



SDOS User Group Guidelines

Introduction

The SDOS User Group can be classified as a "Discussion Group" and it enables 'subscribers' (i.e. members of the group) to share information on topics of interest with the other subscribers. Subscribers will also receive event reminders; newsletters as a PDF file and occasional special notices.

A Discussion Group differs from the well-known social media platforms, such as Facebook, in several important respects:-

- It is a private group, not a public one.
- Only name and email address are required, no other personal details are stored.
- Messages (posts) are distributed by email, and a special Application is not required.
- Message content should relate to the specific interest area(s) of the Group.

The SDOS User Group is currently hosted by a company in the USA called 'Groups.io'

Messages posted to the SDOS User Group are not filtered or monitored before distribution, so for our Group to be informative; interesting, relevant and concise we rely on subscribers observing the following guidelines:-

Message Content – General Guidance

- ◆ Inevitably, as an ornithological society, messages posted are mainly anything relating to birds and birding in our area. Examples are sightings; ringing reports; identification problems; habitats and conservation projects.
- ◆ In addition posts might be about nature and the environment in our area, including mammals; reptiles; insects; plants and trees.
- ◆ But please DO NOT divulge ecologically sensitive information relating to the location of vulnerable species.
- ◆ 'Our area' is interpreted, first and foremost, as the SDOS Recording Area (see map on web-site) and the sites listed on the extended site list. In some cases discussions could relate to sites outside our area, but in adjacent counties, for example, if they might be of interest to members and the sites are within reasonable driving distance.
- ◆ Posts may include still photo attachments if you have a good-quality image available, but please select the best photo out of a set to illustrate your post and keep the number of images to a minimum.
- ◆ Video clips cannot be posted on the User Group. If you wish to share a video you will have to upload it onto one of the sites designed for the purpose of video-sharing, obtain a link, then insert the link into your posts.
- ◆ Members may post details of birding-related equipment, books etc. that they personally have in their possession and wish to sell or dispose of.

Message Content - Other Considerations

- ◆ While it is relatively easy to define the scope of discussions on our User Group it is less easy to define what might be unacceptable to the majority of subscribers.
- ◆ Remember that every 'post' generates an email so, unlike 'social media' we do want to avoid posts which are 'off-topic', offensive or politically contentious.
- ◆ Where you wish to refer to relevant content on a web-site or on social media please DO NOT repost the content - add a link instead.
- ◆ Please refer for checking any posts that you wish to share about campaigns, petitions etc. organised by other groups or individuals. To do this email sdos+owner@groups.io in the first instance with details of the proposed message.
- ◆ Commercial advertising is not permitted under any circumstances.
- ◆ If you wish to post a message which might result in members making financial payments to third-parties (other than personal equipment and book sales referred to above) authorisation from SDOS Council is required by emailing sdos+owner@groups.io with details of the proposed message. *(See also Note 1 below)*
- ◆ If you are unsure whether the topic of a post meets these guidelines, or if you wish to complain about a post, please contact sdos+owner@groups.io

User Group Membership

- ◆ SDOS members who wish to subscribe to the User Group will be sent an invitation by e-mail. By replying to the invitation the member agrees to their email address being held securely by Groups.io (see GDPR Compliance Policy).
- ◆ Subscribers may, if they wish, register on the groups.io web-site. By doing so in addition to managing messages, the photo gallery can be viewed.
- ◆ Subscribers will then receive 'posts' by other members and can reply either to all group members or only to the sender.
- ◆ The preferred way of replying to a post is to use a link at the bottom of the message, rather than the ones you usually use for your general emails.
- ◆ Please note that 'Reply to Group' should only be used if you want to join the general discussion, otherwise 'Reply to Sender' should be used.

Moderation

- ◆ Posts submitted to the User Group will be sent out to all subscribers within minutes and are only checked after sending, so it is important to check your drafts before sending to ensure that the content is correct and in compliance with these guidelines.
- ◆ Moderators reserve the right to immediately remove any post that recipients might find offensive in any way.
- ◆ Moderators also have the right to remove a subscriber from the group if the subscriber's email is a source of a virus, or if a subscriber persistently flouts these guidelines.

Additional Notes

Note 1:- SDOS Council wants to prevent members receiving unwanted requests for payments such as donations to charities or 'crowd-funding' projects. If any such posts are approved a disclaimer will be required, stating that "by allowing this post SDOS is neither indicating its support, nor encouraging members to make payments, and accepts no responsibility for a member's decision to make a payment."