

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NATURE’S FEATHERED FLIRTS STRUT THEIR STUFF IN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC’S**

***BIRDS OF PARADISE* TRAVELING EXHIBITION AT PEROT MUSEUM OCT. 8, 2016-JAN. 8, 2017***Journey to an exotic virtual rainforest in New Guinea to explore how the
beautifully bizarre birds-of-paradise evolved, their show-stopping mating rituals
and the impact these bodacious birds have on the country’s culture*

 **DALLAS (Sept. 13, 2016) –** Who is the fairest fowl of all? Found only in New Guinea, birds-of-paradise are among nature’s most beautifully bizarre flying creatures. Opening Oct. 8 at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, ***Birds of Paradise***,developed by **National Geographic** and **The Cornell Lab of Ornithology**, reveals all 39 species of these elusive birds for the first time. The exhibition will take visitors on an exotic journey throughout a virtual rainforest in New Guinea to witness the spectacular plumage, shape-shifting and dazzling dance moves of these sassy and bodacious birds. A science exhibition, art show and natural history display in one, *Birds of Paradise* follows the adventures of photographer Tim Laman and Cornell Lab of Ornithology scientist Edwin Scholes – who made 18 trips to New Guinea over eight years. The exhibition, born out of the duo’s important scientific achievement, highlights their groundbreaking research with new information about each of the 39 birds-of-paradise species, all photographed for the first time in history. Interactive stations such as “Dance, Dance Evolution” will let visitors groove along with the birds to learn their signature moves. Presented by *Highland Capital Management*, *Birds of Paradise* makes its only stop in Texas at the Perot Museum through Jan. 8, 2017.The exhibition requires a surcharge for members and non-members. Member preview day is Oct. 7.

*“Birds of Paradise* is a story of daring expeditions, world culture and the science behind the world’s most fascinating feathered flirts, told only as National Geographic can, with stunning imagery, compelling video, natural soundscapes, traditional wood carvings, artifacts and engaging educational activities for all ages,” said Dan Kohl, the Perot Museum’s interim chief executive officer. “Visitors can explore how these extraordinary birds evolved, their show-stopping mating rituals, strange behaviors and why they’re only found in one area of the planet.”

In addition, visitors can examine the bizarre courtship dances that the males perform to attract the females in what is truly survival of the sexiest. The first-ever video of the female’s point-of-view of the dances is shown, captured through an innovative use of equipment created by Laman and Scholes. Photos, videos, bird specimens and a kinetic sculpture of a riflebird (a bird-of-paradise species) also show the transformations that birds-of-paradise undergo to attract their mates and the various moves that make up their mating rituals.

“These beautiful creatures are a feast for the eyes. Highland Capital Management is proud to support such a fascinating exhibition that will allow visitors to discover how these almost unworldly birds-of-paradise evolved and flourished over millions of years in the lush environment of Papua New Guinea,” said Thomas Surgent, partner and chief compliance officer for presenting sponsor Highland Capital Management.

In the case of the shape-shifting Western Parotia, the male’s mating ritual is a precise process. Before the bird-wooing begins, he finds a “dance floor,” clears the space of debris and tidies up with a nature-made towel. After he calls for a female, the dancing, shape-shifting and most unusual display commences. This mating morphosis is a spectacle full of head jiving, courtship dancing, feet stomping and an unbelievable transformation to which the male bird’s feather flaring resembles a blue and black psychedelic smiley face!

***- more -***

Guests can see how their dance moves measure up in the “Dance, Dance Evolution” interactive and learn how to strut their stuff just like the swaggering Parotia. Other interactives include “Ready, Set, Evolve,” a “Ladies’ Choice” game, bird call stations and artificial tree branches that visitors can manipulate to trigger video footage of different birds displayed on their perches.

Amid natural soundscapes and traditional wood carvings, the exhibition highlights the importance of birds-of-paradise to New Guinea. Maps and diagrams of the birds’ ranges across the country explain how its environment allowed the birds to adapt and evolve over time. Legends and folklore are shared from generations past.

**PROGRAM EXTENSIONS.** The Perot Museum will offer a covey of *Birds of Paradise*-related programs and eventsincluding *First Thursday Late Night: Aviation* on Nov. 3, the family-fun *Discovery Days: Birds* on Dec. 10, and the adults-only *Social Science: Flight* on Oct. 14.

**HOURS.** General hours of operation for the Perot Museum are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. On the first Thursday of the month, the Museum will stay open until 9 p.m. for its *First Thursday Late Night* public events.

**Member mornings.** From 9-10 a.m. every Saturday and 11 a.m.-noon every Sunday, members can enjoy exclusive access to the Perot Museum and *Birds of Paradise*.

**TICKETS.** Museum general admission is $19 for adults (18-64), $12 for youth (2-17), $13 for seniors (65+) and free for children under 2. Museum general admission is free for members.

***Birds of Paradise*** requires asurcharge for a total admission cost of $27 for adults (18-64), $19 for youth (2-17), $20 for seniors (65+), and free for children under 2. Member tickets are $6 for adults (18-64) and $5 for youth (2-17) and seniors (65+).

The Perot Museum is located at 2201 N. Field Street in Dallas, Texas. For parking information and other details, visit [perotmuseum.org](http://www.perotmuseum.org) or call 214-428-5555.

**NOTE: To obtain the news release, Perot Museum fact sheet, photos, b-roll and film trailers, please go to** [***perotmuseum.org/press***](http://www.perotmuseum.org/access.html?p=about-the-perot_newsroom_press) ***and use the access code* press. For additional information from National Geographic about the exhibition, visit** [***http://events.nationalgeographic.com/exhibits/birds-of-paradise/***](http://events.nationalgeographic.com/exhibits/birds-of-paradise/)

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***About the Perot Museum of Nature and Science***

*The top cultural attraction in Dallas/Fort Worth and a Michelin Green Guide three-star destination, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is a nonprofit educational organization located in the heart of Dallas, Texas, with campuses in Victory Park and Fair Park. With a mission to inspire minds through nature and science, the Perot Museum delivers exciting, engaging and innovative visitor and outreach experiences through its education, exhibition, and research and collections programming for children, students, teachers, families and life-long learners. The 180,000-square-foot facility in Victory Park opened in December 2012 and is now recognized as the symbolic gateway to the Dallas Arts District. Future scientists, mathematicians and engineers will find inspiration and enlightenment through 11 permanent exhibit halls on five floors of public space; a children’s museum; a state-of-the art traveling exhibition hall; and The Hoglund Foundation Theater, a National Geographic Experience. Designed by 2005 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis Architects, the Victory Park museum has been lauded for its artistry and sustainability. To learn more, please visit* [*perotmuseum.org*](http://perotmuseum.org)

***About the National Geographic Society***

*The National Geographic Society is a global nonprofit membership organization driven by a passionate belief in the power of science, exploration and storytelling to change the world. We fund hundreds of research and conservation projects around the globe each year. With the support of our members and donors, we work to inspire, illuminate and teach through scientific expeditions, award-winning journalism, education initiatives and more. For more information, visit* [*nationalgeographic.org*](http://nationalgeographic.org/)*.****About the Cornell Lab of Ornithology***

*The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is nonprofit, member-supported organization with the mission to interpret and conserve the earth’s biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds. Founded in 1915, the Lab is supported by 50,000 members and engages 200,000 citizen-science participants and 6 million bird enthusiasts who connect online at* [*allaboutbirds.org.*](http://www.allaboutbirds.org./) *As a proud unit of Cornell University, the Lab has a leading team of faculty, educators, conservation scientists and engineers continuing a strong history of excellence in science, technological innovation and outreach. Learn more at* [*birds.cornell.edu*](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/)*.*

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