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EXPERIENCE THE MYSTERIES OF THE DEEP, SURFACING AT THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES JUNE 5

Creatures of the Abyss exhibit makes U.S. debut in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA—An exciting new exhibit making its U.S. debut at the Academy of Natural Sciences this summer explores the most inaccessible ecosystem on Earth—the deep ocean, where extraordinary creatures thrive under immense pressure and in total darkness.

Creatures of the Abyss, on view June 5 through Sept. 6, takes visitors on an amazing journey through different underwater landscapes, down to the deepest parts of the ocean where thousands of mysterious and strange life forms live. Through educational interactive components, life-sized models of exotic creatures, real preserved specimens, videos and more, the exhibit provides both adults and children an immersive glimpse into another world.

The ocean contains more than 99 percent of the living space on the planet, yet scientists have only explored 3 percent of it. The [latest update](#) from the [Census of Marine Life](#) reported a diverse collection of 17,650 species living in the persistently cold, pitch-black ocean, under immense pressure from the water above. Scientists believe that a million or more species remain unknown. On land, biologists have cataloged about 1.5 million plants and animals.

“The deep sea is one of these little-known regions where really spectacular new discoveries are being made,” said Dr. John Lundberg, curator of the Academy’s Ichthyology (fish) Department, whose collection of about 1.3 million specimens includes numerous deep-sea creatures. “Biologists expect there are life forms there that we’ve never seen before.”

Creatures of the Abyss, free with museum admission, sheds light on this little-known world. Among a wide range of activities for all ages, visitors can:

- Entangle themselves in the tentacles of a life-sized model of a colossal squid; at 26 feet, it is the largest (by weight) known species of squid.
- Step inside the Bioluminescence Theatre and see colored light shows produced by creatures to communicate in complete darkness.
- Hitch a virtual ride on *Alvin*, the world’s first manned deep-sea submersible.

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Controversial undersea oil drilling and April's massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico illustrate the potential vulnerability of life in even deep underwater environments. As with all animals and plants, scientists are racing to identify new deep sea species before they go extinct and to understand their roles in this ecosystem.

"The deep ocean contains a unique assemblage of animals and microorganisms that are fascinating and inspiring in their own right," said Lundberg, who has spent more than four decades studying the evolution of fishes. "Surely understanding what lives in the deep ocean will enlighten us about the diversity of life, especially how life functions and evolves at the extremes."

Creatures of the Abyss is a production of Science North, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, and is supported and funded in part by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation.

For more information on the exhibit, visit www.ansp.org.

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The Academy of Natural Sciences, founded in 1812, is the oldest natural science research institution and museum in the Americas and a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.

HOURS: Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Saturday–Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. ADMISSION: \$12 adults; \$10 children 3-12, seniors, college students, military personnel; from May 28–Sept. 6 military and up to 5 family members are free; free for members and children under 3. \$2 fee for Butterflies!