

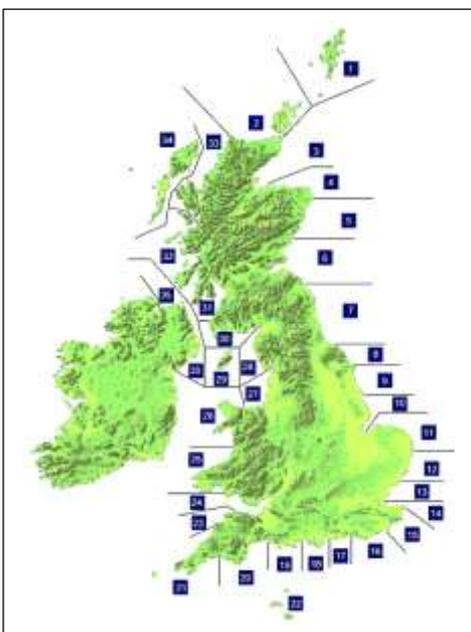


Whales Dolphins and Porpoises on the Saga Pearl 2 “Grecian Odyssey” a report by Robin Petch - www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk

As the Chair of Trustees of the Sea Watch Foundation it is my great pleasure to share with you the sightings from our Grecian Odyssey cruise, along with a few of the photographs I have taken. Thank you for your company on deck, and particularly to those of you who reported additional sightings to us. As you will see, we were able to collect an impressive number of sightings, despite variable weather and sea conditions later in the cruise and a port heavy itinerary in the Eastern Mediterranean! For the record, large baleen whales are in any case quite rare in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean but we would normally have expected to see Common, Striped and/or Bottlenose Dolphins in the areas that we visited and both Sperm and Cuvier’s Beaked Whales are known to feed in the deeper waters.

Firstly however, if I may, I would like to tell you a little about our work. Sea Watch Foundation is the leading UK cetacean research charity and has been collecting sightings data since the 1970s to create Europe’s biggest whale, dolphin and porpoise sightings database. This is used to inform EU and national governments, scientific and environmental agencies and NGOs, as well as independent research scientists who have an interest in studying and protecting cetaceans and the marine environment.

- Monitoring the numbers and locations of whales and dolphins in order to gain valuable knowledge of the health of our marine environment, and insight into the effects of chemical pollution, noise disturbance, over-fishing, accidental capture in fishing gear and climate change
- Involving the public in scientific monitoring
- Raising awareness and understanding of marine mammals and the threats they face
- Educating, informing and advising for better environmental protection



The information gathered by Sea Watch since 1991 (and by the Mammal Society’s Cetacean Group since 1973) and our network of observers has been the primary source of knowledge about the relative status and distribution of cetacean around the British Isles. Close links are maintained with similar organisations all over Europe and the information we gather on cruises is added into this database.

Every coastal county of the UK has a Regional Co-ordinator and teams of volunteers help by reporting sightings, raising funds and promoting our work. If you’d like to get involved, we’d love to hear from you. You can find out more or contact your Regional Co-ordinator directly via the listings on www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk or email info@seawatchfoundation.org.uk and our Sightings Officer will be happy to help. Alternatively of course, I will also be happy to help!

Until we meet again... enjoy your cruising!

Robin & Kris



Cetacean Sightings from the Saga Pearl 2 Grecian Odyssey Cruise (October 2015)

Recorded by Robin Petch, www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk, with the assistance of Kris Simpson and fellow passengers. All times are ship's times.

The daily watches were made from the Sun Deck (forward) whenever possible but frequently it was necessary to seek more shelter and watches then took place from Verandah Deck (aft). A full effort record was maintained, with regular position fixes and course, speed and sea conditions as well as sightings logged. At least one of us was on deck throughout most of the daylight hours, and the following sightings were recorded:

Species seen: Common Dolphin, Striped Dolphin, Risso's Dolphin, Bottlenose Dolphin, Pilot Whale, Sperm Whale (probable), Sei Whale (possible), Fin Whale

7/10/15 Bay of Biscay

1210+	20+ Common Dolphins in 4 or more groups
1600	1 Common Dolphin
1902	1 Fin Whale (whales also reported by passengers)

8/10/15 North Atlantic

1006	2 whales blowing, probably Fin or Sei
1017	2 whales blowing & surfacing, Fin or Sei
1700	1 whale blowing, probable Fin Whale
1838	1 Fin Whale blowing & surfacing

9/10/15 Leaving Lisbon

1601	1 small unidentified whale
1608	12+ Common Dolphin
1645	6 Common Dolphin, much leaping!
1721	1 Fin Whale, 2 probable Fin or Sei Whales
1733	2 Fin Whales, 1 probable Fin or Sei Whale
1757	2 Fin Whales
1809	12+ Bottlenose or Striped Dolphins
1814	1 whale blowing



10/10/15 Atlantic / Straits of Gibraltar / Mediterranean

0835	5+ Bottlenose Dolphins
0915	Whale off African coast (reported by passenger)
0920	Distant dolphins, possibly Common Dolphins
0925	Distant dolphins, probably Bottlenose Dolphins
0955	15+ Bottlenose Dolphins, repeated sightings
1008	2 Bottlenose Dolphins
1011	5+ Bottlenose Dolphins
1015	12+ Long Finned Pilot Whales, very close to port side
1631	5+ Probable Common Dolphins
1634	3 Probable Common Dolphins
1637	4+ Pilot Whales
1645	15+ Pilot Whales in 5+ groups
1653	6+ Pilot Whales
1702	3 Fin Whales, surfacing and travelling E
1713	4 Sei or Fin Whales, blowing and travelling E
1717-1734	40+ large dolphins in 8 or more groups, including Risso's Dolphins

11/10/15 Mediterranean

c0745	Probable Striped Dolphins (reported by passengers)
0835	Large group of dolphins aft, (reported by passengers)
1335	3+ Common Dolphins
1358-1412	16+ Common Dolphins in 3 groups
1547	20+ Probable Common Dolphins
1602	2+ Probable Common Dolphins

12/10/15 Leaving Cagliari, Sardinia

1725	4 Common Dolphins, just outside harbour entrance
1821	5+ Common Dolphins

13/10/15 Mediterranean (inc. Straits of Messina)

0855	1 probable Sperm Whale, blowing & diving, 4 smaller, possibly brownish, whales nearer ship (reported by passengers)
1220	4+ Dolphins, feeding with birds (reported by passengers)



14/10/15 Argostoli, Kefalonia, Greece - 21/10/15 Katakolon, Greece - No Sightings

We only had an hour or so of daylight on sailout each day, sometimes in poor weather/visibility. Under other circumstances, sightings of Common, Striped and/or Bottlenose Dolphins might reasonably be expected.

22/10/15 At Sea No Sightings

23/10/15 At Sea 1735 1 dolphin (seen by passenger... well done!)

24/10/15 At Sea 1228 1 Sunfish (not a cetacean, but an unusual and reportable sighting)
1421 1 Turtle, (probably Green or Loggerhead)
1628 6+ Striped Dolphins (probably more further off)
1634 1 Large Whale, breached then blew (species unidentified)

25/10/15 Leaving Cartagena, Spain

1655 4+ Pilot Whales
1713 3+ Dolphins (starboard bow)
1724 1 Dolphin (starboard bow)
1726 8+ Striped Dolphins (leaping, starboard bow)
1736 10+ Striped Dolphins (leaping, starboard bow)
1805 5+ Pilot Whales (port side)

26/10/15 Gibraltar, Ship's Dolphin Watching Tour

30+ Common Dolphins (inc. many calves and juveniles)
40+ Striped Dolphins
1 Bottlenose Dolphin (adopted by Common Dolphins when young!)

27/10/15 At Sea 1550 5 Common Dolphins (passenger report, port side)
1554 4 Dolphins (close to Shackleton's, starboard side!)
1604 3 Dolphins (passenger report)
1709 2 probable Fin Whales, blowing c. 3 miles to port

28/10/15 At Sea 1253 4 Dolphins (passenger report, port side)
1404 1 Dolphin (passenger report, port side)

29/10/15 1143 9 Common Dolphins, in 3 groups, 4+3+2, starboard side

To check sightings around the UK, donate or learn more about our work visit:

www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk



Fin Whale



Common Dolphin



Striped Dolphin



Bottlenose Dolphin



Risso's Dolphin



Pilot Whales