



*75th Anniversary*

# **BIRDING BIG YEAR**

*In collaboration with the City of Cape Town*

The Cape Bird Club will be launching a Cape Town Birding Big Year to run from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 in celebration of its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a bird club in South Africa.

## ***Objectives and benefits***

This challenge has numerous benefits and objectives:

- A true birding pursuit to mark the Cape Bird Club's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- To highlight the bird diversity within the City of Cape Town
- To publicise and introduce birders to many of the reserves in the city and to increase their profile and access. Information about the City's reserves will be sent out in January.
- To encourage birders, young and old, to enjoy the birdlife on our doorstep within the city.
- To perhaps find some very interesting and unexpected birds within the boundaries of the city through increased awareness and coverage.
- To collect a large volume of bird data for the City of Cape Town area which will be of significant interest to the conservation authorities and researchers.
- To encourage healthy competition amongst birders

## ***Eligibility and record keeping***

There are no eligibility criteria for participation in the challenge. You do not need to be a member of the Cape Bird Club, nor do you need to have any existing birding skills to join. We hope to encourage all kinds of birders to challenge themselves in seeing or hearing as many birds during the year as possible.

All birders participating in the challenge will be required to register an account on Birdlasser (if you do not already have one) and then to join the public challenge available under the "Play" button on the Birdlasser website. Please note that the challenge will only go live on Birdlasser when we tick over into January 2023. In the meantime, please pop over to the Birdlasser website to register if you have not already done so. Also download the app on your smartphone and log in to list species that you see during the challenge.

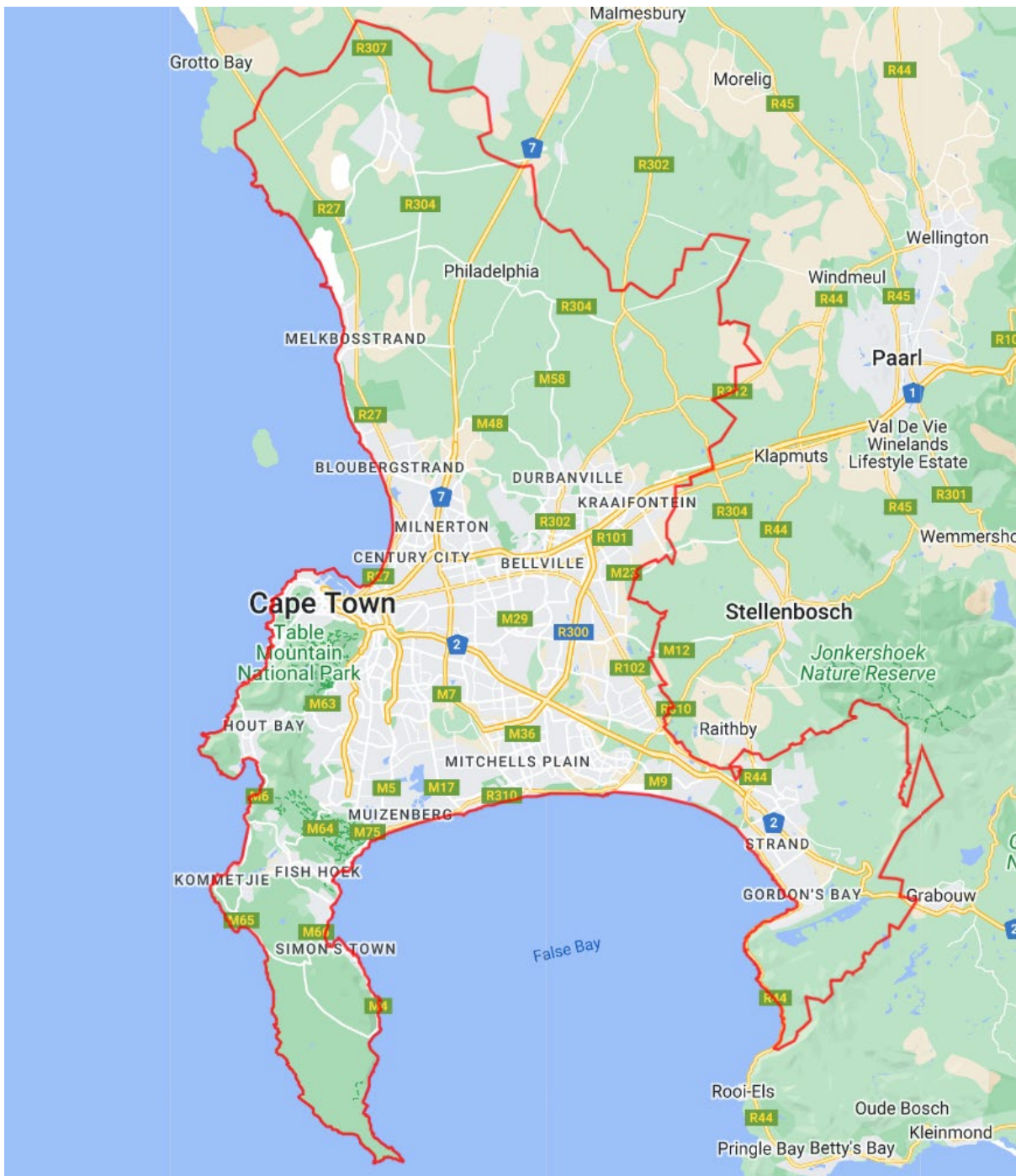
Here is a link to the Birdlasser website:

[BirdLasser. Spot. Plot. Play a part](#)

We'd like to thank Henk and his team at Birdlasser for assisting with the facilitation of this challenge.

## ***Boundaries of the challenge area***

The boundaries will be the City's official boundaries stretching from just south of Grotto Bay in the north west down to just north of Rooi Els in the south east and including the Cape Point section of the Table Mountain National Park. The area of the Birding Big Year is shown below:



We have decided to exclude Robben Island from the challenge area even though it is land that falls under the city's boundaries. There are no birds on the island that do not occur on the mainland aside from Chukar Partridge and we do not believe it is worth the financial outlay to board a ferry for the pursuit of this single species. Although the Indian Peafowl population on the island is considered by some listing authorities to be the only validly tickable population, Indian Peafowl does occur on the mainland and is required to be recorded for atlasing purposes under SABAP2, and so they can be ticked for the challenge, provided they are free ranging, unfed and non-captive birds.

## ***Rules of the Challenge***

The following rules will apply to the challenge:

- All wild birds that are considered tickable for the Southern African bird list are eligible to be listed. The birds can be ticked based on sight or sound, provided you are 100% certain of your identification. There are certain bird species that are, at times, debatable and they are listed below as eligible. (Note: the purpose of including these species in your records is to provide the City of Cape Town with valuable data on invasive aliens, for the sake of conservation.)
  - Mallard – this bird is a valid tickable species provided it is not a hybrid.
  - Bronze Mannikins – there is now a free ranging, self-sustaining population that are pure bred and they are therefore tickable
  - Red-headed Finches – there is now a free ranging, self-sustaining population that are pure bred and they are therefore tickable
  - Lovebird species – there are many lovebirds in the northern suburbs of the city that are free ranging and non-captive. Unfortunately, there is a high degree of hybridization and sometimes this is very subtle and so can be hard to assess. So, while the Cape Town lovebirds are not currently considered established, we are going to encourage everyone to log them as Rosey-faced Lovebirds for the challenge. This is because this information will be useful in assessing the current extent of their range and numbers. This information will be of great use to the conservation authorities and researchers.
  - Common Ostrich – due to many ostriches throughout the city being captive or livestock the only tickable ones will be the ones in a formal nature reserve such as Cape Point Nature Reserve or Koeberg Nature Reserve.
- You MAY NOT use playback from a smartphone or any other sound device to elicit a response from a bird to tick it.
- All birds that are seen or heard whilst you are standing within the boundaries of the challenge area will be eligible. This means that land-based pelagic watches are valid for listing species.
- Birds must be logged *in situ* and in real time as much as is possible. There should be no backdating of logged bird species. This is to ensure that the data points for bird species are accurate and transparent.
- You must adhere to all the relevant ethical standards required of birders when it comes to private and public land access. No trespassing will be tolerated and any birders that are guilty of climbing fences without permission will be disqualified from the challenge.
- The sharing of sightings and gen is to be encouraged and applauded. The challenge hopes to bring together birders from all walks of life to enjoy a shared passion.

## ***Rarities and vetting***

It is very likely that rare birds will be found during the year's challenge period. All rare birds that are found and are subject to verification under the criteria of SABAP2 (either locally or nationally rare birds) will be subject to verification under the challenge. Observers must be prepared to complete a rarity form for these rarities, and these will be vetted by a committee. The committee has not yet been formed, but it is likely that it will consist of experienced birders that may be participating in the challenge and therefore consensus and independence will be required when assessing any records of rare birds by that committee. We aim to ensure that all records of birds during the year are valid and correct.

## ***Prizes and categories***

This is intended to be a challenge of each birder against their own personal goals. However, we do acknowledge that there will be a competitive angle for many that participate. This is to be encouraged and we would like to reward those that achieve great totals during the year. We will be running multiple challenges during the year, but we do intend to have a separate category for young birders. We will ask participants under a certain age bracket to disclose their ages to us so that we can keep track of a category for young birders, in addition to the top listers during the year.

### ***WhatsApp Group***

A WhatsApp group has been set up and names are being added as birders are joining the challenge. Initially the group will be for admin postings only in order that the details can be shared efficiently, but the group WILL be opened up to encourage the sharing of gen and sightings. It will not be a chat group as there are already groups that facilitate this, but we do want there to be open communication channels to keep things interesting during the year. Remember that there is always a mute button for WhatsApp groups! Being on this WhatsApp group is totally voluntary and not a requirement to participate. To have your name added to the WhatsApp group please click on this google form and add your details, so we can add you to the group:

<https://forms.gle/eQ6M7hZ8HhkJf3YEA>

Please send this link to anyone else that you may know who will be interested in this challenge. We think that there is great scope to make this a successful event, and we look forward to the participation of many birders in the greater Cape Town area.