



*For immediate release*

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## **Highly Regarded Mexican Scientist Returns to the San Diego Natural History Museum**

SAN DIEGO, CA, April 15, 2005—The San Diego Natural History Museum announces the return of Dr. Exequiel Ezcurra as director of the Museum’s scientific research division, the Biodiversity Research Center of the Californias (BRCC). Dr. Ezcurra will simultaneously serve as Provost of the Museum, the highest ranking academic officer, in tandem with his director position, which he previously held from 1998–2001.

As Provost, Dr. Ezcurra will direct the Museum’s science departments and research efforts, including the organization and leading of research expeditions. Dr. Michael Hager, executive director of the Museum, explains that “Dr. Ezcurra’s experience and expertise position him perfectly to synthesize the scientific disciplines here at the Museum. He will also promote cooperation with the Mexican government and environmental and scientific organizations. We are thrilled to have him back.” Dr. Ezcurra also plans to resume his own applied conservation research.

Dr. Ezcurra is also leading a regional initiative funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. This initiative is focused on the understanding and management of the Sea of Cortés as a whole, single ecosystem, including the people who live and work there. Over the course of a year, Dr. Ezcurra will synthesize existing knowledge, emphasize conservation science, and map out sustainable development in the region.

Dr. Ezcurra is a highly regarded scientist whose international experience and contacts will greatly enhance the Museum’s research and education endeavors. Dr. Ezcurra has written over 70 articles for scientific journals, eight books, (the most recent is *A New Island Biogeography of the Sea of Cortés*) and 40 book chapters. He also co-produced the award-winning giant-screen film *Ocean Oasis* ([link](#)). Highlights of his 30-year career include developing the first environmental impact assessments in Mexico and promoting creation of the California Condor release program in Baja California, Mexico. He has received numerous awards for his professional contributions to the field on ecology, including the prestigious Conservation Biology Award from the Society for Conservation Biology in 1994.

Most recently, Dr. Ezcurra was President of the National Institute of Ecology (INE) for Mexico. Appointed by President Vicente Fox in 2001, he was in charge of the national research organization that supplies research results to the federal government and the public. While directing the think tank, he focused on making the results of science accessible—this is apparent on the INE website ([www.ine.gov.mx](http://www.ine.gov.mx)). During the three years he served, the number of pages

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(journals, articles, and even complete books) downloaded from INE's website increased 17 fold, a testament to the success of his campaign to broaden the dissemination of INE research findings. While at INE, Dr. Ezcurra served as Mexico's representative on the International Whaling Commission.

Dr. Ezcurra's education includes a Diploma in Systems Analysis in Ecology at the *Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas*, and an M.Sc. and a Ph.D. in plant ecology at the University College of North Wales, Bangor. Dr. Ezcurra has received scholarships from UNESCO, the British Council, the Ford Foundation, and the Agency for International Development. He currently serves on the Boards of PRONATURA A.C., the Mexican Conservation Fund, ISLA A.C. (promoting conservation of the islands of the Sea of Cortés), the Instituto de Ecología A.C., and the Drylands Institute.

The San Diego Society of Natural History has engaged in scientific field work and systematics research since 1874. The BRCC's mission is to conduct field explorations research; to preserve specimens and information that document the region's natural history and biodiversity; to provide scientific knowledge; and to support the San Diego Natural History Museum's mission by laying the scientific foundation for its operation and programs. The Museum's focus is the bioregion that stretches 1200 miles from Point Conception in Southern California to the southern tip of the peninsula of Baja California, including the Sea of Cortés.

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