



Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Saturday, 8 February 2025

Trip Highlights: Spectacled Petrel, Northern Royal Albatross



Our group met at 07:00 on a beautiful calm and sunny Saturday morning at the False Bay Yacht Club Simon's Town before setting off on our pelagic tour on board with the *Destiny*. On our way out from the harbour, we made a quick pass by the floating barriers, on which sat an assortment of coastal birds, including **Cape Cormorant**, **Hartlaub's Gull**, **Sandwich Tern** and **Swift (Greater Crested) Tern** while several **Kelp Gulls** were flying about. The trip towards Cape Point was reasonably uneventful although we kept on seeing good numbers of the coastal species mentioned above, as well as one or two rafts of **African Penguin**.

After we made our customary safety check-in stop at Cape Point, we slowly headed in a south-westerly direction where, according to the AIS system, which tracks marine traffic, one or two trawlers were engaged in fishing activities. Around the point itself, a few **Kelp Gulls**, **Cape Cormorants** and **Greater Crested Terns** were milling about. Slightly further along, we picked up a few **Sooty Shearwaters**, **White-chinned Petrels**, **Cape Gannet** and a few flocks of **Cory's Shearwaters**.

We came across two trawlers approximately 20 nautical miles to the west-southwest of Cape Point, both of which had a decent following of birds – these were later joined by a third trawler. Among the more regular species present, were **Common Tern, Sooty Shearwater, White-chinned Petrel, Cory's Shearwater, Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Shy Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Great Shearwater, Brown Skua, Southern Giant Petrel, Northern Giant Petrel, Great-winged Petrel** as well as two specials for the day namely a brief flyby from a **Northern Royal Albatross** and several **Spectacled Petrels**. On the day we guessed that there were at least half a dozen of the latter present, but it may well have been double our initial estimate.

After spending a few hours with the seabirds, it finally was time to head northwards again. Along our trip back towards the shoreline, we continued seeing small numbers of some of the bird species encountered earlier on during the day.

Back in False Bay, we then found a nice, relatively quiet spot to stop for a lunch break, while enjoying all the coastal seabirds around the boat. En route back to Simonstown, we made a last stop at Partridge Point where we visited the **Bank Cormorant** colony and the **Cape Fur Seal** rock, which also hosted a few **Cape Cormorants, White-breasted (Great) Cormorants** and two **Crowned Cormorants**. We then finally returned to the Simon's Town harbour after a lovely day of birding out at sea.

Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy Albatross	200+
Black-browed Albatross	200+
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	5
Northern Giant Petrel	1
Southern Giant Petrel	3
White-chinned Petrel	500
Spectacled Petrel	6+
Cory's Shearwater	50
Sooty Shearwater	20
Great Shearwater	10
Wilson's Storm Petrel	10
European Storm Petrel	50
Cape Gannet	5
Brown (Subantarctic) Skua	5
Sabine's Gull	2

Rarities / Vagrants:

Northern Royal Albatross	1
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Coastal species:

Grey Heron	1
Hartlaub's Gull	15
Kelp Gull	200
African Oystercatcher	1
White-breasted Cormorant	2

Bank Cormorant	10
Crowned Cormorant	2
Cape Cormorant	500
African Penguin	100
Sandwich Tern	1
Great Crested Tern	120
Common Tern	30

Marine Mammals:

Brown (Cape) Fur Seal	120
Humpback Whale	Blow

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

GALLERY



Black-browed Albatross



Great Shearwater



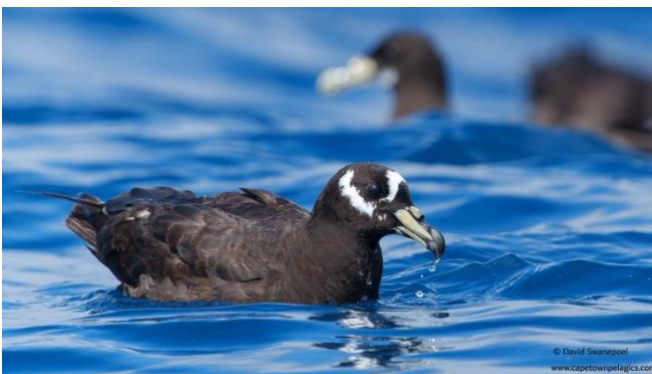
Southern Giant Petrel



Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross



Shy Albatross



Spectacled Petrel



Northern Giant Petrel



European Storm Petrel

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.