



Trip Report – Cape Town Pelagics – Sunday, 3 October 2021

Trip Highlights: Four species of albatross, **Black-bellied Storm Petrels**, Parasitic Jaeger, Sabine’s Gull, Pintado (Cape) Petrel.

We set out into False Bay with intermittent squalls on the horizon. The calm coastal waters delivered the expected diversity of endemic coastal taxa like **African Penguin, Cape Gannet, Cape, Crowned and Bank Cormorants, Great Crested Tern** (nominate subspecies – Swift Tern), **Kelp** (*vetula* subspecies – Cape Gull) and **Hartlaub’s Gulls**. The specials were joined by **White-breasted Cormorants** and migrant **Common and Sandwich Terns**.

Once past Cape Point and into the open ocean, we quickly added **White-chinned Petrel, Sooty,** and **Great Shearwaters** and both **Northern and Southern Giant Petrels**. A few **Shy Albatrosses** were also seen very close to the coastline, with nearly consistent sightings all the way out to 15 nautical miles. With no fishing vessels working in the immediate area, we put down a slick of fish oil. This attracted a good number of **Wilson’s Storm Petrels**, with a pair of **Black-bellied Storm Petrels** causing great excitement. Our efforts also delivered an additional three species of albatross: **Black-browed** and both **Atlantic and Indian Yellow-nosed**. The other notable additions were **Pintado (Cape) Petrel, Brown Skua, Arctic Tern,** and **Sabine’s Gull**.

Our return trip added **Parasitic Jaeger** to the list, but the sightings of breaching **Humpback Whales** stole the show.

After a quick lunch below the towering cliffs at Cape Point, we continued onto the **Bank Cormorant** colony and **Cape Fur Seal** haul-out at Partridge Point. Here we added **African Oystercatcher** to the day list, before heading back into Simon’s Town harbour.

Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy/White-capped Albatross – 50
Black-browed Albatross – 20
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross - 1
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross – 1
Northern Giant Petrel – 1
Southern Giant Petrel – 1
Sooty Shearwater – 50
Great Shearwater - 10
White-chinned Petrel – 500
Cape (Pintado) Petrel – 2
Wilson’s Storm Petrel – 20
Black-bellied Storm Petrel – 2

Cape Gannet – Common
Brown (Sub-Antarctic) Skua – 2
Parasitic Jaeger - 2
Sabine’s Gull - 3
Arctic Tern – 2

Coastal species:

African Penguin – 20
White-breasted Cormorant – common
Cape Cormorant – abundant
Crowned Cormorant – 3
Bank Cormorant – 18 breeding pairs
Kelp Gull – common
Hartlaub’s Gull – common
Great Crested Tern – common
Common Tern – common
Sandwich Tern - common
African (Black) Oystercatcher - 2

Marine mammals:

Cape Fur Seal – abundant
Humpback Whale – 2

Trip report and photos: Cape Town Pelagics guide [Vincent Ward](#)

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.