



MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo: immediate

BirdLife South Africa prepares for the SOS Festival 2013

Cape Town, 30 September 2013: BirdLife South Africa, Iziko Museums of South Africa and the Department of Environmental Affairs will be hosting their annual SOS Festival from 7-13 October 2013. The Festival, a National Marine Week initiative, has run annually since 2009. The Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust became the major sponsor for the festival in 2012, and this year GreenMatter has joined as a strategic partner, adding events geared towards promoting marine biodiversity skills needs and career opportunities.

The events that comprise the festival aim to communicate conservation messages, challenges and opportunities regarding our marine ecosystems. This connection is reflected in the Festival's strap-line "Save our Oceans, Save our Seabirds".

"Although the events and the festival are nominally about seabirds, one of nature's indicators of marine ecosystem health, everything about the SOS Festival extends well beyond seabirds. One of the major themes for this year, penguin satellite tracking, is focused on addressing broad conservation issues in marine ecosystems and developing the human capital needed to manage the complex problems in our oceans." commented Dr Ross Wanless, Seabird Division manager at BirdLife South Africa and SOS Festival Director.

Several novel components have been added to this year's SOS Festival, including a focus on supporting graduate skills and career development in support of marine ecosystem management, a SOSExplore Quest competition, a Treasure Hunt at the Iziko Museum for kids and much more.

This year's SOS Festival has an exciting programme of events and activities including:

- **Marine Conservation Lecture Series**

Budding and established environmentalists and science specialists are encouraged to join us to hear how prominent conservationists are making a difference in the field of marine and seabird conservation. Speakers include Associate Professor Colin Attwood and Emeritus Professor George Branch both from the University of Cape Town.

Complimentary light snacks and drinks will be served.

Venue: Iziko South African Museum, 25 Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town

Dates: 7 and 9 October 2013

Time: 18:30 for 19:00

Cost: Free

On-line booking is essential at <http://www.sosfestival.co.za/event/booking>

- **Keynote Lecture: The Making of the BBC's "Africa" - The secrets of a natural history blockbuster**

The BBC NHU Africa series journeyed to the four corners of the continent from the roof of Africa to the deserts of the Sahara, to where the jungles of the Congo meet the Atlantic, to the dramatic seas off the Cape. This is the story behind the story and includes the trials, the tribulations and the occasional triumphs, as well as how the series was made.

Speaker: Mike Gunton, Executive Producer, BBC Natural History Unit.

Venue: Iziko South African Museum, 25 Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town

Date: 11 October

Time: 18:30 for 19:00

Cost: Free

On-line booking is essential at <http://www.sosfestival.co.za/event/booking>

- **Oceans of Life Photographic Exhibition**

The annual 'Oceans of Life' photographic competition is part of the SOS Festival, harnessing the power of stunning imagery to inspire our love for the oceans. This will include a treasure hunt activity for children with prizes to be won.

On display at the Iziko South African Museum from 8 October to 1 December 2013

Admission to Museum: R30, Concessions R15, Family ticket (2 adults, 2 children) R75

- **Skills and Career Development Events**

The GreenMatter network has set up two interactive platforms for university students to engage with young and established professionals, including employers as they consider the range of skills that will increase employability in today's tough market. These are open to students from all Cape Universities.

Wednesday 9 October 2013, University of Cape Town:

- 09:00 until 11:00 - 5 Career Coffee lounges running in parallel in the Zoology, Marine Biology, Economics, Anthropology and Environmental and Geographical Science departments
- 12:00 until 14:00 - An Expert Panel Discussion, facilitated by Prime Media's Kieno Kammies with Woolworths, the Department of Environmental Affairs, BirdLife South Africa, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), CapeNature and the NCC- Group.

Cost: Free

Visit www.greenmatter.co.za for more information

"In preparation for the upcoming SOS Festival, BirdLife South Africa has also developed a website to provide access and information on all of the activities mentioned above. This includes user-friendly

access to our satellite tracking research, to allow the public an opportunity to follow the movements of penguins in real-time, find information around our photo competition, careers and skills development, as well as a link to our SOSExplore Quest Competition. We urge our youth and those interested in learning more about our amazing seabirds to get involved.” said Dr Wanless.

“BirdLife South Africa and GreenMatter are developing a game, linked to the penguin tracking, for high school and university students that will be launched at the upcoming SOS Festival. The game will provide experiential learning about a serious issue in a fun and interactive format, instilling environmental values in the next generation of leaders,” states Chantal Ramcharan-Kotze, Head of Marketing, Communications and Stakeholder Relations at GreenMatter.

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Notes for the editor:

1. The mission of BirdLife South Africa is to promote the enjoyment, conservation, study and understanding of wild birds and their habitats.
2. BirdLife South Africa contact details: Lewis House, 239 Barkston Drive, Blairgowrie, P.O. Box 515, Randburg, Johannesburg, South Africa, Tel. +27-11-7891122, Fax. +27-11-7895188, e-mail address: info@birdlife.org.za, website: www.birdlife.org.za
3. GreenMatter: Chantal R. Kotze, Head of Marketing, Communications and Stakeholder Relations, Tel: 011 447 5112/Cell: 083 265 5756/ Email: chantal@greenmatter.co.za, website www.greenmatter.co.za
4. Iziko Museums of South Africa (Iziko) operates 11 national museums, the Planetarium, the Social History Centre and three collection-specific libraries in Cape Town. The museums that make up Iziko have their own history and character, presenting extensive art, social and natural history collections that reflect our diverse African heritage. Iziko is a public entity and non-profit organisation that brings together these museums under a single governance and leadership structure. The organisation allows *free access to all individuals on commemorative days, (*excluding the Castle of Good Hope and Planetarium). Visit our webpage at www.iziko.org.za, join our online community on Facebook (www.facebook.com/IzikoMuseums) or follow us on Twitter ([@Iziko_Museums](https://twitter.com/Iziko_Museums)) for regular updates on events, news and new exhibitions.

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