



Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics – Sunday, 26 July 2026

Trip Highlights: Four species of albatross, Spectacled Petrel



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. The light had just started to break through as we walked down to the mooring spot, and a group of **Kelp Gulls** were patrolling the jetties. Both the floating barrier and the larger rocks in the bay were covered in **Cape Cormorants**, with one or two **Great Cormorants** in between. On our way to the point we encountered one or two rafts of **African Penguins** as well as several **Greater Crested Terns**. Along this stretch we also had a chance to spend a few wonderful moments with our first **Humpback Whale** of the day, and then just before we got to the entrance of False Bay, a few distant **Sooty Shearwaters** came flying past low over the water.

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 impressive skeins of **Cape Cormorants**, as well as some **Kelp Gulls** and **Greater Crested Terns**. On the way out we found more **Sooty Shearwaters**, followed by **White-chinned Petrels**, a **Southern Giant Petrel** and one or two **Cape Gannets**.

There were three trawlers 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**, **Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross**, **Black-browed Albatross**, **Shy Albatross**, **Southern Giant Petrel**, **Northern Giant Petrel**, **Kelp Gull**, **Brown**

Skua, Pintado Petrel, Sooty Shearwater and White-chinned Petrel as well as small numbers of **Cape Gannet**, two **Spectacled Petrels**, one **Antarctic Prion** and one **Great Shearwater**.

Each time one of the trawlers hauled in a new catch, the numbers of seabirds were buoyed to a truly spectacular mass of birds. After spending a few hours in the area, it eventually was time to head northwards again. 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 as well as a single **Antarctic Tern** that came flying past all too briefly.

Once back in False Bay, we found a spot near the coastline (and out of the wind that had picked up slightly) to enjoy a quick lunch, after which we stopped off at Patridge point, where we could enjoy views of the resident **Bank Cormorants**. Also in attendance were one or two **Great Cormorants**, several **Cape Cormorants**, three **Crowned 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 Simonstown harbour after a lovely day of birding out at sea.

Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy Albatross	300+
Black-browed Albatross	300+
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	10
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	50
Northern Giant Petrel	5
Southern Giant Petrel	50
Cape (Pintado) Petrel	500+
Antarctic Prion	1
White-chinned Petrel	500+
Spectacled Petrel	2
Sooty Shearwater	500+
Great Shearwater	1
Brown (Subantarctic) Skua	20
Cape Gannet	30

Coastal Species:

Egyptian Goose	2
Grey Heron	1
Kelp Gull	250
White-breasted Cormorant	20
Bank Cormorant	35
Crowned Cormorant	3
Cape Cormorant	500+
African Penguin	100
Great Crested Tern	200
Antarctic Tern	1

Marine Mammals:

Brown (Cape) Fur Seal	50
Humpback Whale	1

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

Gallery



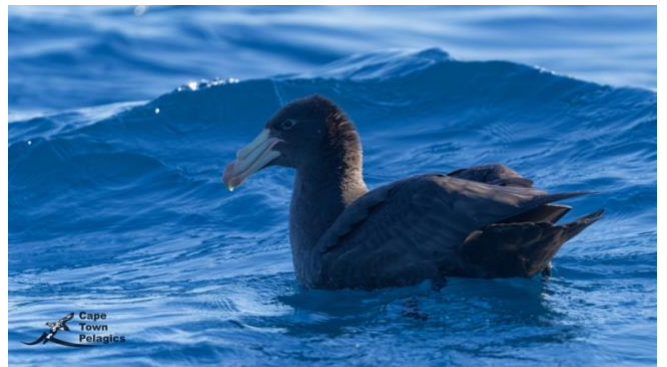
Spectacled Petrel



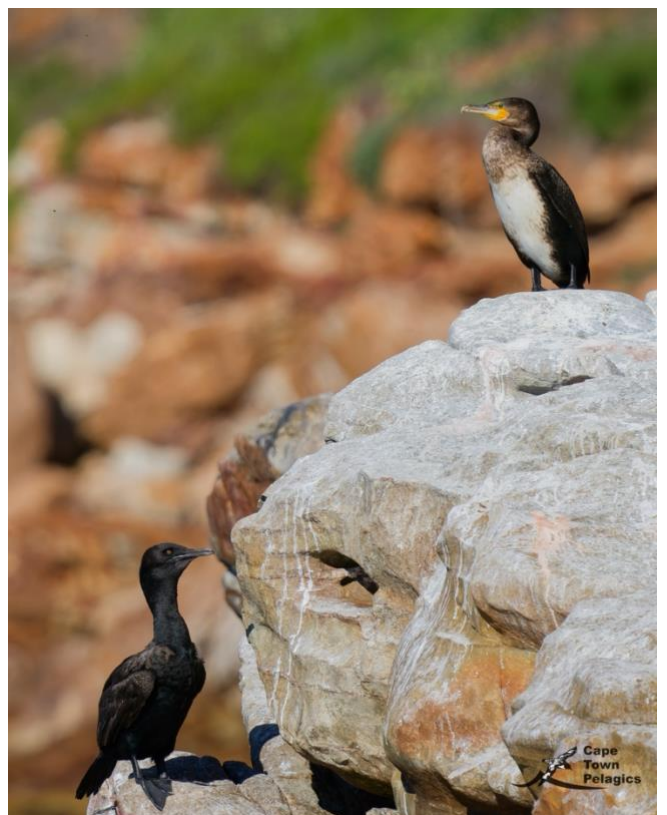
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross



White-chinned Petrel



Northern Giant Petrel



Bank & White-breasted Cormorant



Sooty Shearwater



White-chinned Petrels



Shy Albatross



Brown (Subantarctic) Skua



Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross



Black-browed Albatross



Black-browed Albatross

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.

