EXHIBITIONS**FINAL WEEKS! Special Exhibition—*Animals: Machines in Motion* (Through January 2, 2017)**

Created and developed by The Field Museum in collaboration with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, [Animals: Machines in Motion](#) portrays animals and plants as machines built for survival, complete with pumps, pipes, insulation, motors, springs, and intelligence gathering devices. Using real specimens, life-like models, amazing video footage, and interactive displays, the exhibition investigates how cheetahs run so fast and fleas jump so far; how the bite force of an extinct fish made it a top predator; how a toucan stays cool in the jungle; how a Venus fly trap detects its next meal; and how many other organisms function as machines in order to survive, move, and discover. [Learn more.](#)

Permanent Exhibitions Always on View:***Extraordinary Ideas from Ordinary People: A History of Citizen Science***

Located in the new Eleanor and Jerome Navarra Special Collections Gallery, *Extraordinary Ideas* features approximately 70 rare books, works of art, and photographs from the Research Library's 56,000-volume collection that demonstrate how everyone can participate in science. Exhibits include plant and animal specimens, touchscreen interactives, and touchable models. *Extraordinary Ideas* is included with general admission and free for members. [Learn more.](#)

Coast to Cactus in Southern California

San Diego is known for its incredibly diverse terrain, ranging from the beaches and chaparral near the coast, to the mountains and the desert farther afield. This terrain is what makes the region one of only 35 biodiversity hotspots in the world, meaning areas that have the highest concentration of different species of any geographic area of similar size. *Coast to Cactus in Southern California* illustrates that richness by taking visitors on a journey through these habitats and the plants and animals that live in them. [Learn more.](#)

Fossil Mysteries

From dinosaurs to mammoths, discover the rich fossil history of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California. Visitors can play the role of paleontologist: ponder a mystery, examine the strong fossil evidence from the Museum's collection, and use scientific tools to discover answers. Traveling through a 75-million-year timeline, from the age of dinosaurs to the Ice Ages, experience an unfolding of the prehistory of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California, Mexico. [Learn more.](#)

Skulls

This exhibition contains nearly 200 skulls from the Museum's research collection of animals from all over the world, from the tiny to the spectacular. Mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians are all on display, showcasing an eye-popping array of horns, beaks, bills, teeth, and more. Have a question about a skull? Use the *Skulls* chalkboard to ask, or get creative and draw a skull. [Learn more.](#)

Water: A California Story

Learn about current, local issues on land and in the ocean. Examine the infrastructure of the regional water system, and discover how we import the majority of the water we use in this region and the costs associated with this practice. *Water: A California Story* also looks at effects of a changing climate on the region's water supply and reveals how southern Californians can help protect water for future generations. [Learn more.](#)

Click [here](#) for more information on current exhibitions.

OTHER FILMS

Wild Africa 3D (Through April 30, 2017)

Wild Africa takes audiences on a spectacular journey across, over, and through the magical realms of the wildest continent on earth. Water serves as a guide, shaping wild Africa and conjuring up life wherever it journeys...above the plains on seasonal winds, cascading along raging rivers or sheltering coral cities. Audiences will be plunged into fantastic places and meet amazing creatures, discovering the fascinating secrets of this incredible world. It's an adventure where you will truly believe the real world is more extraordinary and awe-inspiring than any fiction. From BBC Earth, Reliance Entertainment and IM Global, this is one of the most ambitious 3D nature films ever to premiere on the giant screen, fusing Hollywood techniques with the best in nature filmmaking and storytelling.

FINAL WEEKS! A Reef Reborn 3D (Through January 2, 2017)

Immerse yourself into a world of swirling sardines, majestic sea turtles, and eye-popping life. This inspiring story of transformation takes place against the stunning backdrop of the Cabo Pulmo reef in Baja California. Meet the people and animals that call this extraordinary location home. Take a journey through time to see how science, human courage, and the irrepressibility of nature resurrected a community and its greatest natural treasure. Support for this film was provided by the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, The Walton Family Foundation, and the International Community Foundation Candeo Fund at the recommendation of Christy Walton.

Ongoing—Ocean Oasis

Produced by the San Diego Natural History Museum, Summerhays Films, and PRONATURA A.C., *Ocean Oasis* takes viewers on a fascinating journey into two remarkably different but inextricably linked worlds—Mexico's beautiful Sea of Cortés and the Baja California desert. Witness the beauty of life in Baja California's rich waters and seemingly barren land. *Ocean Oasis* is the winner of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival and the International Wildscreen Film Festival.

Films in the giant-screen theater are free with [paid general admission](#) (except on Residents' Free Tuesdays), Passports to Balboa Park, Go San Diego Cards, and for Museum members. To view theNAT's film schedule or watch the trailers, click [here](#).

MACY'S MUSEUM MONTH

The San Diego Natural History Museum (theNAT) is proud to participate in Museum Month during the month of February. Presented by Macy's and created by the San Diego Museum Council, this month-long promotion offers half-price admission for up to four people when a Museum Month pass is presented at the Admissions Desk. Museum Month passes are available at Macy's stores in the San Diego, Imperial Valley, or Temecula area. More information will be listed on the San Diego Museum Council website soon.

Museum Month passholders are invited to enjoy half-price general admission to theNAT, which includes access to the Museum's permanent exhibitions [Extraordinary Ideas from Ordinary People: A History of Citizen Science](#), [Coast to Cactus in Southern California](#), [Fossil Mysteries](#), [Skulls](#), and [Water: A California Story](#). The Museum Month pass will also allow access to all 2D and 3D films in the [giant-screen theater](#) and the photography gallery on Level 4.

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Family Days

The San Diego Natural History Museum hosts monthly [Family Days](#) celebrating new exhibitions at the Museum and the natural world. Hosted by the Museum's Education Department, participants will conduct experiments, make a craft to take home, and provide a variety of extra activities for a fun and educational family experience. Family Days run from 11 AM to 3 PM, are free with paid admission, and always free for Museum members. Ms. Frizzle offers Family Day participants a wild and wacky performance in the Museum's giant-screen theater at noon.

Upcoming Family Days:

- Sunday, December 11: Nature Detective
- Monday, January 16: Flights of Fancy
- Monday, February 20: Radical Reptiles
- Sunday, March 26: Ultimate Dinosaurs
- Saturday, April 22: Trash to Treasure

ASD Mornings

[ASD Mornings](#) take place the second Sunday of every month. This program is designed by the San Diego Natural History Museum for the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) community. Once-a-month the Museum opens one hour early (at 9 AM) for adults and children on the autism spectrum and their families, friends, and caregivers. This innovative program encourages individuals to explore, play, and discover the treasures the Museum has to offer in an environment that is comfortable for them. General admission rates apply.

Upcoming dates:

- Sunday, December 11
- Sunday, January 8
- Sunday, February 12
- Sunday, March 12

- Sunday, April 9

Nature & Me Storytime

Calling all budding naturalists! Come enjoy an imaginative journey into nature through dynamic readings and visits to exhibitions. [Nature & Me Storytime](#), now being offered in our brand-new, permanent exhibition [Extraordinary Ideas](#), is held every second Thursday at 10:15 AM. Open to all ages with a parent or guardian (recommended for ages 1–5). Free with paid admission and always free for Museum members.

Upcoming dates and themes:

- December 8—Cats
- January 12—Fossils
- February 9—Trees
- March 9—Sharks
- April 13—Spiders

Click [here](#) or call 877.946.7797 (M–F, 10 AM–5 PM) for more information on theNAT’s family programs.

CANYONEER HIKING SEASON AND NEW TRAIL GUIDE

Canyoneer Nature Walks (Through June 25, 2017)

The 2016–2017 Canyoneers season kicks off Saturday, September 17. Take a walk on the wild side with our Museum-trained naturalists. On these free, guided nature walks, hikers are encouraged to stop, look, listen, smell, and examine—revealing that all ecosystems are interconnected. Canyoneers provide a unique opportunity to explore the wild places of San Diego, Riverside, and Imperial counties, highlighting the rich biodiversity of our region. To view a list of available hikes on our interactive map or to learn more about the history of this longtime public program, visit [our website](#). The 2016–2017 Canyoneer season is made possible with support from Subaru of America.

NEW! *Coast to Cactus: The Canyoneer Trail Guide to San Diego Outdoors*

A new hiking guide titled *Coast to Cactus: The Canyoneer Trail Guide to San Diego Outdoors* is now available at the Museum store and more than 60 retailers in San Diego. Written by theNAT’s very own [Canyoneers](#) and published by [Sunbelt Publications](#), this book is much more than a typical hiking guide—it encourages readers to stop, look, listen, touch, smell, and examine to understand that everything is connected in nature, much like being on a nature walk with a Canyoneer. The book is also intended to be an extension of the Museum’s permanent exhibition, [Coast to Cactus in Southern California](#), in that they both highlight the rich biodiversity that exists in local habitats. [Learn more](#).

WHALE WATCHING

Gray Whale Watching Cruises (December 10, 2016 through April 23, 2017)

As part of our [mission](#) “to inspire in all a respect for nature and the environment,” the San Diego Natural History Museum partners with [Hornblower Cruises and Events](#) to provide an unparalleled opportunity to experience gray whale watching off the San Diego coast. Each gray whale watching experience is narrated by experienced Hornblower captains and the Museum Whalers, trained naturalists. These daily 3.5 hour cruises are great for guests of all ages. Come meet some of nature’s largest animals and enjoy a day on the water with family and friends. [Learn more](#).

OTHER HAPPENINGS

NEW! SPECTRUM Social Stories

From January to December 2017, the Social Stories—SPECTRUM Project will provide a structured opportunity for high-functioning verbal young adults (ages 18-25) with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to meet up with their peers and practice social skills, participate in organized trips to seven museums in Balboa Park, and work together to create “social stories” for the museums visited. This opportunity is made possible in part through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The Museum will also be providing updates on the project with regular [blog posts](#).

About the San Diego Natural History Museum

The San Diego Natural History Museum (theNAT) is the second oldest scientific institution in California and the third oldest west of the Mississippi. Founded in 1874 by a small group of citizen scientists, the Museum’s mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education, and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California, Mexico; and to inspire in all people respect for the environment. The Museum is located at 1788 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101 in Balboa Park. For more information, call 877.946.7797 or visit sdnat.org. Follow theNAT on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and join the discussion on [Facebook](#).

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