



Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Saturday, 19 November 2022

Trip Highlights: Shy, Black-browed and Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatrosses, Cory's and Great Shearwater, European and Wilson's Storm Petrels.



We departed at 8am from Simon's Town aboard the *Pisces*, with Skipper Dylan, with a later start to allow the sea to settle. It was a fairly bumpy day at sea with modest winds, and clear, sunny skies. The water temperature averaged 17.5 deg Celsius.

The harbour and cormorant roost delivered the usual suspects, with **African Black Oystercatcher**, **Cape, White-breasted** and **Crowned Cormorants** all showing well, in addition to the endangered **Bank Cormorants** at their breeding location. A single **African Penguin** was seen in False Bay harbour. As usual, **Cape Fur Seals** were present in abundance.

We headed down to Cape Point with occasional **Kelp Gulls** and **Common Terns** seen.

Beyond Cape Point, after the obligatory photo stop for the epic ocean-side view of this famous landmark, we started to encounter occasional **Sooty Shearwaters** and **White-chinned Petrels**, **Cape Gannets**, and a little further into the deep, **Shy Albatrosses** started to show, arcing gracefully into view and passing by the *Pisces* at close range. A single **Sabine's Gull** was seen, flushed from the water with a raft of **White-chinned Petrels**



Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross

Towards the canyon, in deeper pelagic waters, we were lucky enough to locate a longliner fishing vessel, which provided good entertainment and an excellent selection of pelagic species, with immature **Shy** and **Black-browed Albatrosses** present, as well as one gloriously beautiful adult **Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross** which stayed with the longliner through the entire duration of our stay.



We had two sightings of **Cory's Shearwater**, and a single **Great Shearwater** (*photo to left*) gave us a flyby view. Storm Petrels also joined the mix of species, with mostly **European Storm Petrel** seen, joined by at least one **Wilson's Storm Petrel**.

Subantarctic (Brown) Skuas also made an occasional appearance, as well as **Common Terns** moving through. A **Greater Crested Tern** was also seen out in the deep.

Whilst spending time with the longliner, an **Ocean Sunfish** also made a brief appearance.

At least one distant Giant petrel was spotted, but was unfortunately too far away for definitive identification, and the same applies to a distant Jaeger.

Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy Albatross	<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>	10
Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>	2
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>	1
White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procelleria aequinoctialis</i>	30
Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris borealis</i>	2
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardena grisea</i>	15
Great Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gravis</i>	1
Wilson's Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	1
European Storm Petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>	5
Brown (Subantarctic) Skua	<i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>	2
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>	1

Coastal species seen and approximate numbers:

Cape Gannet	<i>Morus capensis</i>	10
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	20
White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	5
Bank Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>	15
Cape Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	200+
African Penguin	<i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	1
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	1
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	10

Marine mammals:

Brown (Cape) Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>	50
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Trip report: Cape Town Pelagics guide, Garret Skead

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.



Shy Albatross