



CAPE PELAGIC TRIP

We ask participants to meet at 6:45 a.m. at the Simon's Town harbor, for departure around 7:00 a.m. If you need a transfer, please e-mail info@birdingecotours.com

We then head out of the beautiful False Bay, sailing very close to the dramatic sea cliffs of Cape Point, Africa's southwestern-most tip. Before leaving the bay, we will already encounter our first pelagic seabirds, such as **Sooty Shearwater**. Both species of **Giant Petrel, Northern and Southern, White-chinned Petrel**, and occasionally **Spectacled Petrel** are also usually close inshore. But the greatest spectacles await us when we reach the rich trawling grounds 30 km or so beyond Cape Point. Literally thousands of albatrosses, petrels, pattering flocks of storm petrels, and many others gather around hake-fishing boats. This is one of the most unbelievably amazing spectacles that any birder can experience! Some people are wary of seasickness, but for those who brave this, pelagic trips can be true highlights of any birding career. With luck, we may also find Bryde's whale and other whale species, Cape fur seal, and dolphins. The boat returns to the harbor at about 3:00 p.m.

The guide for day trips is allocated only after you have booked, as all of them are run as private trips. But we always use the country's top birding guides.

The price is R1900, with occasional discounts to R1700 (please ask). This is based on a group size of 8 - 10 participants plus the guide.



Preparation for a Pelagic Trip:

This applies to our Cape Town pelagic trips. Please note that by request we also arrange 1-day pelagic trips in Mozambique, Namibia, Australia, New Zealand, the USA, etc., and these notes generally apply for those as well. A pelagic trip is run over the course of one day and involves heading out into the open ocean in search of various species only occurring out at sea. While this is a truly spectacular adventure, one must remember that we are always at the mercy of the ever-changing sea conditions.

The vessel will depart from the specified port around sunrise and venture out into the ocean for usually a maximum distance of 30 nautical miles from land. Off southern Africa this is usually the 'drop zone', where deep water is present and many fishing vessels operate. On a pelagic trip we strive to try and find a fishing vessel, whether it be a trawler or a long-liner, as they attract huge masses of birds. We spend most of the day out at sea (depending on weather and sea conditions) and return to our port of departure in the afternoon (usually any time between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m.). We provide a light lunch on board with various snacks, eats, and drinks, although if you should want anything specific we recommend that you bring it yourself.

A pelagic trip is booked over two consecutive days (usually a weekend). The first day is used as the primary day, but should the previous day's weather forecast indicate that sea and/or weather conditions will prove more adverse on the first day, yet better on the second day, the pelagic trip will go ahead on the second day. However, it is possible that the trip may not go ahead at all due to adverse conditions over the entire two-day period. This is, unfortunately, not something we can predict and reliably confirm far in advance, and we are at the mercy of the weather/sea conditions and the word from our very experienced skippers, who ultimately give the final approval. Your safety on board the vessel is of paramount importance to us, and should the conditions of the sea prove to be too dangerous, the vessel will not go out. The pelagic trip is confirmed by the skipper either way a few days before it is due to depart. We will keep you informed about the decision.

What you will require:

- Most important is a waterproof layer of clothing. There is often wind out at sea, and it blowing off the swells creates some spray. It is very easy to get wet on board, especially while heading out to the trawling grounds and returning back to port.
- Layered and warm clothing. No matter the conditions predicted, whether it be sun or cloud, it can get cold out at sea, and bringing warm clothing is advised. It is also recommended to bring layered clothing, so that you can remove/add on as the conditions change.
- Applying sun lotion or anti-sunburn cream is recommended, no matter the conditions. It is very easy to get badly burnt out at sea, whether it be a sunny or cloudy day.
- It is recommended to bring a hat that can be fastened to you head to prevent it from being blown away. Sunglasses are also recommended, as the glare from the ocean can be very bad at times, but note that it is very easy to lose a pair of sunglasses, and they will invariably pick up some spray from the ocean.



- Due to the nature of the pelagic trip, water/spray invariably gets on board the vessel, and it is very easy to get your feet completely wet. Either waterproof hiking boots, or sturdy Teva-type sandals that can be fastened to your feet are recommended.
- Anti-seasickness medication. Not everyone is affected by seasickness, but it is a very unpleasant experience should you get seasick. Various tablets, such as Stugeron, are recommended. Should you be prone to seasickness, it might be worth consulting your local pharmacist for stronger medication.
- Binoculars and cameras are recommended (as in any birding excursion), but again please note that they can very easily get wet and could get damaged as a result. A covering over your camera is advised.

Seasonality Table

Pelagic trips off the Cape Peninsula, South Africa		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Wandering Albatross	<i>Diomedea exulans</i>												
Southern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>												
Northern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>												
Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>												
Shy Albatross	<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>												
Grey-headed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>												
Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>												
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche carteri</i>												
Southern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>												
Northern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>												
Southern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialisoides</i>												
Cape (Pintado) Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>												
Antarctic Prion	<i>Pachyptila desolata</i>												



Great-winged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma macroptera</i>	■ ■ ■								■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Soft-plumaged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>							■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Grey Petrel	<i>Procellaria cinerea</i>								■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Spectacled Petrel	<i>Procellaria conspicillata</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■					■ ■ ■		■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris borealis</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■					■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Flesh-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■							■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Great Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gravis</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■			■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■				■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■		■ ■ ■
Little Shearwater	<i>Puffinus assimilis</i>					■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	
Wilson's Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
European Storm Petrel	<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■						■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Black-bellied Storm Petrel	<i>Fregatta tropica</i>					■ ■ ■			■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	
Leach's Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■					■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Cape Gannet	<i>Morus capensis</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Hartlaub's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus hartlaubii</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■						■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■

