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GECKOS—TAILS TO TOEPADS **May 30 – Sept. 7, 2009**

New exhibit features remarkable variety of live geckos

PHILADELPHIA—They have bulging eyes, sticky toe pads and disposable body parts, and they come in a remarkable variety of colors, patterns and characteristics.

You guessed it! They are geckos, and they will invade The Academy of Natural Sciences May 30 through Sept. 7 in the exhibit “Geckos—Tails to Toepads.” The exhibit features dozens of live geckos—from the tiny Viper Gecko that manages to scare away big, deadly predators to the Giant Day Gecko, whose charismatic TV counterpart is a popular, well-spoken spokes-animal for a certain insurance company.

Fifteen species of these small, agile lizards will be arrayed in naturalistic habitats, where visitors can not only see these secretive creatures up close, but also can hear their unusual squawks, chirps, barks and growls. Interactive components demonstrate their amazing night vision, keen hunting skills and tremendous diversity of body parts—not to mention their ability to pop off a tail now and then to evade a predator.

Geckos are among the most adaptable lizards on earth, with more than 1,250 species that have conquered habitats from balmy tropical beaches and lush rainforests to frigid mountain slopes and parched deserts. Geckos range from shadowy nighttime hunters with unbelievable camouflage to neon-colored nectar-eaters that scamper around in daylight. They are commonly known for their amazing ability to scale smooth walls. Indeed their sticky feet have inspired a new type of glue-free bandage for use in internal injuries as well as external wounds.

“Geckos—Tails to Toepads” is free with museum admission. It was created by Peeling Productions in Allenwood, Pa.

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The Academy is located at 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends until 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children ages 3-12, students with college I.D., seniors and military personnel, and free for children under 3. Additional \$2 for “Butterflies!”

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