



Director Callan Cohen: [callan@birdingafrica.com](mailto:callan@birdingafrica.com)

mobile: +27 83 256 0491

Pelagic enquiries: [info@capetownpelagics.com](mailto:info@capetownpelagics.com)

office: +27 21 531 9148

fax: +27 21 531 8289

4 Crassula Way, 7405 Pinelands, Cape Town, South Africa

## Cape Town Pelagics Trip Report

22 November 2008

A Cape Town Pelagics trip left Simonstown on 22 November 2008 guided by Cape Town Pelagics guide Dalton Gibbs. There were overcast skies with a light southerly wind as we headed out for Cape Point and beyond to the trawling grounds.

In the harbour we found **Cape** and **Hartlaub's Gull**, **Swift Tern** as well **Sandwich Terns**, which have arrived for the summer months. A lone **African Black Oystercatcher** was also about trying its luck on the floating buoys. Further out in False Bay were **African Penguin** on the water surface as well as **Cape Gannet** and **Cape Cormorant** flying out for fishing.

Cape Point was shrouded in mist, so after checking with the Cape Point Lighthouse we set out to sea. Beyond Bellow's rock we came across a few **Sooty Shearwater** that were mixed with occasional **Swift Terns** that were working the area for pelagic fish.

The mist got thicker as we set out for the deep, turning into fine rain which made birding challenging. Undaunted, we picked up several **White-chinned Petrel** and **Cory's Shearwater** that passed near the boat near us. About 17 miles off Cape Point we made out a trawler on the horizon and headed toward her, finding a few **Shy Albatross**, **Cory's Shearwater** and **Sabine's Gull** on the way. Almost immediately upon reaching the flock of birds behind the trawler, we picked up a **Manx Shearwater** mixed in with the **Great Shearwater**, **Shy** and **Black-browed Albatross**. **Northern Giant Petrels** were present in numbers, with up to a dozen being around at a time, in contrast to **Southern Giant Petrel** of which only two individuals were seen. **Subantarctic Skuas** were mixed with a **Parasitic Jaeger** that worked through the feeding birds to either steal food or scavenge scraps before the other birds could get to them. Excellent views were obtained of a number of **Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross**, with a single **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross** present. We stayed with the trawler for an hour, checking the flock as it worked the offal discharged from the stern. With the wind picking up we headed for home. The trip back to land was quiet, with a few flocks of **Sabine's Gull** and **Cory's Shearwater** appearing; near Cape Point a lone **Pomarine Jaeger** chased **Swift Terns** for food.

Back in inside False Bay we moved across to Castle Rock colony to obtain views of the nesting **Bank Cormorants**. These rocks provided good comparison views of bank, **Cape**, **Bank** and **White-breasted Cormorants**. The adjacent rocks held large numbers of Cape Fur Seals. Back in Simonstown came across a single **African Black Oystercatcher**, **Crowned Cormorant** and Grey Heron at the harbour entrance.

Bird species seen and approximate numbers:

Swift Tern	coastal
Hartlaub's Gull	coastal
Cape Gull	coastal
Cape Cormorant	coastal
Bank Cormorant	coastal
White-breasted Cormorant	coastal
Crowned Cormorant	coastal 1

African Penguin	coastal
Cape Gannet	coastal & pelagic – 100
Africa Black Oystercatcher	coastal - 1
Subantarctic Skua	4
White-chinned Petrel	200
Southern Giant Petrel	2
Northern Giant Petrel	14
Sooty Shearwater	100
Great Shearwater	200
Cory's Shearwater	50
Shy Albatross	50
Black-browed Albatross	50
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	8
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	1
Sabine's Gull	50
Parasitic Jaeger	2
Pomarine Jaeger	1

Mammals:

Cape fur seal

**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 Dalton Gibbs.