

FLIGHT FOR BIRDERS

A bird identification course for novice and intermediate bird-watchers :

Harold Porter Botanical Gardens, Betty's Bay

(26 and 27 May 2010)

The presentation of the "Flight for Birders" bird identification course by Anton Odendal in Betty's Bay has been scheduled for 26 and 27 May 2010. The costs will be R 350-00 per head. The costs include the course manual and a certificate endorsed by BirdLife South Africa – roughly 1,400 slides and drawings will be used. The contents of the course get updated every second year and this has now been done – in many cases images of similar and potentially confusing species have been combined on the same slide in order to illustrate differences. The development of an infrastructure for birding tourists in the local area will also be highlighted. In the vast majority of the slides English and Afrikaans names of species are printed onto the slide. The course focuses on basic steps in the identification of birds, places heavy emphasis on where to find the rare and often endemic birds in southern Africa and illustrates how ordinary bird-watchers could become involved in the conservation of birds and their habitats.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BRING ALONG:

- One of the bird guide books (Newman's, SASOL or Robert's), preferably one that you are prepared to make notes in to illustrate key identification features of species
- Notebook and pen
- Binoculars
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Hat and sunscreen
- Picnic basket and refreshments (Coffee and tea will be provided).

DAY 1: 26 May 2010

(Kindly note that short breaks will be taken on the hour).

07h30 to 08h00: Registration

08h00 to 09h00: The basic approach to Flight for Birders and what to look for when trying to identify a bird

09h00 to 10h00: The identification of garden birds

10h00 to 10h15: Tea

10h15 to 11h15: The identification of garden birds. A special new talk on how to attract birds to one's garden will be included here.

11h15 to 12h00: An overview of some threatened birds in Southern Africa: what is BLSA trying to do about the problem through conservation programs and how can ordinary birders help?

1. The work of the Dyer Island Conservation Trust
2. BLSA's Albatross Task Force

3. Mark Anderson's work on Lesser Flamingos at Kamfers dam near Kimberley.

12h00 to 12h30: A special section on some of the cuckoos of southern Africa and their host species

12h30 to 13h00: Lunch

13h00 to 15h00: An introduction to the identification of some difficult groups – Little Brown Jobs and Swallows

15h00 to 16h00: Typical birds found along the highways and byways: Focus on Chats, Bustards and gamebirds.

16h00 onwards: Practical outing in small groups applying the principles taught.

DAY 2: 27 May 2010

08h00 to 10h15: The identification of raptors and birds of prey, with a special focus on the Owls of southern Africa

10h15 to 10h30: Tea

10h30 to 11h00: How to prepare when visiting a new birding area: Birding in the Kgalagadi Trans-frontier Park as a brief case-study, during which we place heavy emphasis on the difference between eastern and western species.

11h00 to 12h30: The identification of the fairly common water birds of southern Africa

12h30 to 13h00: Short lunch

13h00 to 13h30: The identification of the seabirds and coastal birds of southern Africa

13h30 to 14h30: Concluding integration: a focus on the conservation of birds and birding tourism - the critical role that the Cape West Coast in general and the southern and central regions in particular could play in this regard

14h30 to 15h00: The 101 species in southern Africa that every avid birder needs to be able to identify – how to distinguish between the various families of birds. (An open-ended participatory discussion on photographs of the most common birds representing different families of birds).

15h00+: Presentation of certificates endorsed by BLSA

DETAILS IN BRIEF:

DATES: 26 and 27 May 2010

VENUE: The Conference Centre at the Harold Porter Botanical Gardens, Betty's Bay

COSTS: R 350-00, that include the course manual and certificate endorsed by BirdLife South Africa.

TO REGISTER AND SECURE YOUR PLACE:

Contact Elaine at mwjasser@mweb.co.za or Mobile: 0824558402.