

NEWSLETTER NO. 4: 25 October 2021

Dear Flock to Marion passengers

I am thrilled to finally provide a positive update on our forthcoming voyage.

MSC Cruises announced on Wednesday 20 October 2021 that they will resume their South African sailings on 6 December 2021 following approvals in the most recent government gazette.

For the full press release, click [HERE](#)

Ship: Life, however, continues to be full of surprises (in this COVID-19 world of ours) and we note that the ship has been changed to the **MSC Orchestra** which has recently undergone a major refurbishment programme and replaces the MSC Musica that was originally earmarked for South Africa in the upcoming cruise season. This means another cabin migration, but as the MSC Orchestra is of a similar configuration to that of the MSC Musica, we don't anticipate too long a delay with this.

For Flock to Marion, the MSC Orchestra will leave Cape Town on 24 January and arrive in Durban on 31 January 2022.

COVID-19 protocols: MSC Cruises will accept both vaccinated and unvaccinated passengers, but will amend its position subject to the requirements of the South African government for our voyage.

MSC Cruises and BirdLife South Africa, however, strongly urge the Flock to Marion guests to be fully vaccinated before their voyage for their own well-being and that of other passengers and the ship's crew.

All passengers, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, will be required to take a COVID-19 RT-PCR test within 72 hours of their cruise departure and provide proof of a negative result in order to board.

Insurance Cover: Another important requirement is that all guests will be required to have an insurance policy to cover COVID-19 related issues such as cancellation, interruption, repatriation, quarantine and medical assistance and related expenses. Guests can choose MSC Cruises' new Hollard COVID-19 Protection Plan that will provide coverage before, during and after their cruise. In collaboration with Hollard Insurance, the plan covers cancellation charges as well as medical and related transport expenses. For further details on what the cover entails click [here](#).

Please note that cover should start from your departure date until your arrival date back home. We strongly suggest you also research alternative quotes through your travel providers.

Balance of Payments: Regarding passengers paying the balance of their berth costs, MSC Cruises has informed us that payment has to be made 75 days before departure (i.e. 10 November 2021) following confirmation of the season on Wednesday 20 October 2021.



Frequently Asked Questions: We appreciate that you may still have queries in this regard. We will shortly send out another email updating and clarifying further frequently asked questions.

New Bookings (availability and costs): As soon as the reallocation of bookings has been completed, we will be reopening for new bookings. In the meantime, if you are interested in booking on the voyage or have any enquiries in this regard, please click [HERE](#) to contact us.

Kind regards

Mark D. Anderson
Chief Executive Officer
BirdLife South Africa

Our Flock to Marion
series of seabird and marine mammal ID courses
will commence at 7pm (SAST) on Thursday 4 November 2021
and take place each Thursday evening for five consecutive weeks.
*** Registration details to follow this week - R50 per person per session ***

A reminder, each time a newsletter goes out it will be saved to the website and copies of these can be found under [Newsletter Updates](#) on the BirdLife South Africa website.
