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## Cape Town Pelagics Trip Report

11 October 2008

A Cape Town Pelagics trip left Simonstown at 07h30 on 11 October 2008 for the Cape Canyon trawl grounds off Cape Point guided by Cape Town Pelagics guide, Bruce Dyer.

Several **Southern Right Whales** were sighted off the harbour, which added to the excitement. We made good time for Cape Point where a lot of feeding activity by seabirds was evident. Hundreds of **Cape Cormorant** mixed with varying numbers of **Cape Gannet**, **Swift** and **Common Tern**, **Kelp Gull** and the odd **Sooty Shearwater** were seen. They were apparently feeding on Anchovy driven to the surface by Yellowtail. A pale morph **Parasitic Jaeger** was seen harrying a tern for food, which was gratefully ticked.

We cruised for some distance before we picked up a trawler. **Great Shearwaters** were regularly seen during this steaming, as was a solitary **Shy Albatross**. Surprisingly, the trawler did not have the abundance of birds usually associated with this fishing. I suspect that the first trawl had already come up and had been processed, hence pockets of birds being spread over several hundreds of metres. One of the first birds seen was an **Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross**, offering us grand views. **Pintado Petrels**, **Great Shearwaters**, **White-chinned Petrel** and **Wilson's Storm Petrels** were common. Less common were albatrosses – only one adult and three immature **Black-browed Albatross** were seen. The highlight was undoubtedly the single **Black-bellied Storm Petrel** that put in a brief appearance.

We moved inshore after arriving at Cape Point to photograph the nests of **Cape Cormorant** and then stopped at Partridge Point to view the **Bank Cormorant** colony. We returned to Simonstown thereafter, arriving alongside at 15h00.

### Bird List

Shy Albatross	30
Black-browed Albatross	4
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	1
Northern Giant Petrel	1
White-chinned Petrel	250
Pintado Petrel	150
Sooty Shearwater	10
Great Shearwater	400
Wilson's Storm petrel	50
Black-bellied Storm Petrel	1
Cape Gannet	50
Brown Skua	1
Parasitic Jaeger	1

Kelp Gull	20
Hartlaub's Gull	5
Cape Cormorant	300
Bank Cormorant	30
Crowned Cormorant	2
White-breasted Cormorant	30
African Penguin	30

### **Mammals**

Cape Fur Seal	100
Southern Right Whale	8

**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.

Trip Report by Cape Town Pelagics guide Bruce Dyer.