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FIRST EVER WEBCAM TO STREAM LIVE FOOTAGE FROM THE FARALLON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Cooperative partnership between California Academy of Sciences, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and PRBO Conservation Science allows Web users to follow the action on the largest seabird colony in the continental United States

SAN FRANCISCO (May 27, 2009) — Just in time for the first annual World Oceans Day, the first ever webcam on the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge will go live on June 8 at www.calacademy.org. Powered by solar energy and perched on a windswept lighthouse on top of Southeast Farallon Island, the webcam will provide an unprecedented view of the seabirds, seals, and possibly even sharks that call these isolated islands home. The live webcam feed will be accompanied by animal identification guides, Farallones history, and research and conservation information. This exciting new initiative is made possible through a cooperative partnership between the California Academy of Sciences, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and PRBO Conservation Science.

Located 27 miles west of San Francisco, the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge is composed of three island groups that are home to the largest seabird colony in the continental United States. Approximately 250,000 seabirds representing 13 species and five species of seals and sea lions use the islands. Gray whales, blue whales, and humpback whales migrate past the islands every year. The area is also an important feeding ground for great white sharks. The refuge was established in 1909 by President Theodore Roosevelt "...as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds." Over 40 years of data on Farallon wildlife have been collected by PRBO Conservation Science in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The findings of these long-term studies have assisted with the establishment of the adjacent Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, contributed to state laws that protect white sharks and restrict use of commercial gill nets, and provided a greater understanding of marine ecosystem conservation.

"Since the islands are not accessible to the general public, the webcam will be a valuable tool not only for scientists, but for casual observers as well," says Jack Dumbacher, curator of ornithology & mammalogy at the California Academy of Sciences and lead scientist on the project. "The wildlife observations that we glean from this webcam will assist with ongoing research, guide conservation decisions, and hopefully inspire citizens to care about this valuable resource right in San Francisco's backyard."

"The Farallon Islands are California's Galapagos—truly a jewel of the SF Bay Area that supports an amazing abundance of seabirds, seals, sea lions and sharks," says Ellie M. Cohen, President and CEO of PRBO Conservation Science. "We are thrilled to bring PRBO's 24/7 research and stewardship on this rocky laboratory to

the public through this new website.”

The webcam is an Axis 233D network dome camera with half hi-definition resolution. It beams image data via a microwave link between the Southeast Farallon Island and San Francisco’s Twin Peaks. The pan, tilt, and zoom features of the camera will provide 360° views of the island. Network infrastructure for the webcam was provided by the **City and County of San Francisco** Department of Technology.

About the California Academy of Sciences

The Academy is an international center for scientific education and research and is at the forefront of efforts to understand and protect the diversity of Earth’s living things. The Academy has a staff of over 50 professional educators and Ph.D.-level scientists, supported by more than 100 Research and Field Associates and over 300 Fellows. It conducts research in 11 scientific fields: anthropology, aquatic biology, botany, comparative genomics, entomology, geology, herpetology, ichthyology, invertebrate zoology, mammalogy and ornithology.

About the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Farallon National Wildlife Refuge is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

About PRBO Conservation Science

PRBO Conservation Science is a non-profit conservation and education organization dedicated to advancing conservation through birds and ecosystem research. Founded in 1965 as Point Reyes Bird Observatory, PRBO Conservation Science works with hundreds of governmental and non-governmental agencies, as well as private interests. Our goal is to ensure that every dollar invested in conservation yields the most for biodiversity, benefiting our environment, our economy and our communities. Visit PRBO on the web at www.prbo.org.

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