



AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Media Inquiries: Aubrey Gaby Miller, Department of Communications
212-496-3409; amiller@amnh.org
www.amnh.org

December 2016

LIVE BUTTERFLIES RETURN TO ENCHANT VISITORS AT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

THE BUTTERFLY CONSERVATORY: TROPICAL BUTTERFLIES ALIVE IN WINTER
DECEMBER 10, 2016–MAY 29, 2017

FEATURING BUTTERFLIES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, NOW IN ITS NINETEENTH YEAR

The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter, an annual favorite visited by millions of children and adults, returns to the American Museum of Natural History on Saturday, December 10. Celebrating its 19th year at the Museum, this popular attraction transforms the coolest day into a summer escape, inviting visitors to mingle with up to 500 fluttering, iridescent butterflies among blooming tropical flowers and lush green vegetation in 80-degree temperatures. *The Butterfly Conservatory* will be on view through May 29, 2017.

“The Butterfly Conservatory is a joyful, enchanting, and educational exhibition for both children and adults, and truly transports visitors out of their everyday lives into a magical setting teeming with color and flourishing life,” said Ellen V. Futter, president of the American Museum of Natural History. “Butterflies are also important harbingers of environmental change, and so this exhibition offers not just a unique and fascinating experience, but also an opportunity to learn about the roles butterflies play in ecosystems and why it is so critical that we protect them.”

The Butterfly Conservatory

Inside a 1,200-square-foot vivarium, a freestanding transparent structure aflutter with activity, visitors interact with butterflies as they stroll along a winding pathway surrounded by tropical plants and vibrant blossoms including *Pentas* and *Ixora*. Powerful halide lamps shine down from the ceiling, simulating the sunlight that streams through a rain forest canopy.

(more)

In the vivarium, monarchs, zebra longwings, paper kites, and other butterfly species flutter among people and plants.

The conservatory's butterflies come from farms in Florida, Costa Rica, Kenya, Thailand, Malaysia, Ecuador, and Australia. Other featured species include iridescent blue morpho butterflies, striking scarlet swallowtails, large owl butterflies, and beautiful green birdwings. Because the average life span of many butterflies is only two to three weeks, butterfly pupae will be shipped to the Museum for the duration of the exhibit, and the butterflies will be released into the vivarium after emerging. Other pupae hang in a case in the vivarium, giving visitors a first-hand look as adult butterflies emerge from chrysalises and fly away just hours after adjusting to their new surroundings. Video screens outside the vivarium will also display a short film about this process.

Colorful educational displays outside the vivarium explain the life cycle of butterflies, the worldwide efforts to protect their diverse habitats, and the variety of butterfly species in New York State. Visitors can learn about interesting adaptations, from the colored scales that form the intricate designs on butterfly wings to the intriguing relationships between butterflies and other animal species – monarchs, for example, are toxic to birds. Other panels explain how scientists rely on wild butterflies to gauge the health of an ecosystem and how the Museum's butterfly specimens offer a wealth of information to butterfly and moth researchers around the world.

Organization

The Butterfly Conservatory is curated by David Grimaldi, curator in the Division of Invertebrate Zoology. The design director is David Harvey, senior vice president for exhibition.

The Butterfly Conservatory is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (www.amnh.org).

Generous support for *The Butterfly Conservatory* has been provided by the Eileen P. Bernard Exhibition Fund.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH.ORG)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses 45 permanent exhibition halls, including the Rose Center for Earth and Space and the Hayden Planetarium, as well as galleries for temporary exhibitions. It is home to the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial, New York State's official memorial to its 33rd governor and the nation's 26th president, and a tribute to Roosevelt's enduring legacy of conservation. The Museum's five active research divisions and three cross-disciplinary centers support approximately 200 scientists, whose work draws on a world-class permanent collection of more than 33 million specimens and artifacts, as well as specialized collections for frozen tissue and genomic and astrophysical data, and one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, it is the only American museum authorized to grant the Ph.D. degree and the Master of Arts in Teaching degree. Annual attendance has grown to approximately 5 million, and the Museum's exhibitions and Space Shows can be seen in venues on five continents. The Museum's website and collection of apps for mobile devices extend its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions more beyond its walls. Visit amnh.org for more information.

Hours

The Museum is open daily, 10 am–5:45 pm. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Admission

Museum admission is free to all New York City school and camp groups.

Suggested general admission, which supports the Museum's scientific and educational endeavors and offers access to the Museum's 45 halls including the Rose Center for Earth and Space, is \$22 (adults) suggested, \$17 (students/seniors) suggested, \$12.50 (children) suggested. All prices are subject to change.

The Museum offers discounted combination ticket prices that include suggested general admission plus special exhibitions, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, and Space Shows.

- Museum Plus One includes one special exhibition, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, or Space Show: \$27 (adults), \$22 (students/seniors), \$16 (children)

(more)

- Museum Supersaver includes all special exhibitions, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, and Space Show: \$35 (adults), \$28 (students/seniors), \$22 (children)

Visitors who wish to pay less than the suggested Museum admission and also purchase a ticket to attend a special exhibition, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, or Space Show may do so on-site at the Museum. To the amount they wish to pay for general admission, they add \$25 (adults), \$20.50 (students/seniors), or \$13.50 (children) for a Space Show, special exhibition, or giant-screen or 3D film.

Public Information

For additional information, the public may call 212-769-5100 or visit the Museum's website at amnh.org.

Follow

Become a fan of the Museum on Facebook at facebook.com/naturalhistory, follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/AMNH, on Instagram at [@AMNH](https://www.instagram.com/AMNH), and on Tumblr at [amnhnyc](https://amnhnyc.tumblr.com).

#

No. 102