



Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics – Saturday, 6 June 2026

Trip Highlights: Three species of albatross, Southern Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and Whales



Our group met bright and early on a beautiful Cape Town winter's morning at the Simon's Town Yacht Club before setting off on our pelagic tour on board with the *Destiny*. Walking down to the mooring spot, we saw two **Grey Herons**, a pair of **Egyptian Geese** and a group of **Kelp Gulls** patrolling the jetties. Not only the floating barrier was covered in **Cape Cormorants**, but also seemingly every rock in the bay. As first light broke, we encountered a raft or two of **African Penguins** while the **Greater Crested Terns** were fishing in the bay, and then we had really close-up views of two adult **Southern Right Whales** as they approached us once we had cut the engines.

After we made our customary safety check-in stop at Cape Point, we slowly headed in a south-westerly direction where according to the marine traffic site several fishing vessels were active. At the point itself, there were skeins of **Cape Cormorants**, as well as some **Kelp Gulls** and **Greater Crested Terns** and just beyond that some of us had brief views as a **Humpback Whale** dived. It wasn't long until we then saw our first **White-chinned Petrels**, **Sooty Shearwaters**, **Cape Gannets** and the first of many groups of **Antarctic Prions**. A **Manx Shearwater** came flying past us, and not long afterwards we also started picking up one or two **Shy Albatrosses**.



Shy Albatross

Several trawlers and a longliner were present in our target area, and judging from the numbers of birds huddled in rafts and flying around some fishing activity had evidently taken place earlier on. Among the species present were **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Shy Albatross, Southern Giant Petrel, Northern Giant Petrel, Brown Skua, Pintado Petrel, Antarctic Prion, Cape Gannet, Sooty Shearwater, White-chinned Petrel** and **Wilson's Storm Petrel**. A single **Sabine's Gull** paid us a quick visit, and then we had really brief views as our bird of the day, a **Southern Fulmar** flew past and disappeared as soon as it came.



Black-browed Albatross



Northern Giant Petrel

After spending a few hours with the seabirds, it eventually was almost time to head northwards again. Before doing so, however, we decided to pay each of the three trawlers in the vicinity an individual visit. At the last trawler, we first relocated our **Southern Fulmar**, and then realised there were two more! Along our trip back towards the shoreline, we continued to get regular sightings of some of the bird species encountered earlier on during the day.

Once back in False Bay, we first found a quiet spot near the coastline to enjoy lunch, where we were surrounded by **Kelp Gulls** and **Greater Crested Terns** and then a smallish whale blew a spray of water - possibly a **Brydes Whale**, but we could unfortunately not confirm its ID.

After lunch, we stopped off at Patridge point, where we could enjoy views of the resident **Bank Cormorants**. Also in attendance were one or two **Great (White-breasted) Cormorants**, several **Cape Cormorants**, and a few **Kelp Gulls**. Afterwards we made a quick stop at a rock nearby where some **Cape Fur Seals** were basking in the sun, and then we finally returned to the Simon's Town harbour after a lovely day of birding out at sea.



Antarctic Prion © Connor Barr



Southern Fulmar © Connor Barr

Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy Albatross	100
Black-browed Albatross	500+
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	30
Northern Giant Petrel	2
Southern Giant Petrel	15
Giant Petrel spp	5
Cape (Pintado) Petrel	300+
Southern Fulmar	3
Antarctic Prion	500+
White-chinned Petrel	500+
Sooty Shearwater	250
Manx Shearwater	1
Wilson's Storm Petrel	50-80
Cape Gannet	50-80
Brown (Subantarctic) Skua	20
Sabine's Gull	1

Coastal Species:

Egyptian Goose	2
Grey Heron	2
Kelp Gull	50
White-breasted Cormorant	5
Bank Cormorant	20
Cape Cormorant	1000+
African Penguin	100
Great Crested Tern	120

Marine Mammals:

Brown (Cape) Fur Seal	80
Bryde's Whale	possible
Southern Right Whale	2
Humpback Whale	1

Trip report & photos by [David Swanepoel](#)

Additional photos : Connor Barr



White-chinned Petrel © Connor Barr

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.