



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Bird your 'Hood – Birding Big Day 2014

Johannesburg, 21 October 2014: The annual BirdLife South Africa Birding Big Day is a fun, yet competitive day for South Africa's birdwatchers, both beginners and competitive twitchers alike, while at the same time raising funds for the organisation's important conservation work.

This year, BirdLife South Africa would like to encourage greater participation in this event and have created a new category, "Bird your 'Hood". Bird your 'Hood is about birding in your own comfort zone: your garden, neighbourhood, local park or school. So if you are an enthusiastic gardener or a budding backyard birder, why not make a list of birds while visiting your local patch during BirdLife South Africa's Birding Big Day on Saturday 29 November 2014. This special category is tailored to suit those who like to enjoy their coffee on the patio whilst watching a Cape Robin-Chat in the bird bath or the resident weavers building their nests.

By recording the birds that visit your garden you will also be contributing towards seeing how many of South Africa's 845 bird species were spotted collectively during this year's Birding Big Day. Don't be put off if the only birds in your patch are hadeda's or doves; they all count! This is not an "Experts Only" programme; everyone's input will be valuable.

The easiest way to attract a large variety of birds into your garden is by planting indigenous plants. Not only will your municipal water bill be reduced as indigenous gardens need much less water, but you will also attract a variety of insects and butterflies as well. Remember, the wider variety of plants you provide, the more birds you will attract! Flowering plants like aloes attract sunbirds, fig trees attract barbets and seeding grasses provide food for finches and sparrows.

If you do not have a lively bird population already thriving in your garden, you still have time to create an ideal habitat for many species by getting a suitable bird feeder or bird bath as most garden birds appreciate the basic things in life: food and clean water.

In addition to the Garden Bird category, there are the Open and Community/Family categories which cater for the serious birders who get teams together and go birding for a 24-hour period, counting all the bird species they see in an area within a 50 km radius. For those who want to contribute to the scientific gathering of bird data, BirdLife South Africa encourages teams who are registered atlasers to submit data via the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2) or to consider becoming a registered atlaser.

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For further information, please contact: Nikki McCartney, 083 636 1060,
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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. For more information on entering the BirdLife South Africa Birding Big Day, go to www.birdlife.org.za where you can download the entry form and bird checklists. Alternatively, contact BirdLife South Africa (011-789-1122, info@birdlife.org.za) and we will email, fax or post the information to you.
4. There are lucky draw prizes for all categories, which include weekend getaways, books, guided tours and much more.
5. For more information about SABAP2, visit <http://sabap2.adu.org.za/>