



Trip Report - Cape Town Pelagics - Saturday, 21 May 2022

Trip Highlights: Four species of albatross, Wilson's Storm Petrels, Northern and Southern Giant Petrels.



Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross

SPECIES NUMBER: 22

We met at the Simon's Town harbour at 07:00 and after a quick briefing we were soon heading out towards Cape Point, passing small groups of **African Penguins** and hundreds of **Cape Cormorants** heading out to fish. The conditions in False Bay were stunningly smooth and we made very good time to the Point. We had some common coastal species, being **Kelp** and **Hartlaub's Gulls** and **Greater-crested (Swift) Tern**.

Just off the point, we came across our first seabirds. **Sooty** and some late **Cory's Shearwaters**, **White-chinned Petrels** and **Cape Gannets** were feeding on large schools of bait fish. As we headed a little further out, we had the first albatross for the trip, an **Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross**.

We headed south in the direction of a trawler. As we got closer, we came across groups of birds sitting on the water, the lack of wind making it more challenging to fly. In these groups we picked up **Great Shearwater**, **Shy** and **Black-browed Albatrosses** and an **Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross** amongst the many Indian Yellow-noses.

Eventually we caught up to the trawler. Here we were treated to hundreds of albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters behind the boat. We quickly added **Brown (Subantarctic) Skua**, **Cape (Pintado) Petrel** and **Southern** and **Northern Giant Petrels**. Drifting further back in the wake of the trawler, we had a few **Wilson's Storm Petrels** flying around the boat. We were also fortunate to get good views of two **Oceanic Sunfish**.

At midday we started on the long ride back to False Bay. Rounding the Point, we had a light lunch in Buffels Bay before heading to the cormorant colony at Partridge Point. Here we added the endangered **Bank Cormorant**, as well as **Crowned** and **White-breasted Cormorants**. We passed the sparsely populated **Cape Fur Seal** haul-out, with most of the seals feeding at the fishing grounds



Northern Giant Petrel

Pelagic species seen and approximate numbers:

Shy/White-capped Albatross – 200
Black-browed Albatross – 500
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross - 1
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross – 100
Northern Giant Petrel – 5
Southern Giant Petrel – 5
Cory's Shearwaters - 200
Sooty Shearwater – 300
Great Shearwater – 75
White-chinned Petrel – 1000
Cape Petrel - 50
Wilson's Storm Petrel – 5
Cape Gannet – 30
Brown (Sub-Antarctic) Skua – 5

Coastal species:

African Penguin – 20
White-breasted Cormorant – 15 pairs
Cape Cormorant – common
Crowned Cormorant – 3
Bank Cormorant – 25
Kelp Gull – common
Great Crested Tern – common
African (Black) Oystercatcher – 3

Marine mammals:

Cape Fur Seal – abundant (coastal and pelagic)

Fish:

Oceanic Sunfish – 2

Trip report: Cape Town Pelagics guide - [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.



Great Shearwater

