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**SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL™ TWO-PART SPECIAL EMBARKS ON A REMARKABLE
500 MILLION-YEAR JOURNEY REVEALING THE EXTRAORDINARY GROUP OF
ANIMALS THAT DOMINATE OUR WORLD**

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH'S RISE OF ANIMALS – TRIUMPH OF THE VERTEBRATES

PREMIERES WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 AT 8PM AND 9PM ET/PT

New York, APRIL 30, 2015 – Smithsonian Channel will premiere the two-part series **DAVID ATTENBOROUGH'S RISE OF ANIMALS – TRIUMPH OF THE VERTEBRATES** on Wednesday, May 13 at 8 and 9 p.m. ET/PT. From Atlantic Productions, the team that produced Sir David Attenborough's Emmy® Award-winning series *First Life*, comes a new landmark series about the astonishing evolutionary advances that created the dazzling diversity of vertebrates which now dominate our planet, including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and ultimately, mammals like us. Vertebrates have produced the largest, fastest, most intelligent creatures the world has ever seen.

Sir David Attenborough is the world's leading natural history broadcaster and was recently awarded an Individual Life Achievement honor from the Peabody Awards that declared: "No other living creature has shown us more about life on Earth than David Attenborough. He's a credit to his species." His distinguished career in television spans more than 50 years. His films and series have won nearly every major award in television, including Emmys and British Academy Awards.

Attenborough said: "I'm delighted that **RISE OF ANIMALS – TRIUMPH OF THE VERTEBRATES** will be screened on Smithsonian Channel. Their commitment to quality natural history programming makes them a natural home for this series."

In RISE OF ANIMALS – TRIUMPH OF THE VERTEBRATES, Attenborough travels to stunning and remote locations to unravel vertebrates' mysterious origins, chart their unexpected journey out of the water, and reveal the incredible rise of mammals left to battle it out following the death of dinosaurs. The journey reveals how humans are the heirs to a magnificent evolutionary heritage stretching back to the first steps of life.

The special takes Attenborough to a region he's long dreamed of exploring, the new frontier of modern paleontological research, China. There he was given special access to a treasure trove of new fossil evidence allowing him to paint an enriched picture of our paleontological past. Attenborough uses animal encounters and new fossil evidence to unpack the crucial evolutionary turning points leading to the rise of vertebrates, including the first spine, where fingers and toes come from, why we became warm-blooded, and much more.

In the first episode, FROM THE SEAS TO THE SKIES, Attenborough explores the ancient natural world to investigate one of nature's most extraordinary stories – the birth and ascent of the animal group that now dominates our planet: vertebrates. The origins of the vertebrates lie in primitive fish that once swam in ancient seas. Remarkable advances allowed them to make the radical move onto land, and then take to the skies with flight. Brand new discoveries of fossils – ancient and living – combined with stunning CGI and cinematography enable Attenborough to chart their unexpected journey out of the water to populate all corners of the planet.

For the second part, DAWN OF THE MAMMALS, Attenborough continues his journey in China to chart the astonishing rise of the vertebrates. He reveals the fascinating story of the mammals, from their humble origins as tiny nocturnal forest dwellers to their astonishing explosion in diversity and domination following the death of the dinosaurs. Attenborough unlocks the meteoric rise of mammals that laid the foundation for the ascent of man.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH'S RISE OF ANIMALS – TRIUMPH OF THE VERTEBRATES is produced by Atlantic Productions for BBC and Smithsonian Channel. Series producer is Anthony Geffen, and is directed by David Lee. David Royle and Charles Poe serve as executive producers for Smithsonian Channel.

Smithsonian Channel™, owned by Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution, is where curiosity lives, inspiration strikes and wonders never cease. This is the place for awe-inspiring stories, powerful documentaries and amazing entertainment across multiple platforms. Smithsonian Channel combines the storytelling prowess of SHOWTIME® with the unmatched resources and rich traditions of the Smithsonian, to create award-winning programming that shines new light on popular genres such as air and space, history, science, nature, and pop culture. Among the network's offerings are series including *Aerial America*, *L.A. Frock Stars*, *Secrets*, *Mighty Ships*, *Mighty Planes* and *Air Disasters*, as well as critically-acclaimed specials that include *Civil War 360*,

9/11: The Heartland Tapes; MLK: The Assassination Tapes and The Day Kennedy Died. Find out more at www.smithsonianchannel.com.

Atlantic Productions is part of the Atlantic Group which makes television programs, theatrical and IMAX films, apps, visual effects and now, immersive virtual reality experiences. Since its inception in 1992, Atlantic has built a reputation for world-class story-telling, enhanced by the latest techniques and technologies including the building of pioneering cross-platform and digital experiences, most recently establishing a leading position in creating content for 3D, 4K and VR platforms. Atlantic is the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious Huw Weldon BAFTA award for Specialist Factual twice in the last four years for David Attenborough's Natural History Museum Alive 3D (2014) and David Attenborough's Flying Monsters 3D (2011). International awards include multiple EMMY's, Best Films at New York & Chicago Film Festivals, RTS awards, Lumiere Best European 3D Documentary Awards and Best 3D awards at the Wildscreen and Jackson Hole festivals. Atlantic has launched a new company called Alchemy VR to develop content for new Virtual Reality (VR) platforms including for the Oculus Rift. Atlantic's television, theatrical and IMAX documentaries and dramas cover a great variety of genres, with titles including: the recent BBC2/ABC series Inside the Commons, landmark 8-part series Egypt Unwrapped and the theatrical doc about Everest – Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest, and their films have been seen in over 100 countries.

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