



Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Saturday, 4 November 2023

Trip Highlights: Shy Albatross, all four species coastal Cormorants, Humpback Whales



Our skipper and pelagic guide ,David met Raphael and Laura at 07:00 on Wednesday morning at the False Bay Yacht Club before heading out on a pelagic trip. It was a beautiful wind-free and sunny day. Once we set off from Simon's Town harbour towards Cape Point, we soon started encountering a few coastal seabird species such as **Cape Cormorants, Kelp Gulls, African Oystercatcher, Hartlaub's Gull** and **Greater Crested (Swift) Terns**.

We stopped off briefly at Cape Point for a safety check-in with the lookout tower, and then started making our way toward the fishing grounds. A kilometre or two beyond Cape Point, we saw our first pelagic species, namely **White-chinned Petrels** followed by a few **Cape Gannets**. Soon afterwards, we saw a whale blow, and upon closer inspection, it turned out to be three **Humpback Whales**.

Several **Common Terns** were also present in this area along with **Greater Crested Terns** and **Cape Cormorants**. A little further out a **Sooty Shearwater** came past, then a **Cory's Shearwater** and a **Shy Albatross**. Unfortunately, Laura succumbed to seasickness and a decision was made to return to shore.

Once back inside False Bay, we slowly made our way along the cliffs off Cape Point. Several **Common Terns**, one or two **Sandwich Terns** and a few **Greater Crested Terns** were actively foraging. When we got a little closer, we saw a few **Yellowtail** close to the surface and concluded that the terns were after the same 'baitfish' that the **Yellowtail** was chasing. Along the cliff face, a few **Bank, Cape** and **White-breasted Cormorants** were basking in the sunshine.



Cape Cormorants

After a quick lunch stop just off Buffels Bay in the Cape of Good Hope section of the Table Mountain National Park, we made a last stop at Partridge Point where we visited the **Bank Cormorant** colony and the **Cape Fur Seal** rock, which also hosted one or two **White-breasted Cormorants** and several **Cape Cormorants**.

A quick stop at the boulders penguin colony also produced **Crowned Cormorant** and a pair of **African Oystercatcher**. Besides the **African Penguins** standing on the beach, a juvenile penguin swam up to our boat to have a better look. We then finally returned to the Simon's Town harbour after a beautiful day of birding out at sea.

Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy Albatross	1
White-chinned Petrel	30
Cory's Shearwater	1
Sooty Shearwater	2
Cape Gannet	15

Coastal species:

Egyptian Goose	2
Grey Heron	1
Hartlaub's Gull	15
Kelp Gull	50
African Oystercatcher	3
White-breasted Cormorant	20
Bank Cormorant	25
Crowned Cormorant	2
Cape Cormorant	250
Reed Cormorant	0
African Penguin	100
Sandwich Tern	2
Great Crested Tern	40
Common Tern	100

Mammal species:

Brown (Cape) Fur Seal	100
Humpback Whale	3

Trip report: Cape Town Pelagics guide - [David Swanepoel](#)

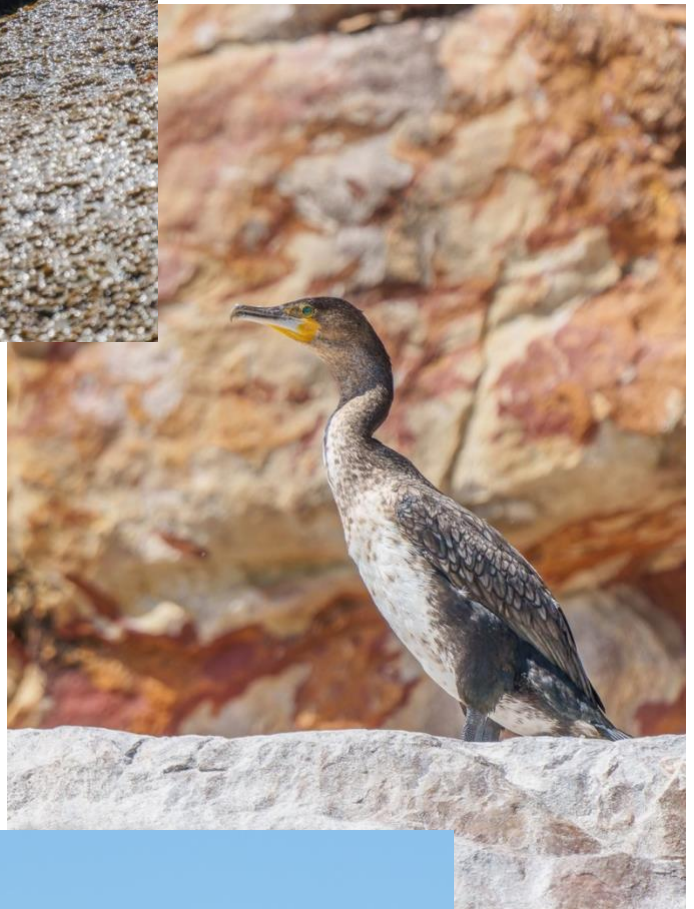
A message from Cape Town Pelagics: A huge thank you to our experienced skippers who are able to safely lead us to the best birding areas and skillfully manoeuvre the boat into just the best position while all on board are busy concentrating on the birds! Coordinating a pelagic trip over a year in advance with guests from all across South Africa and different countries around the world requires an organized 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.



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Cape Fur Seal

White-breasted Cormorant



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