



THE PEGGY NOTEBAERT
NATURE MUSEUM
The Museum of the Chicago Academy of Sciences

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CRITTERCAM OFFERS A SNEAK PEEK INTO THE EXCITING LIVES OF ANIMALS ***Interactive Exhibition at the Nature Museum Begins September 26***

CHICAGO (September 24, 2009) –Watch a 17-foot great white shark capture its prey, follow penguins glide beneath the ice, and take an ocean voyage with seals through *National Geographic Crittercam: The World Through Animal Eyes*. *Crittercam* runs September 26 through April 11, 2010 at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.

Crittercam is a scientific video- and data-gathering tool safely worn by wild animals, offering researchers insights into animal behavior and clues to protecting animals and the world we share. *Crittercam* features compelling footage of land and sea animals as they hunt and feed, attract mates and care for their young – all without human interference. The exhibition focuses on Crittercam’s deployment on seals and sea lions, sharks, sea turtles, whales, penguins, bears and lions.

“*Crittercam* provides mesmerizing first-hand footage, inviting visitors to the center of the action,” said Alvaro Ramos, director of exhibits. “Through interactive displays and multiple viewing stations, Museum-goers can explore the many stories and adventures of animals.”

The sea turtles section offers insights into how turtles search for mates, different foraging behaviors and how the animals avoid becoming a meal themselves. From atop a life-size model of a leatherback, children and adults can watch point-of-view footage from a female leatherback, while other displays show life as seen by loggerhead and hawksbill turtles.

In the whales section, visitors enter into a chamber of bubbles to see the cooperative behavior of humpbacks known as bubble net or lunge feeding. Other highlights include an up-close look at the toothed whales of Hawaii and footage of the mysterious “unicorn of the sea,” the narwhal.

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In the seals and sea lions section, a series of viewing and listening stations show how these animals communicate, hunt, feed, care for their young and attract mates. Visitors then move to the sharks section for a close-up view of an 18-foot-long great white shark model and displays that illustrate the hunting and migratory behaviors of several shark species. A shark fin model features the latest way of attaching the Crittercam — via a fin clamp. As visitors feel the rough sandpaper that keeps the clamp in place, they can watch a video depicting daring deployments, from early tether systems to a researcher deploying the fin clamp by hand.

In the penguin pod, visitors enter the world of Penguin Ranch, the main research site of the Crittercam team in Antarctica, to investigate a penguin's life beneath the ice and learn about research with penguins trained to wear Crittercam. Visitors can squeeze into an observation tube to watch a video of penguins soaring underwater, while youngsters can crawl through a tunnel and pop up in a bubble to come face-to-face with a penguin wearing a working Crittercam. On exiting the tunnel, children can view footage of themselves from the penguin's perspective.

In the land animals section of the exhibition featuring lions and bears, visitors will learn about the trial-and-error process of developing the land-based technology, from deployments on domestic dogs and cats to partnering with animal rehabilitation centers. The final section of the exhibition focuses on the Crittercam technology, with information on how it works and the original inspiration that led to its development. Visitors can learn about how Crittercam has aided in scientific research by allowing scientists to focus on particular challenges facing certain animals. With the help of Crittercam, for example, scientists have gained a deeper understanding of the impact of climate change on penguins in Antarctica.

“Crittercam provides clues about how to protect our planet's creatures and the environment we share,” said Ramos. “We hope visitors leave this exhibition with a deeper understanding of the challenges these wild animals face, creating awareness for the habitat they call home.”

National Geographic Crittercam: The World Through Animal Eyes is organized, produced and traveled by the National Geographic Museum, Washington, DC. *Crittercam* is sponsored locally by Motorola Foundation, Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., Sidley Austin LLP and Solomon Cordwell Buenz. The exhibition will be on display at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum September 26 through April 11, 2010. Admission to the Museum, including special exhibitions, is \$9/adult, \$6/child 3-12, \$7/seniors and students. Thursdays are suggested donation days. Located at 2430 North Cannon Drive in Chicago's Lincoln Park, the Museum is open weekends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.naturemuseum.org or call 773-755-5100.

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About the National Geographic Society

The National Geographic Society is one of the world's largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations. Founded in 1888 to "increase and diffuse geographic knowledge," the Society works to inspire people to care about the planet. The National Geographic Museum produces exhibits based on National Geographic projects, which are displayed at the Society's headquarters in Washington, D.C. and travel to museums around the world.

About the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

The Chicago Academy of Sciences and its Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum inspire people to learn about and care for nature and the environment. The Academy, founded in 1857, improves the quality of life in Chicago and the region by delivering superior environmental and science education programs to students and teachers, by offering Museum exhibitions and conducting public programs, that foster green living, and by restoring local ecosystems and advancing scientific knowledge through collections and research.

During the past 10 years, the Chicago Academy of Sciences has welcomed more than 1.8 million visitors to its Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum. The Museum provides hands-on exhibitions and programs to 70,000 students annually and trains and provides resources for more than 1,700 Chicago teachers in over 430 schools. The Museum engages visitors, especially urban dwellers, in new ways to connect with and preserve the natural world through a unique indoor/outdoor experience. It is one of the city's best examples of eco-friendly building technology with lush outdoor nature trails and habitat, green roof, rain barrels and solar panels.

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