

 AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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**SPIDERS ALIVE!**  
RETURNS TO THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

LIVE SPIDERS TO BE ON VIEW INCLUDE GOLIATH BIRD EATER, BLACK WIDOW, AND METALLICA  
TARANTULA, AMONG OTHERS

EXHIBITION OPENS JULY 4, 2015



**Media preview, Tuesday, June 30, at 10:30 am.**

**To RSVP, please email [communications@amnh.org](mailto:communications@amnh.org) or call 212-769-5800.**

Back by popular demand at the American Museum of Natural History, *Spiders Alive!* is a comprehensive look at the fascinating and complex world of arachnids. Among the exhibition's live animals are 16 species of spiders, two species of scorpion, a chemical-spewing

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vinegaroon, and several long-legged tailless whip spiders – which aren't spiders at all.

The Museum, which has the world's largest research collection of spiders, has been at the forefront of studying spider diversity for over 75 years. In *Spiders Alive!*, visitors will explore spider anatomy, diversity, venom, silk, and encounter little known behaviors such as mimicry and noisemaking. In addition to live spiders, the exhibition features videos, fossils, and larger-than-life models, including a huge, climbable trapdoor spider. Museum staff will handle live arachnids for visitors to see up close, and the exhibition will focus on debunking spider myths like their needing gravity to build webs, that they all neglect their offspring, and that all spiders are dangerous to humans.

Spiders have inspired storytellers from Ovid to E. B. White to the creators of the eponymous superhero, but their actual role in diverse ecosystems around the globe is just as captivating. Spiders are important predators: without them, insect populations would explode. By one estimate, the spiders on one acre of woodland alone consume more than 80 pounds of insects a year. Scientists have identified over 45,300 species of spiders to date, and they believe that there are at least as many yet to be discovered.

Among the live spiders visitors will encounter in this exhibition is the **goliath bird eater**, one of the largest spiders in the world. Including leg span, this spider measures about 12 inches long, or about the size of a dinner plate, and preys on snakes, mice, and frogs. Other species include the **black widow**, a member of one of the few North American spider groups that can be harmful to people; the **fishing spider**, which senses prey by resting its front legs on the surface of the water; and the **golden orb-web spider**, which weaves a golden web that can reach more than 3 feet in diameter.

Species from other arachnid orders will also be on display, including **tailless whip spiders**, whose whip-like feelers, up to 10 inches in length, help the animal find its way; the **giant vinegaroon**, which can spray a foul-smelling vinegar-like chemical from its abdomen if disturbed; and the **desert hairy scorpion**, the largest scorpion native to America. The exhibition will close on November 29, 2015.

#### **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

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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. In 2012, the Museum began offering a pilot Master of Arts in Teaching program with a specialization in Earth science, which is the only non-university affiliated such program in the United States. 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](http://amnh.org) for more information.

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No. 36