



Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Thursday, 1 June 2023

Trip Highlights: Four albatross species, including Atlantic and Indian Yellow-nosed, Northern & Southern Giant Petrels, Antarctic Prion, Cape (Pintado) Petrel, Great Shearwater, Arctic Tern.

Today's trip started with a stunning winter sunrise over the eastern shoreline of False Bay. The sea birding was very productive with the sightings dominated by coastal species like **Great Crested Tern**, **Kelp Gull**, **Cape Cormorant** and **Cape Gannet**. Our first **Sooty Shearwaters** and **White-chinned Petrels** were sighted just before we reached Cape Point. While stopping to take some photos of the twin lighthouses perched atop the towering cliffs at the Point, we were able to release a recently rehabilitated **Sooty Shearwater**. Once away from the coast, we spotted the first of many **Shy** and **Black-browed Albatrosses** for the day.

The beautifully calm conditions allowed us to reach a working trawler in very good time. Said trawler '*The Foxglove*' was actively fishing at the 24 nautical mile mark, trailing hundreds of birds, mainly albatross and **White-chinned Petrels**. While waiting for the net to be raised, we worked the assembled seabirds, picking out several additional species for the trip. These included a few **Cape (Pintado) Petrels**, **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses** and a small number of **Brown Skuas**.

Once the net was raised and the catch of Hake was processed, the number and diversity of birds increased very quickly. Diligent scanning allowed us to add the first **Antarctic Prions** of the season, with a pair of **Great Shearwaters** still lingering around. Additionally, we had a few close views of adult **Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatrosses**. Both **Northern** and **Southern Giant Petrels** were spotted amongst the melee of hungry birds with a few **Wilson's Storm Petrels** making very quick flybys.

Back near the coast, a pair of **Arctic Terns** were spotted roosting on a wrack of floating kelp.

Safely back in False Bay, we enjoyed a light lunch before making a quick stop at Partridge Point for **Bank** and **White-breasted Cormorants**, as well as a visit to the nearby **Cape Fur Seal** haul out.

A quick view of a single **African Penguin** just offshore of Boulders Beach, with plenty of penguins onshore at the colony itself rounded out the trip.

Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy/White-capped Albatross	150-200
Black-browed Albatross	200-250
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	3
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	10-12
Northern Giant Petrel	2

Southern Giant Petrel	4-5
Sooty Shearwater	200-250
Great Shearwater	2
White-chinned Petrel	400-500
Cape (Pintado) Petrel	10-15
Wilson's Storm Petrel	10-15
Antarctic Prion	3-5
Brown (Sub-Antarctic) Skua	5-7
Arctic Tern	2
Cape Gannet	150-200

Coastal Species:

African Penguin	
White-breasted Cormorant	4 pairs
Cape Cormorant	600-700
Bank Cormorant	15 pairs
Kelp Gull	50-60
Great Crested Tern	350-400
African Black Oystercatcher	1

Mammals:

Cape Fur Seal	abundant
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Trip report: Cape Town Pelagics guide – [Vince 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.