



## **WARM YOURSELF THIS WINTER AT THE FOURTH ANNUAL CHRISSIESMEER CRANE FESTIVAL!**

*2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015*

*Start*

Be sure to join us from the 10th to the 12th of July for the Chrissiesmeer Crane Festival held in a uniquely beautiful part of the Mpumalanga Highveld.

Nestled in the heart of South Africa's Lakes District, the little village of Chrissiesmeer in Mpumalanga derives its name from the adjacent Lake Chrissie, the largest natural freshwater lake in South Africa. Located within a radius of 20 kilometres around Lake Chrissie there are about 300 lakes and pans. Three different types of pans occur here which creates excellent habitat for a wide variety of species, in particular birds. The area was declared as a Protected Environment last year and is home to two of our threatened crane species. This includes our National Bird the Blue Crane - this year's Bird of the Year - as well as a magnificent flock of Grey Crowned Cranes. Birding tours to see these magnificent birds are a major highlight during the festival.

"The objective of the festival is to increase environmental awareness among visitors, local communities and the public of the importance of Chrissiesmeer's biodiversity and the conservation of this crucial crane habitat. The festival also seeks to boost the tourism potential of the area by highlighting the fact that Chrissiesmeer is a great destination for birders and nature lovers, photographers, anglers and cyclists, to name a few," commented Ursula Franke, the EWT's African Crane Conservation Programme Senior Field Officer.

The festival will cater for all with a variety of activities from field trips, gin tasting, local traditional dancing, timeless music and a mountain bike fun ride. In celebration of the area's Scottish ancestry, one of the festival's highlights is the colourful Scottish fireplace concert with a variety of well-known guest artists and accompanied by delicious cuisine.

The event is hosted by Chrissiesmeer's Eco-tourism Association, in partnership with the EWT and local farmers. For more information on the Chrissiesmeer Crane Festival please visit Chrissiesmeer's website [www.chrissiesmeer.co.za](http://www.chrissiesmeer.co.za) or the Facebook page "Chrissiesmeer Crane Festival".

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