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FLOCK TO MARION NEWSLETTER NO.7: 22 November 2024

Dear Flock to Marion AGAIN Passengers,

We are thrilled to introduce just a handful of the incredible, world-renowned bird experts who will be joining us for an unforgettable week aboard the MSC *Musica* during **Flock to Marion AGAIN!** in January 2025! This extraordinary expedition promises to be an unparalleled opportunity to explore the diverse and spectacular seabirds of the Southern Ocean alongside some of the world's leading ornithologists. The three experts featured here, along with many others, have made monumental contributions to seabird research and conservation, and we are beyond excited to learn from their expertise. Whether you're a seasoned birder or just starting your birding journey, under their guidance, you're sure to walk away with invaluable knowledge and unforgettable experiences. Get ready for a week of awe-inspiring sightings, expert insights, and new discoveries—**Flock to Marion AGAIN!** is a birding adventure like no other!

Kurt Martin

Communication Manager

kurt.martin@birdlife.org.za

MEET THE EXPERTS

Hadoram Shirihai

Hadoram Shirihai is a world-renowned ornithologist &



explorer, distinguished for his groundbreaking work with tubenoses and petrels. He has published 12 books and won numerous awards, extensively documenting rare seabirds through meticulous research expeditions. Having observed nearly 8000 bird species and photographed over 7000, Shirihai holds the largest photographic collection from the Neotropical region. A pioneer in bird conservation, he discovered and rediscovered several critically endangered petrel species through persistent multi-year expeditions. Founder of the International Birding Center in Eilat and author of the 'Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife', Shirihai continues his mission of protecting and understanding the world's most elusive marine birds

Peter Harrison



Peter Harrison is known as the top expert on seabirds worldwide. His first book on seabird identification has been the standard reference for 40 years, however it will be imminently eclipsed by his magnum opus, “Seabirds, the New Identification Guide” – a 12-year effort which will be launched during the cruise. Peter holds an MBE and was awarded the Royal Society’s Conservation Gold Medal and the Linnaean Society’s Eisenmann Award for Excellence in Ornithology.

Ben Lascelles

Ben Lascelles is a distinguished conservation expert with extensive global experience in marine and seabird protection. As the current Managing Director of Harewood Estate, he drives sustainability initiatives guided by his profound background in environmental conservation. Previously with BirdLife International, he developed the first global marine Important Bird Area atlas and expanded the Global Seabird Tracking Database to over 100 species. His influential scientific



work includes collaborating with international bodies like the UN and Convention on Biological Diversity to advance seabird conservation. A lifelong birder and wildlife photographer, Lascelles has conducted research across six continents and 60 countries, contributing significantly to threatened species programs worldwide.

Have you heard of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak?



© Michelle Risi

We recently received the concerning news from Marion Island that Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is suspected to have reached the remote island. Although samples have been collected on the island, they can't be analysed until the S.A. *Agulhas II*, the South African polar supply and research ship, returns from the next relief voyage in May 2025. However, clinical signs reviewed by experienced veterinarians strongly indicate that the virus is likely responsible for recent mortalities observed in at least three breeding seabird species on Marion Island.

This is a rapidly evolving situation, which is being closely monitored by overwintering field

staff on Marion Island who have been trained to recognise potential HPAI signs in birds and seals, as well as to carry out necessary sampling and mitigation measures. The Mouse-Free Marion (MFM) Project team is actively engaged in ongoing discussions with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, the Western Cape State Veterinarian, and Marion Island researchers regarding monitoring and managing the outbreak.

An HPAI outbreak on Marion Island is a significant conservation concern and underscores the importance of reinforcing conservation efforts on the island. Chief among these efforts is the Mouse-Free Marion (MFM) Project, which remains critical to preserving the island's globally important wildlife.

Human infections of HPAI are rare and require direct contact with infected birds. During the upcoming Flock to Marion AGAIN! 2025 voyage, our team - which includes an experienced seabird rehabilitator and trained veterinarian - will be equipped with adequate PPE when managing potential bird strikes as we get closer to the islands.

We understand that you may have concerns, and we will keep you updated as soon as we have accurate and clear information. Please remember to rely on information directly from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and any BirdLife partners for the most trusted and up-to-date guidance.

Anton Wolfaardt (MFM Project Manager)

Additional Resources:

[!\[\]\(c694a3ff3b077d76910920a6a1593ab4_img.jpg\) The official statement from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment](#)

[!\[\]\(ec9132f1d27c8919987d92907322654d_img.jpg\) Daily Maverick speaks on the Avian Flu on Marion Island.](#)

*****IMPORTANT INFORMATION*****

1. MSC Cruises has had an answer from the Department of Home Affairs' Immigration Services, and they have confirmed that, as no immigration clearance needs to be conducted, the voyage to Marion Island is regarded as a "cruise to nowhere". **In essence, therefore, South African citizens only need ID documents, and international**

travellers require their passports.

2. Your boarding time is indicated on your MSC Cruises booking confirmation. Please plan your travel arrangements accordingly. If you require transportation to and from Durban's King Shaka International Airport, MSC Cruises offers a coach shuttle service which must be booked directly with them. Any costs will be for your own account.

3. If you are celebrating a birthday, anniversary, or any other special occasion during the voyage, please let Tarryn McKechnie know at tarryn.mckechnie@birdlife.org.za before 20 January 2025. We'd be delighted to celebrate this special occasion with you.

4. Merchandise must be purchased before embarkation, as **NO SALES WILL OCCUR ONBOARD**. International guests are welcome to place merchandise orders in advance and collect their orders prior to boarding the ship.

FLOCK TO MARION MERCHANDISE

NOW AVAILABLE TO ORDER!

BOOKS, SUCH AS 'MARINE MAMMALS' AND 'GUIDE TO SEABIRDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA', ARE NOW AVAILABLE FROM OUR ONLINE STORE, [SHOP FOR THE BIRDS!](#)

Flock to Marion AGAIN! 2025 Merchandise



THE CLASSIC 100% COTTON
WOMEN'S GOLFERS
CODE: LGSHT



THE CLASSIC 100% COTTON
GOLFER
CODE: JGSHT



WOMEN'S PACKABLE
BODYWARMER
CODE: WR041



PACKABLE
BODYWARMER
CODE: WR040



100% COTTON
CREW NECK SWEATER
CODE: WR034



100% COTTON
HOODIE
CODE: HOODIE



WOMEN'S
SOFTSHELL JACKET
CODE: WR025



SOFTSHELL
JACKET
CODE: WR023



WATER DEFENDER
FLEECE JACKET
CODE: J608W



BEANIE
CODE: BEANIE





Flock to Marion AGAIN! 2025 Neck Buff

Saving Marion Island's Seabirds.
The Mouse Free Marion Project.



Albatross Socks

One-of-a-kind, our Albatross socks.

- This product signifies our shared hope of a mouse-free Marion Island, where voyaging seabirds can return from their oceanic journeys to a safe Marion Island
- Polyester with Cushioned Cotton Touch Heel & Toe
- Ladies Size 4 – 7
- Mens Size 8 – 12
- For every pair sold Sexy Socks will give a pair of school socks to a South African child in need. Warm toes all round!



Flock to Marion AGAIN! 2025: Walkstools

- Walkstool Comfort in one size only (the most popular size) 55cm (22 in).
- Walkstool Comfort is made in Sweden and has a light weight construction with telescopic legs in aluminum.
- By not extending the telescopic legs, you will be able to use Walkstool in a lower sitting height as well.
- Walkstool Comfort offers big rubber feet and an ergonomically shaped seat of mesh material, making it possible to sit comfortably for extensive periods of time. All Comfort models come with a practical bag to for instance carry over your shoulder.





Mouse Free Marion: 100% Cotton Crew Neck Sweater



A selection of great merchandise is on offer!

All items shown are subject to availability and are only offered in the colours shown. Prior to ordering please take guidance from the sizing charts supplied on each product page.

Purchases are non-refundable but we will have an exchange corner on the ship.

Prices include embroidery as shown.

All items are supplied by Jonsson Workwear (Pty) Ltd (www.jonssonworkwear.com)

[Click HERE to order your merchandise](#)



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You are receiving this email because you booked the Flock to Marion cruise and we would like to keep you up to date with all the recent news and developments.

Our mailing address is:

BirdLife South Africa

17 Hume Road, Dunkeld West

Johannesburg, Gauteng 2196

South Africa

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