

Dear Sailor,

With less than one week to go before we set sail on our exciting adventure, we wanted to send you some important reminders.

Boarding tickets

If you have still not received your travel documents, including your Embarkation Forms, please contact MSC Cruises immediately on 011 798 3600 or 087 075 0850. Please be sure to print out **two** copies of the Embarkation Forms.

Passports or ID

Passports will not be necessary because our cruise is classed as a 'cruise to nowhere' (although we prefer to call it a 'cruise to a birders' paradise'). You can therefore travel with your ID books/cards (a drivers licence is not accepted). **PLEASE NOTE: Make sure that you travel with the document that you used to make your booking (either your ID or your passport).**

South African electrical appliances

The MSC Sinfonia runs on both 110 V and 220 V. The plug sockets are American (110 V) and European round 2 pin (220 V). The South African 3 pin plug will require a European 2 pin round adapter. Please note that hairdryers are available in the cabins.

BirdLife South Africa Information Desk

BirdLife South Africa's information desk (at the Excursion Office on deck 5) will be open each day from 08h00-17h00 for queries about the talks, seabird guiding and general BirdLife South Africa matters (but obviously not queries related to housekeeping and other MSC matters – those must be taken up with MSC directly).

Merchandise

For those of you who have ordered merchandise, please collect your orders from the BirdLife South Africa information desk once you have embarked.

Lanyards

Once you have boarded, please visit the BirdLife South Africa information desk on Deck 5 (which you will see upon embarkation) to collect your lanyards and name tags. We encourage everyone to wear their name tags as they help in building camaraderie. We politely ask that you return the lanyards at the end of the cruise, and you can hand them in at the BirdLife South Africa information desk on the Friday morning.

Onboard Lecture Schedule

Please visit our website to download the lecture schedule. Please note that there will not be a booking system for lectures: <http://birdlife.org.za/events/flock/flock-at-sea-again-2017>

World Penguin Day

Tuesday 25 April is World Penguin Day, coinciding with our launch of BirdLife International's #ProtectAPenguin Campaign (<https://penguin.birdlife.org>). This will give you the opportunity to show your support for the world's penguins, including our own African Penguin. This will be by signing the sustainability pledge and bringing it to our information desk (we will be creating a colony of penguins

on a wall in the ship), by making a financial pledge to help us save the embattled African Penguin, and by dressing up for the Tuesday night fancy dress dinner. You will find the pledge cards in the welcome envelope in your cabin and there will be extras at our information desk.

Don't forget to join us in celebrating World Penguin Day with our Penguin fancy dress dinner on our second night at sea. Dress up or dress down, we leave the choice to you. It is not compulsory to wear formal clothing or fancy dress (just no shorts or slops). However it would be wonderful for everyone to embrace our love of Penguins and celebrate with us in style!

Currency and Cruise Cards

The currency on board the Sinfonia is in US Dollars. The ship operates on a cashless system and once on board, you will receive a personalised ID cruise card. Please refer to pages 4 and 5 of the MSC Frequently Asked Questions document on our webpage for more information about cruise cards: <http://birdlife.org.za/events/flock/flock-at-sea-again-2017>

Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will take place at 14h30 on Thursday 27 April in the main auditorium of the MSC Sinfonia. No bird guides will be on duty during that time. We do, however, have a minor problem. There will be about 1900 birdwatchers on board (although not all will be members of BirdLife South Africa) and the venue is not able to accommodate everyone. On the previous cruise to Walvis Bay we were able to live-stream to other venues on the ship but, for reasons beyond our control and despite our best endeavours, we are not going to be able to do so on this occasion. We therefore have to politely ask all non-members if they would kindly not attend the AGM. To those members who may find themselves unable to gain access, we apologise most sincerely in advance.

In mitigation, some of the proceedings (such as the presentation of the financials) is technical and the key item, namely the report of the Chief Executive Officer, appears in the Annual Report that will be available to all on board and will also appear on our website. We would however appreciate having many BirdLife South Africa members at the AGM, so please help us fill the Teatro San Carlo (the venue for the AGM).

Win Swarovski binoculars!

You can show your commitment to conservation and, by doing so, stand a chance to win a R47,000 pair of Swarovski binoculars. If you sign up to become a BirdLife South Africa Conservation League Member or upgrade your membership to Conservation League status before or during the Flock at Sea AGAIN! 2017 cruise, you will stand a chance to win this fantastic prize. Existing Conservation League Members who are present on the Flock at Sea AGAIN! cruise will also be entered into the lucky draw. Please visit our website by following the below link if you would like to download the form prior to the cruise. Please note that one copy of the form will be included in the welcome envelope in each cabin. See <http://birdlife.org.za/events/flock/flock-at-sea-again-2017>

Win Zeiss binoculars

One lucky attendee of Prof. Peter Ryan's talk on Marion Island (17h00 on Tuesday 25 April) will win a pair of Zeiss Conquest binoculars (value more than R15,000).

BirdLasser Workshop

A workshop about the exciting mobile app BirdLasser will be held by Henk Nel during the cruise. This workshop will be a practical demonstration about the functionalities of the app. People attending will

follow the demo by entering data on their phones during the workshop. As there will be limited internet access on the trip, people who are planning to attend the workshop are requested to download the app before the trip. It is easy, go to the Play Store (Android) or App Store (iPhone), search for BirdLasser and download, install and register. For more information visit www.birdlasser.com or email Henk Nel at henk@birdlasser.com. We hope to log many seabirds while at sea, so if you have not downloaded the app as yet, do so now!

Other useful tips

Remember to bring warm clothing as the weather where we will be heading can be quite boisterous.

Check-in (embarkation) time is printed on your ticket.

There is no cover from the sun at the Cape Town port, so suitable protection is suggested (such as sunscreen and a hat).

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions and visit the links to our previous communications for more useful information which can be found at: <http://birdlife.org.za/events/flock/flock-at-sea-again-2017>

Have a safe trip and we look forward to welcoming you on board the MSC Sinfonia.

If you're on Facebook, don't forget to join our Flock at Sea AGAIN! 2017 group to join in with the conversation and to see interesting posts, discussions and updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/184051415289185/>

Should you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact Emma Askes, our Events Programme Manager, on emma.askses@birdlife.org.za

Best regards,

The Flock at Sea AGAIN! 2017 Organising Committee

Please note that this email is being sent to the main booking contact (i.e. the email address that was used to confirm your booking through MSC Cruises). Please ensure that the passengers with whom you are sharing receive this notification.