



## Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Sunday, 15 September 2024

**Trip Highlights:** Three albatross species, Soft-plumaged Petrels, Humpback Whales.



We left Simon's Town as the sun rose and headed toward Cape Point, passing by large groups of **Cape Cormorant**.

As we reached Cape Point, we had our first tubenoses for the day, with **Sooty Shearwaters** and **White-chinned Petrels** in between large numbers of **Common Terns**. We also soon saw several **Cape Gannet** and **Shy Albatross**.

From Cape Point we headed west in search of trawlers. On the way to the fishing grounds, we had numerous **Shy Albatross**, as well as a few **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross**, one of which showed very well as it flew past the boat. We were also treated to several breaching **Humpback Whales**.

We were able to find some long-liners, with large numbers of **White-chinned Petrels** and **Shy Albatross**. There were smaller numbers of **Brown Skua**, **Black-browed Albatross** and the diminutive **Wilson’s Storm Petrels**, with a brief flyby of a **Northern Giant Petrel**.

We moved around between the long-liners and had excellent sightings of a large group of **Cape (Pintado) Petrels** sitting on the water. There was also a few distant **Soft-plumaged Petrels** that put in an appearance. It was a treat to see the albatrosses and petrels sitting on the water waiting to feed.

Unfortunately, the wind picked up and we had to start making our way back to False Bay. We saw several more Shy Albatross and Cape Gannet, flying effortlessly over the bumpy ocean.

Back inside the bay, we enjoyed a light lunch at Buffel’s Bay before passing by the **Bank Cormorant** colony, where we also had **Cape** and **White-breasted Cormorants**. On the way back to the harbour we had excellent views of two **Humpback Whales** putting on quite a show.

**Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:**

Shy/White-capped Albatross	100
Black-browed Albatross	5
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	2
Northern Giant Petrel	1
Sooty Shearwater	300
White-chinned Petrel	400
Pintado (Cape) Petrel	50
Soft-plumaged Petrel	3
Wilson’s Storm Petrel	5
Cape Gannet	20
Brown (Sub-Antarctic) Skua	2

**Coastal species**

White-breasted Cormorant	4
Cape Cormorant	±750
Bank Cormorant	30
Hartlaub’s Gull	10
Great Crested Tern	10
Common Tern	200
Kelp Gull	50
African Penguin	10

**Marine mammals**

Cape Fur Seal – coastal & pelagic	abundant
Humpback Whale	5

**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.