



# **Black Watch Sightings Record**

## **World Cruise (Southampton – Sydney)**

**Whales Dolphins, Porpoises and other Marine Ocean Life**

**Robin Petch - [TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk](http://TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk)**



What a marvellous adventure we all shared! It was a huge pleasure to share our deck watches, usually on Deck 7 Forward, with so many people. Thanks also to everyone who contributed sightings to this record, who shared stories, asked questions or attended my lectures.

Between us, so many great sightings were recorded, and these are now re-published here and in a second Record for Sydney - Southampton.



**Colour photos now also included at the end!**



# Sightings Record 9/1/16 – 9/3/16

9/1/16	c0950 5 Dolphins, probably Common, port aft 1105 10+ Dolphins with many Gannets diving, starboard aft	Richard & Diana Richard & Diana
10/1/16	1221 3 Whales blowing, port side	Miles
12/1/16	1753 8+ Dolphins, probably Common, starboard bow	Robin
13/1/16	1230 Dolphins “porpoising” in the distance, almost on the horizon 1245 6+ Common Dolphins, starboard bow 1313 Small Sea Turtle, starboard bow and down the side	Louise Robin Passenger
16/1/16	0855 First sighting of Flying Fish, almost continuous from this time!	Ann B.
17/1/16	1350 Turtle swimming on starboard side but caught in green net 1530+ 2 Sea Turtles swimming freely on port side	Passenger Robin
18/1/16	1350 12+ Dolphins at the stern/starboard (while we were at lunch!) 1420 4 Dolphins, close to the starboard side 1655-1705 Whale blowing in the distance, starboard side, Humpback? (Large black and white bird reported by passenger)	Passengers Passenger Passenger/Kris
19/1/16	c0700 Whales seen blowing in the distance, port side 0815+ Frigate Birds circling as we approached Barbados	Passenger Robin
20/1/16	0801 Turtle swimming towards ship	Passenger
21/1/16	1705 8+ Dolphins, probably Bottlenose, starboard bow and down side	Robin
22/1/16	Masked, and a few Brown, Boobies following the ship and diving on Flying Fish all day and a Frigate Bird attacking them occasionally to steal their food in the morning. Also two white Tropic Birds.  1635 8+ Bottlenose Dolphins at the bow and down both sides of the ship Robin One breached and did a complete back flip, see my photo report!	
23/1/16	Brown Pelicans and Tropic Birds around the harbour 1743 4+ Dolphins (possibly Atlantic Spotted) c. 1mile to starboard	Robin
24/1/16	1515-1530+ 3 Brown Pelicans 25m or less off the stern	John H
25/1/16	1722 4 Dolphins (probably Bottlenose), off the port bow	Robin
NB: The large buzzard-like birds circling, initially thought to be Condor, were Turkey Vultures!		

26/1/16	Dolphins were seen this morning, quite early, as we approached Colon and what may have been a whale was seen on the starboard side but we missed them again!	
27/1/16	Lots of wildlife in the canal area! Turkey Vultures and smaller Black Vultures were circling, and some Magnificent and smaller species of Frigate Birds. There were small Martin or Swallow type birds around most of the locks as well as Grackles and Pelicans were seen frequently as well as quite a few crocodiles. Some passengers believed they saw a few dolphins as we left the first locks. This is not impossible but highly unlikely and would be bad news indeed as dolphins would be unlikely to survive long in the canal. It is more likely that it was large fish, or even sharks, that were spotted as other passengers believed. Sadly, a dead Manatee was also seen.	
28/1/16	0645 4 Dolphins alongside to port, others further out, perhaps ½ mile	Liz
	1157 8+ Bottlenose Dolphins alongside to starboard, some leaping	Robin
	1210 Large group of dolphins, some leaping, c2miles to starboard	Kris
	1257 More dolphins, very active, c3miles to starboard	Kris
	1314 Even more, much splashing c2½ miles to port	Robin
29/1/16	1600-1630 Turtles seen alongside ship	Pete
	1809 4+ Dolphins, 300m to starboard, c34min from Manta	Robin
	1710 Whale to port	Passenger
30/1/16	A very, VERY, VERY special day!	
	A bat was seen and photographed in the early hours, hanging on Deck 9	Annie
	0730 2 Swallow-tailed gulls	Passenger
	1042 Passengers reported "hundreds of dolphins" on both sides	Passengers
	1053 Possible Sooty Shearwaters	Robin
	1110+ Huge flocks of what appeared to be small petrels, 1000s in total!	Robin
	1148 Dolphins c2 miles to starboard	Robin
	1152 Whale 50m to port	John H.
	1155 3-4 seals, starboard side	Dave, Cath, Jackie
	1209 2 Blue Whales, starboard side	Robin
	1221 Probable Blue Whale to port	Kris
	1227 200+ Common Dolphins, ½ mile to port	Robin
	1234 Large Turtle, port side	Kris
	1256 50+ Dolphins, probably Common, 2-3 miles to port	Kris
	1332 4 Sperm Whales to starboard, 1 dived ahead	Robin
	1338 Large Whale to starboard, probable Fin or Sei	Robin & Chris T
	1345 50+ Dolphins c1½ miles to port, probably Risso's	Kris
	1402 50+ Dolphins to starboard, probably Common	Robin
	1408 Large Ray jumped clear of the water, then approached port bow	Robin
	1428 Possible Sei Whale passed across bow, starboard-port	Robin
	1442 20+ Dolphins to starboard	Robin
	1448 Large Turtle, starboard side	Passenger
	1455 2 Blue Whales, port side, blowing strongly (and Waved Albatross!)	Kris
	1517 Large group of Dolphins, starboard	Passengers
	1521 20+ Dolphins to starboard (and our first Blue Footed Booby!)	Robin
	1543 Large Whale to port, c2 miles	Kris
	1601 Dead Sea Lion to port, with birds feeding on carcass	Kris
	1645 3 or 4 whales at surface, "lazy motion"	Mr & Mrs Hilton
	1657 40+ Dolphins, c1½ miles to starboard	Robin

	1715	100+ Dolphins leaping ahead across bow, and down starboard side	Robin
	1725	2 Sei Whales ahead, crossed bow and down starboard side	
		Fin Whale surfaced alongside and then moved off to starboard	Robin
	1812	Waved Albatross	Robin
31/1/16	0717	Single Dolphin port side, possible Spinner?	Passenger
	0720	30+ Dolphins to starboard	Passenger
	0852	Dolphin seen through Deck 3 porthole, starboard!	Kris
	0915-1000	Frequent dolphin sightings close to ship	Passengers
	0945	15+ Dolphins on port side	Passengers
	1028	4 Bottlenose Dolphins leaping in to starboard bow	Robin
	1059	Dolphins off starboard bow, probably 6+	Robin
	1522	Big splash 2miles to port, suspected large whale breaching	Robin
	1548	Blue Whale and calf/juvenile with probable third, port side 400m  The tail was seen and photographed as it dived!	Kris
		3 blows and additional unidentified large whale to starboard	Robin
	1555	2 low, bushy blows, large unidentified whale to port	Robin
	1612	Fin or Sei Whale to port	Robin
	1615	2 probable Fin or Sei Whales, starboard side	Passengers
	1655	4 Bottlenose Dolphins, to the bow and down port side	Robin
	1826	Big splash port side aft, suspected large whale breaching.  Our first "brown morph" Red-footed Booby was seen this morning and a Waved Albatross this afternoon.	Robin
1/2/16 - 3/2/16		Plenty of bird life in both General St Martin and Callau and a couple of South American Sea-Lions alongside the ship in the former port.	
4/2/16	0950	Sperm Whale, 3 blows and a dive to starboard	Robin
	1205	12+ Dolphins, starboard side	Robin
	1250	Sperm Whale spotted 3 miles ahead and then passed down the port side and tracked until 3 miles astern, also announced by Officer of the Watch	Robin
	1302	7+ Dolphins to starboard	
	1345	20-30 Dolphins leaping, starboard side, while we were at lunch!  Markham's & Hornby's Storm Petrels were found on Deck 7 and released to fly and we began to see a few Storm Petrels on this and the following day also.	Passengers
5/2/16	1452	12+ Dolphins leaping c1½ miles to port	Robin
	1753	Large Whale breached, blew three times then dive, possible Blue Red-billed Tropic Birds also seen for the first time.	Dave & Cath
6/2/16		Red-tailed Tropic Birds spotted for the first time and although we continued to see flying fish, wildlife sightings are, as expected, now few and far between!	
7/2/16 – 9/2/16		Even flying fish seem fewer in number, although there are some larger ones.	
10/2/16		A couple of Brown Boobies, and Tropic Birds, seen by passengers early in the day	
11/2/16		A very quiet day again! Only a few flying fish, and not many of those!	
12/2/16		A lot of birds, including Tropic and Frigate Birds and probably Terns, in a feeding frenzy 1 mile to starboard. Later, Sooty Shearwaters and big flying fish.	
13/2/16	0640	2 Whales, probably Sperm. Seen to port, approaching Nuku Hiva	Passengers

- 14/2/16 Sooty Shearwater discovered on Deck 9 by passengers which I released on the starboard side. Fairy Terns, Tropic Birds, Shearwaters and Boobies seen throughout the day.
- 15/2/16 c0700 2 Bottlenose Dolphins leaping off port bow, approaching Rangiroa Passengers  
Bottlenose Dolphins also seen in the “gap” by passengers ashore and from the tenders later in the day.  
1703 4 Bottlenose Dolphins leaping at the bow during sail away, just off the reef. Robin
- 16/2/16 Approaching Tahiti in the rain, nothing seen!
- 17/2/16 Moorea, 25+ Spinner Dolphins seen on Dolphin Watching trip with Dr Michael Poole
- 18/2/16 Bora Bora. Nothing on approach but Stingrays and Black-tipped Reef Sharks, with Frigate Birds and large Terns seen during the Shore Excursion and 4-5 Bottlenose Dolphins and 5+ Spinner Dolphins seen to starboard at 0630 during the sail away.
- 19/2/16 Heavy rain and rough seas. No sightings!
- 20/2/16 Nothing seen approaching and leaving Raratonga but I photographed one of a number of Red-tailed Tropic Birds catching and trying to eat a Puffer Fish later in the day!
- 21/2/16 No sightings, difficult conditions and deep, relatively unproductive waters (4500m+ depth!)
- 23/2/16 We'll never know if there was anything around on Monday because it never happened! Only a couple of white birds seen by passengers up until 1500 today when I updated this record.
- 24/2/16 Shearwaters and a Frigate Bird approaching Nuku Alofa, Tonga, Black-naped Terns as we left.
- 25/2/16 No sightings – Sea State 5 and 6!
- 26/2/16 0720 Large fish leaping/splashing off the port side as we approached Suva, Fiji,  
1845+ Several large flocks of Storm-Petrels as we left
- 27/2/16 No Sightings (Crew Marathon for Fiji)
- 28/2/16 Vanuatu, Mystery Island – no sightings but lots of fish along the reef and a Fruit Bat rescued!
- 29/2/16 Noumea - Spotted Eagle Rays alongside the port bow in the harbour.
- 1/2/16 Preparing and delivering “Wildlife Southampton-Sydney” talk, little watching, no sightings!
- 2/3/16 A few Shearwaters and Terns and a small swimming reptile, probably a Saltwater Crocodile
- 3/3/16 0750 Humpback Whale, blowing and surfacing, starboard side Graham  
Whale seen by passengers  
1635 Whale blowing well ahead of port bow Passengers  
1905 Whale seen by passengers, port side aft Passengers  
First sighting of Australian Gannet, Red-footed Boobies, Shearwaters and Flying Fish also seen
- 4/3/16 Too dark for spotting as we sailed in to Sydney but 5 Dolphins seen from the Harbour Bridge by some passengers!
- 5/3/16 No sightings on sail-away from Sydney.
- 6/3 – 3/5/16 The Sightings Record will continue on a new document, Sydney – Southampton  
Both records will be available, with some photographs, from my website  
[www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk](http://www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk) after the cruise free of charge but donations to Sea Watch Foundation will be gratefully received!

## Black Watch World Cruise – Selected Photographs



Brown Booby



Frigate Bird



Masked Booby



Crocodile - Panama Canal



Bottlenose Dolphin



Sperm Whale (note the forward-angled blow)



Common Dolphins, some of hundreds seen



This Manta Ray leapt clear of the water!



One of 4 Blue Whales, Peru



Spinner Dolphins in Moorea



One of many, many Flying Fish!



Red-tailed Tropic Bird with Puffer Fish



Fruit Bat rescued at Mystery Island



Spotted Eagle Ray - Noumea

I hope you have enjoyed reading through this Sightings Record and looking at the photographs. Don't forget to download the second Record, for Sydney - Southampton!

As you know, I am passionate about the work I do to improve the study and protection of whales, dolphins and porpoises in the UK. Please do consider helping me, by making a donation to Sea Watch Foundation at [www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk](http://www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk) or [www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk](http://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk). Also, please watch my website for the DVD of "Wildlife Photographs from Cruiseships" which I am working on to raise more funds to support my work. All of these photographs, and many more, will be included in larger format.

Enjoy your future cruising and wildlife watching, **Robin Petch**