

From: Flock to Marion Communications flock2022@birdlife.org.za
Subject: Flock to Marion Newsletter No. 7: 9 December 2021
Date: 09 December 2021 at 9:13 PM
To: Clare.Neall@birdlife.org.za



FLOCK TO MARION NEWSLETTER NO. 7: 9 DECEMBER 2021

Dear Flock to Marion passengers,

We are now moving at pace to get the many arrangements in place before our office closure (from Thursday 16 December 2021 until Monday 3 January 2022) and general South African business year-end shut down.

IMPORTANT: And a reminder, it is now mandatory for all passengers on the Flock to Marion voyage to be fully vaccinated.

MSC Cruises South Africa recently announced that all guests for its 2021/22 local cruise season must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in addition to the requirement to also take a PCR test before their scheduled embarkation date.

The measures have been put in place in light of the evolution of the pandemic, including the new Omicron variant, and with the wellbeing of the cruiseliner's guests as its number one priority.

For the full press release please visit the Media page on MSC Cruises' website [HERE](#)

BirdLife South Africa remains enormously grateful to MSC Cruises for all that is being done to ensure a successful Flock to Marion voyage and the safety of our passengers.

We apologise for the inconveniences that the postponement and other changes have caused, and we thank you for your support as we negotiate these largely uncharted waters.

Flock to Marion will happen, we will get to sail to the Southern Ocean, we will get to see some awesome seabirds and marine mammals, and we will enjoy the camaraderie of like-minded people who love seabirds, the ocean and the natural world.

In the meantime, some of our team have spent a few days aboard the MSC Orchestra this week on a reconnaissance trip ahead of the Flock to Marion voyage. According to them the shuttle service from the airport was efficient, the boarding procedure was seamless, the decks are spacious, and full COVID-19 protocols are in place on the ship. We cannot wait to host you in approximately six weeks time!

Please contact us at flock2022@birdlife.org.za if you have any queries.

Kind regards



Mark D. Anderson
Chief Executive Officer
BirdLife South Africa

NB: MSC SHUTTLE SERVICE

This will be available from Cape Town International Airport to the harbour at R130 per person one way and from Durban harbour to King Shaka International Airport at R165 per person one way. These must be pre-booked with MSC via email info@msccruises.co.za or by calling MSC Cruises on +27 (0) 11 798 3600. Please have your booking references handy and the names of the passengers needing this service. This applies to bookings made directly with MSC only.

We are continuously updating our **Frequently Asked Questions** section on our Flock to Marion Webpage – please keep a look out [HERE](#) for new additional information being added.

WHAT TO WEAR

It will probably be warm when we leave Cape Town on 24 January, and it will almost certainly be hot and humid when we arrive in Durban on 31 January. When we are in the Southern Ocean, and while on deck, it will be cold (a few degrees C, with a wind chill factor) and maybe wet. The inside of the MSC Orchestra is air-conditioned!

Warm clothes most definitely required (a warm, perhaps rainproof, jacket, beanie and scarf) when birding, and a light jersey when inside the ship.

Although it is not necessary to dress up for the dinners, jeans, t-shirts and slops would be inappropriate. Some passengers enjoy dressing up (evening dresses, jacket-and-tie, etc.) for dinner.

A “BIRD PARTY” – SAVE THE DATE - WEDNESDAY 26 JANUARY 2022
ON BOARD THE MSC ORCHESTRA - YOU ARE INVITED!

As always we will be having a themed evening during the voyage and will soon send out an

invitation! We have been super-impressed with the lengths that people go to during our two previous "Flocks at Sea"!

On those nights, many selfies are taken and the bar sales are apparently excellent.

Get your creative juices flowing, be inspired and start thinking and preparing your creative outfits, e.g. masks, feather boas, snazzy bird costumes, and much more!

Dress as the quirkiest, quackiest bird for a night of fun and festivities aboard the MSC Orchestra.



BIRD OF THE YEAR 2022

Cape Gannet (*Morus capensis*)

Read more at:
www.birdlife.org.za/bird-of-the-year-2022/



BIRD OF THE YEAR MERCHANDISE

Cape Gannet fluffy toys, pin badges and T-shirts

sporting the magnificent Cape Gannet art by Ingrid Weiersbye

COMING SOON! Keep an 'eye' out on our online store *Shop for the Birds!*

NB: As our office will be closed from Thursday 16 December 2021 until Monday 3 January 2022, please note that any online orders will only be dispatched from Monday 3 January 2022



Seeing beyond

Get rewarded for joining the Flock to Marion voyage

Promotion is valid from December 2021 to January 2022



Flock

The BirdLife South Africa Expedition to our Southern Ocean Islands to Marion 2022



Buy any ZEISS Terra bino and get a **FREE ZEISS Cleaning kit**.



Buy any ZEISS Conquest HD bino and get a **FREE ZEISS harness**.



Buy any ZEISS Victory SF bino and get a **FREE ZEISS Cleaning kit and harness**.



BONUS: Every customer buying a ZEISS binocular gets **1 YEAR FREE SUBSCRIPTION** to *African Birdlife* magazine.

info.za@zeiss.com
Terms & conditions apply.



SWAROVSKI OPTIK

Limited Offer!
Swarovski CL Companion Binoculars 8x30
R24 000 per pair
(excludes delivery)
Until end January 2022

Colours: Either green or anthracite
Includes:
A cleaning set free of charge, plus a donation of R500 to Birdlife South Africa with each pair sold

Visit: www.shop.birdlife.org.za



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Ensuring a Safe and enjoyable cruise on MSC Orchestra - MSC Cruises are continuously assessing developments in response to the COVID-19 situation and will adapt health and safety measures as needed and in line with government regulations.

To download a copy of their **Know Before You Go** information, please click [HERE](#)

You can also read about MSC Cruises' COVID-19 protocols [HERE](#)

With your safety as our utmost priority, MSc Cruises has partnered with Hollard Insurance to offer you the best value-for-money comprehensive insurance that covers you before, during and after your cruise.

Mandatory Covid-19 protection plan

For your protection, this insurance is mandatory for all guests and includes cover for any Covid-19 related risks including:

- cancellation
- repatriation
- medical expenses

The Hollard Covid-19 protection plan costs R61.00 per person, per day and has automatically been added to bookings, in retrospect, which must be settled before departure. Click [HERE](#) for further details.

Looking for COVID Tests with fast results? Contact *Testaro* Mobile Health! PCR COVID-19 test results within 24 Hours! Or pay a higher fee to have your results sent to you within about four hours. They are open on weekends. For further information, please click [HERE](#)

Flock to Marion Merchandise

Regrettably, sales are now closed.

Coming soon to the online store Flock to Marion buffs!

Visit shop.birdlife.org.za or click [HERE](#)

kulula.com

BirdLife South Africa has partnered with Kulula.com who are offering a 10% discount on published fares to the passengers booked on the Flock to Marion voyage.

THIS OFFER CLOSSES ON FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2021

Please email your booking requirements to Samantha.Allers@comair.co.za



BirdLife South Africa has partnered with the Hotel Sky Cape Town, which is offering special rates to those passengers booked on the Flock to Marion voyage:

20 - 24 January 2022 rates to those passengers booked on the Flock to Marion voyage.

Hotel Sky Cape Town, Lower Long St, Cape Town City Centre, Cape Town, 8000

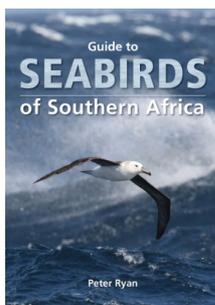
Phone: 021 879 5040. www.hotelsky.co.za

R1270.00 for **Standard Single Room** per night including breakfast but excluding the 1% of the room rate for Tourism Levy per night.

R1460.00 for **Standard Double / Twin Room** per night including breakfast but excluding the 1% of the room rate for Tourism Levy per night.

Please email your requirements quoting Booking Code 52458 directly to the hotel [HERE](#)

Shop for the Birds - In store now!



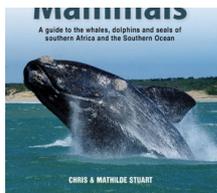
Guide to Seabirds of Southern Africa, Peter Ryan

Seabirds hold a special place in the hearts of birders, not least because of the challenge of getting to grips with a group of birds that is largely inaccessible, and living in an often hostile habitat. *Guide to Seabirds of Southern Africa* is the first book focusing exclusively on the birds that occur around the Southern African coastline and adjacent Southern Ocean.



Marine Mammals: A guide to the whales, dolphins and seals of Southern Africa and the Southern Ocean, Chris and Mathilde Stuart

The is easy-to-use identification guide to the whales, dolphins and seals



found in Southern African waters and the Southern Ocean is compact yet comprehensive. Close to 50 species occur in the region: from the demonstrative Humpback Whale and Dusky Dolphin to the striking Leopard Seal and massive Blue Whale.

To order your copies click [HERE](#)

A reminder that each time a newsletter goes out it will be saved to the website and copies of these can be found under [Newsletter Updates](#) at www.birdlife.org.za/flock-to-marion-2022

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