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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Museum of Natural History to Unveil Newly Transformed Mammal and Bird Halls and New Santa Barbara Gallery June 2**

**Santa Barbara, California (May 22, 2018)** — Following ten months of transformation supported by the Museum's \$20 million Centennial Campaign, the first of two "Grand Reopenings" will occur on Saturday, June 2, when the beloved Mammal Hall, Bird Hall, and Bird Habitat Hall will reopen to the public. Historic specimens are now looking livelier than ever after being refreshed by specialists, who also added new taxidermy, new foliage, and fun touchable interactive exhibits. The Museum has also added new dioramas that squarely engage visitors in a conversation about the closeness of nature and our place in it. Diorama experts, taxidermists, fabricators, painters, and Hollywood prop-makers all lent their artistry to the cause, and as a result, the new incarnations of these exhibits still honor their heritage while better serving future visitors.



Grizzly Bear in Mammal Hall – now extinct in California

Cartwright Hall will reopen as the Santa Barbara Gallery, which focuses on how geography and climate come together to create the unique ecosystems of the Santa Barbara region. These conditions give rise to extraordinary biodiversity, and this space highlights the fascinating species interactions that result. As with the dioramas in the revitalized Mammal Hall, the Santa Barbara Gallery explores the dynamics of natural systems in our region and how our actions impact those systems. The Gallery leaves visitors with a roadmap to begin their own exploration beyond the Museum's walls. In effect, this new Gallery serves as a visitor's field guide to the Santa Barbara region.

Exhibits in all the updated halls are now better equipped to address the important environmental issues on the minds of Museum visitors. Technology has also been strategically implemented in ways that allow for greater flexibility in disseminating new media to keep pace with science. The Museum has continued to expand its corps of volunteer docents, and this summer, these docents will be available at various times in the galleries to be naturalist guides for visitors.

Outside, the Museum has improved access by building a pedestrian-safe, ADA and stroller-compliant arrival corridor. The corridor guides visitors from the parking lot to the historic front entry via the Blue Whale courtyard and a walkway surrounded by geological and paleontological wonders. On the other side of the entrance, a new pedestrian path parallel to the historic Hazard Estate wall along Puesta del Sol provides safe access between the Museum and Mission Canyon Road, in homage to the original 1922 design.

Museum President & CEO Luke Swetland shares, "Everything we have done in the Centennial Project is meant to revitalize the Museum, to honor the past and make it new. I think when folks see their 'new' Museum, they will be quite pleased that we preserved the very best of our proud legacy but have led it into a brighter future."

The Museum's second "Grand Reopening" will occur in August when the redesigned Backyard and Club House reopen. The signature piece of the Centennial Project will be the Museum's new Pavilion that will be home to butterflies every summer, and available for many other uses during the rest of the year. If the myriad pieces and



permits align, the Museum intends to have its very popular *Butterflies Alive!* experience later this summer, even if for only a few weeks.

Open daily from 10:00 AM-5:00 PM, the Museum welcomes visitors to explore these newly transformed spaces along with its summer exhibition of *50 Greatest Photographs of National Geographic*, open now through September 3, 2018. This exhibition is organized and traveled by National Geographic Society.

### **About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History**

*Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature.* Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being *naturally different*. For more information, visit [www.sbnature.org](http://www.sbnature.org).

*High-resolution images available upon request.*

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