



## Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Wednesday, 27 August 2025

Trip Highlights: Five species of albatrosses, including Southern Royal and Indian Yellow-nosed, Soft-plumaged Petrel, Northern Giant Petrel, Brown Skua.



We set out into False Bay in moderate but rapidly improving sea conditions. The birding started off well with good views of **Crowned, Cape and White-breasted Cormorants, Kelp and Hartlaub's Gulls and Great Crested Terns**. The shoreline at Boulders Beach was dotted with **African Penguins**. Towards the southern edge of the bay, the first of many **Cape Gannets** was seen.

Once safely past Cape Point, the sea birding quickly became very productive. The first of many **White-chinned Petrels and Sooty Shearwaters** made close approaches to our boat. In short order the first **Shy (White-capped)** and **Black-browed Albatrosses** were seen well. An exciting list addition were at least three **Soft-plumaged Petrels**.

At 17 nautical miles offshore, we reached the '*Ferox*' - a working hake trawler. It trailed a good numbers of albatrosses, mainly **Black-browed**, but also **Shy**, and smaller numbers of both **Atlantic and Indian Yellow-nosed Albatrosses**. **Pintado/Cape Petrels** were very common. Several **Brown Skuas** were seen well, as was a juvenile **Southern Giant Petrel**.

The real excitement came in the form of a **Southern Royal Albatross** that flushed up from a raft of mixed albatrosses. Sadly, it flew off very rapidly and could not be relocated despite some frantic searching.

Our return trip allowed more views of the more common species, with some excitement coming from a pair of **Humpback Whales**.

Once safely back in False Bay we stopped for a light lunch below the cliffs at Cape Point. We continued back to port, finishing off the trip with good views of a pair of endemic **African Oystercatchers**.

**Bird species seen and approximate numbers:**

Southern Royal Albatross – 1  
Shy (White-capped) Albatross – c. 60  
Black-browed Albatross – 250  
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross – 2  
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross - 3  
Southern Giant Petrel – 2  
Pintado/Cape Petrel – 60  
Soft-plumaged Petrel – 3-4  
White-chinned Petrel – c.250  
Sooty Shearwater - 50  
Cape Gannet – 15  
Brown (Sub-Antarctic) Skua – 5

**Coastal species:**

African Penguin – c.50 (onshore at Boulders)  
White-breasted Cormorant –35 (13 active nests)  
Cape Cormorant – c. 500  
Bank Cormorant – c.35 (22 active nests)  
Crowned Cormorant – 2  
Kelp Gull – c.75  
Hartlaub's Gull – c.2  
Great Crested Tern – c.75  
African Oystercatcher - 2

**Marine mammals:**

Cape Fur Seal – abundant (coastal and pelagic)  
Humpback Whale - 2

**eBird checklist links:**

Simonstown to Cape Point: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S269826615>  
Cape Point to Trawling Grounds: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S269827494>  
Trawling Grounds: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S269829042>  
Trawling Grounds to Cape Point: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S269828182>  
Cape Point to Simonstown: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S269825963>

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.

