



### Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics – Saturday, 1 August 2026

Trip Highlights: Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Manx Shearwater, both Southern and Northern Giant Petrels, Humpback Whale and Common Dolphins.



Our group met nice and early on a beautiful, calm morning for the first pelagic trip of August. As we walked to our boat we saw numerous **Kelp Gulls** already on their morning patrol. We also encountered many **Cape Cormorants** on the floating jetty and some abandoned vessels within the harbour. We had quite an eventful trip toward Cape Point, with a couple of **Greater Crested Terns** flying past, two large rafts of **African Penguin** giving us close views and a huge pod of **Common Dolphin** swimming all around the boat in the beautiful golden light.



We reached the Point and made our customary safety stop before heading out to the drawling grounds where one trawler seemed to be in reaching distance. The conditions were very strange – not a single gust of wind made the sea very calm and all around us we could see dead fish (likely a type of Red-eyed Sardine) which we assumed was caused by Red Tide or something similar. The birds were few and far between in these strange conditions, however we did see numerous congregations of **White-chinned Petrel** and **Sooty Shearwater** sitting on the water and we had two **Manx Shearwater** flying past. We also had a **Humpback Whale** that surfaced a bit too close for comfort to our vessel, giving us all quite a shock.

Once we reached the trawler the strangeness continued, with only a handful of birds following it whilst it was bringing up its catch. Three Shy Albatross soon joined the party. Following the trawler we were also greeted by **Southern Giant Petrel**, **Northern Giant Petrel** and **Pintado Petrel**.



Cape (Pintado) Petrel

Northern Giant Petrel

On our way back to have some lunch within the bay, we were greeted by a juvenile Yellow-nosed Albatross which, after examination of the photos, was identified as an **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross**. We also had a single Brown Skua hovering over the water.



Juvenile Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross

We enjoyed a lovely lunch within the bay and headed off to Partridge Point to enjoy some great views of all four pelagic cormorant species: **Bank Cormorant**, **Cape Cormorant**, **Crowned Cormorant** and **White-breasted Cormorant**. We also had wonderful views of **Cape Fur Seal** throughout our entire trip. Although the numbers of birds weren't their usual volume, we still had a wonderful day with some memorable sightings.



Shy Albatross



Bank & Cape Cormorants

**Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:**

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross | 1  |
| Shy Albatross                 | 6  |
| Southern Giant Petrel         | 1  |
| Northern Giant Petrel         | 2  |
| White-chinned Petrel          | 80 |
| Pintado Petrel                | 4  |
| Sooty Shearwater              | 60 |
| Manx Shearwater               | 2  |
| Brown Skua                    | 1  |
| Cape Gannet                   | 20 |

**Coastal species:**

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| Kelp Gull                | 100+ |
| Hartlaub's Gull          | 3    |
| Greater Crested Tern     | 9    |
| Grey Heron               | 1    |
| Crowned Cormorant        | 4    |
| White-breasted Cormorant | 8    |
| Cape Cormorant           | 300+ |
| Bank Cormorant           | 40   |
| African Penguin          | 60   |

**Mammals:**

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Common Dolphin | 200 |
| Humpback Whale | 1   |
| Cape Fur Seal  | 250 |

Trip report & Photos: Cape Town Pelagics guide: Connor Barr



Crowned Cormorant

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.

