



## Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Wednesday, 11 October 2023

Trip Highlights: Three species Albatross, Great-winged Petrel, Parasitic Jaeger, Humpback Whales, Common Dolphins.

Starting the day at the False Bay Yacht Club, we first looked at the roosting cormorants on some of the boats and picked up a few **Crowned Cormorants** among the **Cape Cormorants**. From here, we left the harbour and were joined by some **African Penguins** next to the boat heading out to fish in the bay.

We continued on to Cape Point and after we passed the point we started getting the first pelagic species in the form of **White-chinned Petrels** and **Sooty Shearwaters**. There were many terns feeding in this area as well, and we managed to identify **Sandwich, Greater Crested, Common, Antarctic** and **Arctic Terns**. At the moment, there is a short window of time when the resident, winter visiting, and summer visiting terns are all present. A **Subantarctic Skua** harassed some of the terns, and we also had a brief flyby from a **Parasitic Jaeger**, a newly arrived summer visitor to these waters.

Shortly thereafter we saw one of the highlights of the trip. We had close views of **Humpback Whales** that were surfacing and displaying their fins. We moved into some productive waters as the sea temperatures shifted from cold to warm and started seeing many **Great Shearwaters**, as well as our first **Shy Albatrosses** and large numbers of **White-chinned Petrels**. A **Great-winged Petrel** sped past very quickly providing brief views, and we managed to pick up both **Northern** and **Southern Giant Petrels**.

Since the nearest trawlers were quite far away, we decided to chum in this area and were soon joined by many birds, including **Shy, Black-browed** and **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Wilson's Storm Petrels, Arctic** and **Common Terns**, and **Subantarctic Skua**, which sat obligingly right alongside the boat. Since the seas were becoming quite choppy, we decided to head back and were joined by a pod of **Long-beaked Common Dolphins** wake-riding on the return trip.

On the return trip we also encountered two young **Northern Giant Petrels** feeding on a dead seal which provided very close views and had another flyby from a **Parasitic Jaeger**.

Back in False Bay, we stopped off at Partridge Point to view the breeding **Bank Cormorants** and more roosting **Cape Cormorants** and Boulder's Bay to see the **African Penguin** colony. Arriving back in the harbour we were greeted by a pair of **African Oystercatchers** on the pier.

**Pelagic species seen:**

Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross  
Shy Albatross  
Black-browed Albatross  
Wilson's Storm Petrel  
Southern Giant Petrel  
Northern Giant Petrel  
Great-winged Petrel  
White-chinned Petrel  
Great Shearwater  
Sooty Shearwater  
Subantarctic Skua  
Parasitic Jaeger  
Arctic Tern  
Antarctic Tern  
Cape Gannet

**Coastal species:**

Crowned Cormorant  
Bank Cormorant  
Cape Cormorant  
White-breasted Cormorant  
Hartlaub's Gull  
Kelp Gull  
Common Tern  
Great Crested Tern  
Sandwich Tern  
African Oystercatcher  
African Penguin

**Marine Mammals:**

Humpback Whale  
Long-beaked Common Dolphins

**Terrestrial bird species:**

Speckled Pigeon  
Red-winged Starling  
Cape Canary

Trip report: Cape Town Pelagics guide - [Cameron Blair](#)

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.