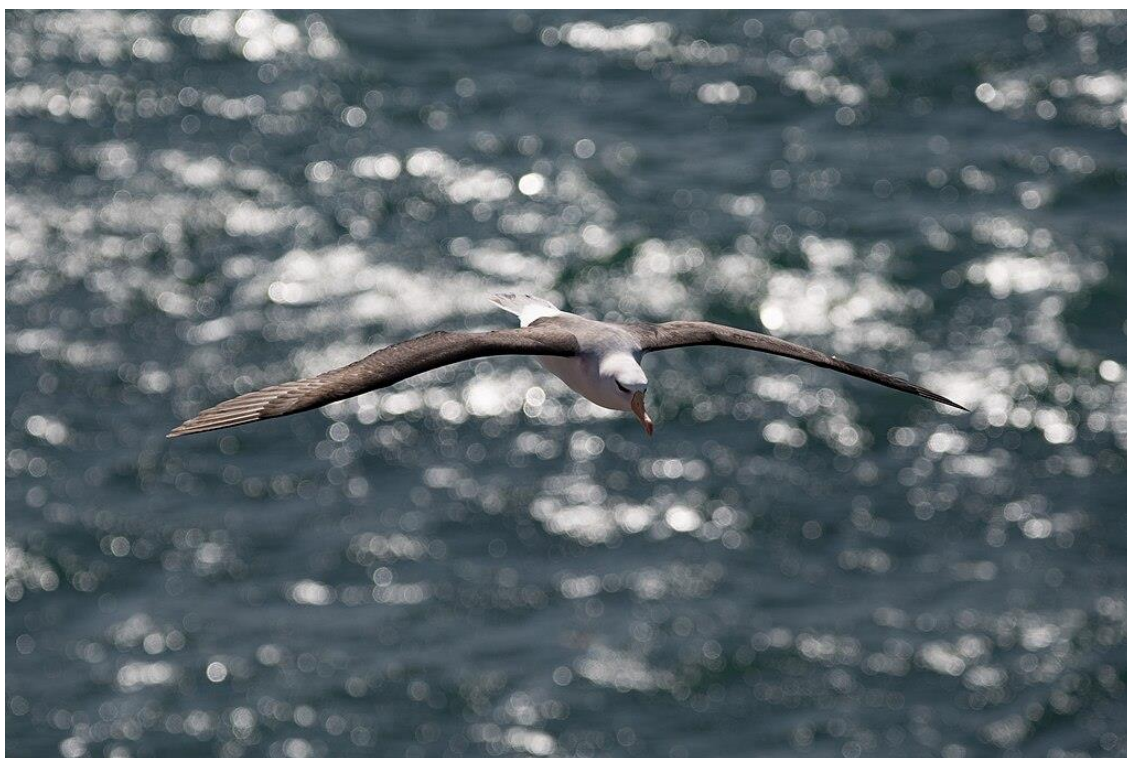


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FLOCK TO MARION NEWSLETTER NO.8: 28 November 2024



Black-browed Albatross

© Christoph Muller/Wikimedia Commons

Dear *Flock to Marion AGAIN!* Passengers,

We hope you enjoyed last week's newsletter, where you met some of the experts that will be joining us next year aboard the MSC *Musica* during our voyage!

We've got some interesting news for you today, including introductions to a few more of the many experts who will be joining us, the digital nomads behind your favourite birding game, a packing list to help you prepare for your trip, and a special treat for guests who have joined us for all previous *Flock* voyages.

A correction to our previous newsletter:

I stated that Peter Harrison MBE would be launching *Seabirds: The New Identification Guide* on this voyage. This book was actually launched on our previous *Flock to Marion* voyage in 2022, but Peter Harrison will be hosting a book-signing session on board this time, so bring along your copies of his books!

Kurt Martin

Communications Manager

kurt.martin@birdlife.org.za

Meet the Experts: Part 2!

We are privileged to have many eminent ornithologists, scientists, first-rate twitchers, and more joining us on *Flock to Marion AGAIN!* They will share their expertise with us as we bird in the day, and ensure there'll be no shortage of fascinating conversation during our evenings at sea, as stories are swapped, life lists are compared, life-long friendships are formed, and old bonds are strengthened.

Following last week's newsletter, here are just a few more of the experts that we are lucky to have with us:

Professor Peter Ryan

Renowned ornithologist Peter Ryan is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Cape Town and a former Director of the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology. He is dedicated to bird conservation: He's authored over 500 research papers and multiple bird books, including the notable [Guide to Seabirds c Southern Africa](#). Peter serves as a scientific advisor for BirdLife South Africa's award-winning magazine, *African Birdlife*. He has conducted research on the birds



of remote islands like Marion, Gough and Inaccessib for 40 years, and has been instrumental in promoting the conservation of seabirds and their breeding islan through a variety of management interventions.

Professor Martin Perrow



Martin has been an ecological consultant and researcher for over 35 years, with interests in all aquatic wildlife. A prolific editor and author, he is perhaps best known for his work on several seminal books including the *Handbook of Ecological Restoration*; *Wildlife and Wind Farms: Conflicts and Solutions*; and, after a chance meeting with Peter Harrison on a subantarctic seabird quest, [Seabirds: New Identification Guide](#). Terns are a particular pass and Martin is currently planning a book on the group. With a 25-year history of leading wildlife tours, he lo forward to working alongside friends and colleagues, especially those from South Africa who know the birc and mammals of their waters better than anyone. Trip dreams include a handful of lifers and th fantasy of a nomadic Kerguelen Tern checking out the ship.

Trevor Hardaker

Trevor Hardaker has been birding from a very young a and did his first pelagic trip over 35 years ago. Since then, he has embarked on hundreds of pelagic trips



from his hometown in Cape Town and elsewhere in Southern Africa, and has travelled to all 7 continents looking for and photographing birds. He runs a company, [Zest for Birds](#), which operates pelagic trips the Western Cape and he also runs the SA Rare Bird News email alert system with 1000s of Southern African birders subscribed to it, a major lifeline to twitchers & listers countrywide. As an avid twitcher and lister himself, Trevor has seen more species in Southern Africa than anyone else with a current total of 942 species. He is a co-author of the recently published [Veld Birds of Southern Africa: The Complete Photographic Guide](#).

Need some new 'bins' for *Flock*?

BirdLife
SOUTH AFRICA
Giving Conservation Wings

THE
Birding
LIFE

VORTEX

**UPGRADE YOUR
VIEW, PROTECT
MARION ISLAND**

**BUY A PAIR OF VORTEX VIPER OR
SELECTED RAZOR OPTICS FROM
NOVEMBER TO JANUARY & SPONSOR
A HECTARE OF MARION ISLAND!**

**SUPPORT THE MOUSE-FREE MARION
PROJECT WITH THE BIRDING LIFE**

Saving Marion Island's Seabirds™
The Mouse-Free Marion Project

We're proud to support this fantastic initiative by The Birding Life podcast in partnership with Vortex Optics South Africa:

With every purchase of Vortex Optics' [Viper 8x42/10x42 HD Binoculars](#), [15-45x65/20-60x85 HD Angled Spotting Scopes](#) or [Razor 8x42/10x42 HD Binoculars](#), The Birding Life podcast will sponsor a hectare on Marion Island in YOUR name! By upgrading your optics

in time for Flock, you will be further supporting the [Mouse-Free Marion Project](#), helping to restore Marion Island, and safeguarding the iconic seabirds of the Southern Ocean.

Click on the links above to go to The Birding Life shop.

Meet the Team That Brought You Birdle



It's confirmed: Raining Rock Studio, the creators behind [Birdle](#), will be onboard the *Flock to Marion AGAIN!* cruise! If you haven't played *Birdle* yet, now's your time to [try it out!](#) It's a bird-identifying game that features birds and bird calls from around South Africa. They will be running an exclusive cruise-only version of *Birdle* as well as showcasing a new game: *Birdle GO!* If you complete the games, you stand a chance to win one of two pairs of binoculars from [ProItUp!](#) Stay tuned to the newsletter for more information on how to participate.

Fourth Time's the Charm?



A bird's-eye view of the first *Flock* voyage departing Cape Town Harbour for Walvis Bay, Namibia

© John Maarschalk/[Just John Blog](#)

BirdLife South Africa's *Flock* sea voyages began over 10 years ago, with *Flock at Sea* in 2013. As some of you may remember, first-hand perhaps, voyagers travelled in style to Walvis Bay, marvelling at the stark beauty of the Namib desert meeting the Atlantic Ocean and enjoying the many seabirds we encountered on the way.

That memorable journey began our wonderful relationship with MSC Cruises which continued in 2017 with *Flock at Sea AGAIN!*, a journey to the southern edge of the African Continental Plate, in a 4-day birding bonanza.

Coming to more recent times, our first *Flock to Marion* and third sea voyage overall took place in 2022. Kept indoors and restricted from travel for nearly two years, birders and nature-lovers took out their dusty bags and set jubilant sail for the bracing sea air of the Southern Ocean. With Marion and Prince Edward islands in the distance, heads swivelled in every direction and eyes nearly popped out of their sockets as many hundreds of birders took in a sky filled with many thousands of seabirds.

Now, as we prepare for our fourth *Flock*, we're looking to recognize the stalwarts that have been with us every step of the way so far. For an initiative that we've been jokingly referring to as "Four Flock's Sake!", we want to know who among you have been with us at sea since

our trip in 2013. One such ardent supporter of *Flock* is Peter Harrison, our first Patron of [Mouse-Free Marion](#), joined each time by his wife Shirley Metz.

We'll have a special photograph on board, and a lucky draw for one of our Four Flockers! Want to join the Four Flocks Club? [Let us know!](#)

Not Sure Where to Begin?



Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross

We've created a packing list that should help as you start thinking about getting your gear together for the voyage. You can open the PDF by clicking the green box below. Note that there are links to our shop in the packing list, and advertisements for our shop further on in this newsletter. If you choose to purchase clothing, gear, and merchandise from our shop, you will be directly supporting our mission to conserve Marion Island's incredible seabirds.

[Flock to Marion AGAIN! Packing List](#)

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

1. MSC Cruises has had an answer from the Department of Home Affairs' Immigration Services, and they have confirmed that no immigration clearance needs to be conducted, as the voyage to Marion Island is regarded as a "cruise to nowhere". **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 GOLFER
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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