

The Flufftail Festival

CELEBRATING OUR WETLANDS



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate use

Protecting our Wetlands

Johannesburg, 2 February 2016:

Wetlands are amongst the most threatened ecosystems in South Africa and water is one of South Africa's scarcest resources. BirdLife South Africa, Eskom and Rand Water (Water Wise) are collaborating to host this year's Flufftail Festival. The Flufftail Festival is linked to World Wetlands Day on 2 February, which is celebrated worldwide to raise awareness about wetlands. With the current drought that is gripping our country, there's no better time to be raising awareness about water.

The 2016 Flufftail Festival will be held at Cresta Shopping Centre and takes the form of a giant maze. The entire family is encouraged to collect entry forms and wander through the maze, stopping at five different stations to answer questions. Each correctly completed entry will stand a chance to win one of many lovely prizes. Participants can also dress up and have their photos taken in the wetland photo booth over the weekend.

You have from 2-8 February to step into this interactive and fun initiative that educates and raises awareness of wetlands, and the associated biodiversity, in order to reduce the threat to wetlands and wetland wildlife.

Napoleon Hill famous author, said *"if you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way"*. We each have the opportunity to make small changes in the way we safeguard our wetlands and waterbirds, and conserve our water.

About wetlands

Wetlands are ecosystems that are saturated with water permanently or for at least part of the year. Wetlands are amongst the most threatened ecosystems in South Africa and water is one of South Africa's scarcest resources. The Flufftail Festival is linked to World Wetlands Day on 2 February, which is celebrated worldwide to raise awareness about wetlands.

The most important ecosystem service provided by wetlands is the regulation of rivers and water flow. Wetlands act like a sponge and plants growing in wetlands play an important role in holding back water, spreading it out and slowing it down. Wetlands have the ability to slow down flood water by as much as 60%. Wetlands also purify water, removing pollutants and toxins.

Some animals are completely dependent on wetlands, whilst others use wetlands for only part of their lives. There are approximately 130 waterbird species in southern Africa, and this rich diversity is possible because there are many wetlands, of different types, spread across the sub-continent.

Every action has a reaction. You may not realise it, but every time you leave the tap running or ignore a leaky tap, precious water is wasted. In a country as water stressed as South Africa, such waste not only affects the environment but will result in us being affected. Find out more about water conservation at the Flufftail Festival this week.

You are invited to visit the Flufftail Festival where we guarantee to fluff-out your tail feathers.

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Notes to Editors:

About Flufftail Festival

- There's more information at <http://www.birdlife.org.za/component/k2/item/516-flufftail-festival>.
- For images to be used with articles, please contact Linda van den Heever at linda.vdheever@birdlife.org.za.