

## Press release

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### Drives, dances, and dalliances in the animal kingdom

New exhibition "SEXY – The Driving Force of Life" in the Natural History Museum

**The new special exhibition "SEXY – The Driving Force of Life" at the Natural History Museum Basel is all about reproduction in the animal kingdom. Animals are endowed with various features to win their mate through the art of seduction and/or warfare. There is a whole wealth of different animal behaviour patterns, pairings and family models. But why? Because of the sexes. This exhibition is designed for families and adults. It was inspired by the "Sexperten" exhibition of the Liechtenstein Office for the Environment and then further developed by the Basel exhibition team.**

The animal kingdom is vibrant and diverse. Why is this? One reason is the pairing of different sexes in order to reproduce. They are very different in terms of their biological characteristics and interests. Whether it's in their choice of partner, competition between the sexes, mating or the role of parents, gender differences in animals drive evolution forwards producing a world filled with diversity.

#### **Gender as a pacemaker**

The special exhibition "SEXY – The Driving Force of Life" illustrates this diversity and reveals the role gender plays in it. You will discover that: Some animals have two genders, others none and some even have several. There are animals that can change their gender and some that can have two genders at the same time. But they all have one thing in common: they want to reproduce. Through astonishing stories, impressive specimens, and interactive elements, we show the lengths animals will go to to breed. They turn on the charm with their best displays and most splendid plumage. In the survival of the fittest, animals fearlessly fight off the competition with the ultimate aim of becoming attentive parents who watch over their young. But there isn't a clear pattern to their roles: The animal kingdom is ahead of its time and has always had different family models.

#### **Family exhibition with an in-depth level for adults**

This exhibition is exciting for kids and adults. While we grown-ups can marvel at the many different types of pairing and the desires and frustrations of animals' mating rituals, kids can find out how it feels to grow up protected by a womb, pouch or even ice. We use a variety of young animal specimens to show how they started life and who smoothed their pathway to adulthood.

This exhibition is based on objects and the basic idea of the special exhibition "Sexperten" by Liechtenstein National Museum and Liechtenstein Office for the Environment.

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### **The Clever Clogs Club and other surprise features for an engaging programme**

The special exhibition at the Natural History Museum also offers a varied programme of events. In addition to the regular guided tours for adults and families, visitors can enjoy a family Sunday outing or inclusivity offers, or show off their knowledge, no holds barred, in the Clever Clogs Club. This competition is held in front of an audience and the participant with the most convincing and best presented scientific argument scores points.

Thanks to the museum's cooperation with Basel Zoo, there are two focus tours in dialogue between curators from the zoo and the museum, and another guided tour with an external expert, biologist Daniel Haag-Wackernagel, the "advocate of female desire". The dancer Armando Braswell is also on hand with his Braswell Arts Center. He invites visitors to dance in a video installation in the exhibition, and delights visitors by performing a dance during the opening event.

### **After Hours in the Museum**

The programme also offers the chance for AFTER HOURS sweet talk once a month from December 2023 to May 2024. Here the special exhibition can be visited free of charge on these evenings until 11 pm. Plus, an exhibition space within the museum is transformed into a lively bar where you can enjoy your evening with some uplifting tunes and in good company.

### **More information**

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