



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

Trip Highlights: Three albatross species including a distant Northern Royal, Spectacled Petrel, Manx Shearwater, Southern & Northern Giant Petrels and Humpback Whales.



We left the harbour just after 07:30 and headed towards Cape Point. As we left False Bay, we came across our first tubenoses for the day: **White-chinned Petrels** and a distant **Shy Albatross**. Additionally, we had several **Cape Gannets**, **Cape Cormorants** and **Greater-crested Terns**.

We headed west in search of a fishing vessel. On the way to the fishing grounds, we had an extremely surprising sighting of a single **Spur-winged Goose** flying past the boat. They were likely heading towards the Overberg region. On the way to the fishing boat, we had relatively few species but had a fairly constant stream of **White-chinned Petrels** and **Sooty Shearwaters**, with a **Manx Shearwater** putting in a brief appearance. We also had a short sighting of some **Humpback Whales**.

After a fairly bumpy ride with a lot of sea spray, we arrived at a trawler that had broken its net as it had pulled it in. There were hundreds of fish in the water, with many hundreds of birds coming to feast. There were three albatross species: many **Shy** and **Black-browed Albatross**, with a few **Indian Yellow-nosed** in between. Dozens of **Cape (Pintado) Petrels** were feeding in-between the **White-chinned Petrels** and **Sooty Shearwater**. We were treated to excellent views of both **Southern** and **Northern Giant Petrels**, with several **Cape Gannets** flying overhead.

However, the highlight came in the form of a **Spectacled Petrel** that showed very well over the duration of time that we were at the fishing vessel, often right next to our boat. We were able to clearly see the white rings on the face combined with the dark bill tip, features that are diagnostic for this very special species. A very distant **Northern Royal Albatross** was glimpsed on the horizon, but it did not come any closer and we were not able to relocate it.

Unfortunately, the wind was picking up, so to prioritise safety, we headed back towards Cape Point. Back in False Bay we made a stop at the **Bank Cormorant** colony at Partridge Point. These endangered birds are always great to see, and we were fortunate to see a partially leucistic individual.

On was back to the harbour we saw some **Humpback Whales** making their way out of False Bay. Just before we got to the harbour, we added **African Penguin** to the list as we had several small groups swim past the boat.

Bird species seen and approximate numbers:

Northern Royal Albatross – 1
Shy/White-capped Albatross – 200
Black-browed Albatross – 100
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross – 10
Northern Giant Petrel – 5
Southern Giant Petrel – 10
Sooty Shearwater – 40
Manx Shearwater – 1
White-chinned Petrel – 300
Spectacled Petrel – 1
Pintado (Cape) Petrel – 50
Kelp Gull – 50
Cape Gannet – 50
Spur-winged Goose – 1

Coastal species:

African Penguin – 10
Cape Cormorant – common
Bank Cormorant – 12
White-breasted Cormorant – 30
Great Crested Tern – 10

Mammal species:

Cape Fur Seal – abundant (coastal and pelagic)
Humpback Whale – 5

A Cape Town Pelagic Trip Report by Tour Leader [Joel Radue](#)

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 organised 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.