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Cape Town Pelagics Trip Report

22 September 2008

A Cape Town Pelagics trip left Simonstown on 22 September 2008 guided by Cape Town Pelagics guide Alvin Cope, in a calm sea and a gentle following wind. Several pods of **Southern Right Whales** were seen on the way to the Point, the first group being close to the shore in the harbour.

A large group of **Terns** (mainly **Swifts** with a sprinkling of **Commons**), **Cape Gannets**, **Cape Cormorants** and fish 1 mile east of the Bellows was an exciting start to the day. A single **Humpback Whale** at about 5 miles off the Point was seen well by all. There were very few birds on the way out and unfortunately there were no fishing boats in the area. Without fishing boats, windless days are not good for the birds and we had to resort to chumming in the Cape Canyon area. This was fairly successful, with close up views of some of the usual albatrosses and other pelagics.

We were also fortunate to see a shoal of large **Yellowfin Tuna** chasing fish quite close to the boat as well as a **Mako Shark** jumping out of the water on several occasions. The ride home, with the NW wind picking up was uneventful, except for 3 **Arctic Terns** at about 15 miles and lots of **Southern Right Whales** inside the Bay.

It was an unusually quiet day at sea but we had excellent views of what was on offer in the most pristine weather conditions and so we returned in high spirits.

Birds seen, with numbers where known, excluding all the usual stuff on the inside.

Shy Albatross	30
Black-browed Albatross	2
White-Chinned Petrel	
Sooty Shearwater	3
Pintado Petrel	
Wilson's Storm Petrel	
Sub-Antarctic Skua	3
Arctic Tern	

A message from Cape Town Pelagics: A huge thank you to our experienced skippers who are able to safely lead us to the best birding areas and skillfully manoeuvre the boat into just the best position while all on board are busy concentrating on the birds! Coordinating a pelagic trip over a year in advance with guests from all across South Africa and different countries around the world requires an organised office team. We thank them for their special eye for detail - and for the sometimes last-minute rearrangements and frustration if the weather delays the trip to another day! Our biggest thank-you is to our Cape Town Pelagics guides who take time out of their work, often involving seabirds and conservation, and time away from their families, to provide our guests with a world-class birding experience. Cape Town Pelagics donates all its profits to seabirds, and so all the participants who join the trip make a contribution towards bird research and conservation – a big thank you from all of us.

Trip Report by Cape Town Pelagics guide Alvin Cope.