



BirdLife South Africa Avitourism Division  
Self Drive Itinerary

**Birding Route Name:** Western Cape Birding Route

**Self Drive Itinerary Name:** Pelagic boat cruise – Day Trip Option E

**Habitats:** Open ocean

**Duration:** Drive to Simon's Town (45 mins) – pelagic trip (6/7 hrs)

**Distance covered:** ± 70 km's

**Costs:** Fuel – R65  
Boat trip – R1 500

**Itinerary updated:** January 2010

### Itinerary

This full-day trip out of Simon's Town to see a wide range of southern African pelagic seabirds is a must! The boat trip leaves on Saturday morning, weather permitting, and if the weather is not suitable on Saturday then they are re-scheduled for the Sunday, so try to keep both days free. There is nothing quite as spectacular as watching thousands of sea-birds feeding on the by-catch of a trawler! As well as birds, the cetacean life of the Atlantic Ocean may prove interesting, with fairly regular sightings of Humpback, Bryde's and Southern right whales and Bottle-nosed, Risso's, Dusky & Common dolphin.

Leaving the docks at Simon's Town the boat heads out to Cape Point where you get breathtaking views of the towering cliffs of the Point. As you leave the harbour and make your way along the coast to Cape Point look for **Bank, Crowned, White-breasted & Cape cormorant, Kelp & Hartlaub's gull, Sandwich, Caspian & Crested terns, Cape gannet** and **African penguin**. From Cape Point you leave *terra firma* behind and head out to sea and the continental shelf, about a 2hr boat ride from the Point. Once out at sea (and if you're lucky while still close to shore) you'll start seeing the pelagics, the most common of which are **Shy albatross, Black-browed albatross, Indian & Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross, Sooty shearwater, White-chinned petrel, Wilson's storm-petrel** and **Subantarctic skua**. As you approach any fishing trawlers, the numbers of birds increases substantially, providing a truly remarkable spectacle of thousands of birds. Apart from the previously mentioned species, the time of year of the pelagic trip

influences the species you may see. Summer months are good for **Cory's, Manx & Great shearwater, European & Leach's storm petrel, Arctic, Long-tailed & Pomarine skua** and **Sabine's gull**. In winter look for **Northern & Southern royal albatross, Wandering albatross, Salvin's & Grey-headed albatross, Soft-plumaged & Atlantic petrel, Antarctic & Slender-billed prion, Little shearwater** and **South polar skua**. See the below websites for a fantastic table outlining which species are seen in which months, as well as in-depth trip reports.

- Please enquire as to whether lunch is included, or pack some sandwiches and light snacks as a back-up. It is also suggested to bring some bottled water along.
- For a comprehensive list of what to bring and what to wear on the trip, see the below websites.
- Proceeds from these trips go towards albatross research and conservation.

### **Tour operators**

#### **Cape Town Pelagics** ([www.capetownpelagics.com](http://www.capetownpelagics.com))

Please contact the company for prices

Tel: +27 (0)21 531 9148 / +27 (0) 83 270 7452

E-mail: [info@capetownpelagics.com](mailto:info@capetownpelagics.com)

#### **Zest for Birds** ([www.zestforbirds.co.za](http://www.zestforbirds.co.za))

from R1 000 – R1 500. Please note prices are accurate for winter 2010 only.

Tel: +27 (0)21 557 0624 / +27 (0)21 715 0933 / +27 (0)82 780 0376

E-mail: [info@zestforbirds.co.za](mailto:info@zestforbirds.co.za)

- Costs are accurate at the time of collation of copy
- Fuel costs are based on the AA rate for a standard petrol 1.6L sedan, fuel price of R8.60/litre, and calculate out at R0.90/km.
- Accommodation rates are on a per person sharing basis. Single supplements are usually more expensive.
- GPS co-ordinates are in DDMMSS format. To convert to an alternative format try [www.earthpoint.us/Convert.aspx](http://www.earthpoint.us/Convert.aspx)