



Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Sunday, 30 June 2024

Trip Highlights: Three species albatross including Indian Yellow-nosed, Cape (Pintado) Petrel, Antarctic Tern, Brown Skua and four Humpback Whales.



After meeting in Simon's Town harbour, we boarded our vessel and began the run down to Cape Point. As we worked our way south, we encountered a nice array of typical coastal seabird species like **African Penguin**, **Cape Cormorant**, **Cape Gannet**, **Great Crested Tern**, as well as both **Kelp** and **Hartlaub's Gulls**. Just before reaching the Point we were treated to a spectacular encounter with a pair of very relaxed **Humpback Whales** slowly making their way out of False Bay.

Once out of the bay, we got our first views of **Sooty Shearwaters** and **White-chinned Petrels**, two species which would be our almost constant companions for the rest of the trip. To the great excitement of most aboard we picked up our first of several **Shy Albatrosses** just a few nautical miles further out.

With no trawlers within range, we continued out into deeper waters to start chumming. This worked very well with an excellent diversity of tubenoses/procellariforms approaching our vessel. These included: **Shy (White-capped), Black-browed** and **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses**, and both **Northern** and **Southern Giant Petrels**. Our highlights included **Pintado/Cape Petrel** and **Wilson's Storm Petrel**.

Other notable sightings included several **Brown Skuas, Common** and **Antarctic Terns**, and a few **Kelp Gulls**.

With the forecast strong winds starting to pick up, we returned to the coast. En route we encountered our third **Humpback Whale** for the trip.

Once past Cape Point, we headed to the calm shallows near Buffelsbaai to enjoy a light lunch. We were treated to views of a herd of **Eland**, several **African Oystercatchers** and **Common Ostriches**. We were also witness to the dramatic scene of a **Chacma Baboon** raiding a family's picnic. Continuing north we stopped at the **Bank Cormorant** colony at Partridge Point. The tall granite outcrops also held **Crowned, White-breasted** and **Cape Cormorants**. The lower lying slabs were a refuge for resting **Cape Fur Seals**.

Closer to Simon's Town, we enjoyed very close views of the day's fourth **Humpback Whale**. Just offshore of Boulders Beach we enjoyed excellent views of several rafts of **African Penguin** basking on the ocean's surface.

Bird species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy/White-capped Albatross – 11
Black-browed Albatross – 7
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross – 2
Northern Giant Petrel – 2
Southern Giant Petrel - 1
Sooty Shearwater – 80
White-chinned Petrel – 100
Pintado (Cape) Petrel – 1
Wilson's Storm Petrel - 2
Brown (Sub-Antarctic) Skua – 5
Antarctic Tern – 1
Cape Gannet – 55

Coastal species:

African Penguin – 38 (more onshore at Boulders)
White-breasted Cormorant – 16 (7 breeding pairs)
Cape Cormorant – 1900
Bank Cormorant – 37 (19 active nests)
Crowned Cormorant - 7
Kelp Gull – 75
Hartlaub's Gull - 4
Great Crested Tern – 30
Common Tern - 5
African (Black) Oystercatcher – 7

Marine mammal:

Cape Fur Seal – abundant (coastal and pelagic)

Humpback Whale – 4

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 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.