



# Sightings Record

## Trade Routes of the Middle Ages

As the Chair of Trustees of the Sea Watch Foundation it is my great pleasure to share with you the sightings throughout this Viking Star cruise, from Bergen to Barcelona, along with a few of the photographs I have taken, with thanks to the passengers who submitted reports.

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.

### **24/09/17 Sailing from Bergen, Norway**

1930 18+ Long-finned Pilot Whales, port side and some quite close to the ship, shortly before leaving the fjord and heading out to sea.

### **25/09/17 At Sea, North Sea**

AM 3 Greater Black-backed Gulls riding the air currents to port for a while and a couple of Northern Gannets also spotted.

PM A few more Greater Black-backed Gulls and Northern Gannets, as well as a Song Thrush that landed on the foredeck! He'll be migrating south.

### **26/09/17 Amsterdam, Netherlands**

Lots of Black-headed, and a few Greater Black-backed Gulls feeding in the disturbed water as we berthed and later as we left. Plenty of Coots in Amsterdam's waterways and a Goosander too.

### **27/09/17 Leaving Zeebrugge, Belgium**

A few Black-headed and Herring Gulls, a couple of Greater Black-backed Gulls and some Hooded Crows as we sailed and an Atlantic Grey Seal about ½ mile to port shortly after leaving the harbour.

1713 Harbour Porpoise, 100yards off starboard bow

1714 Harbour Porpoise, 100yards off starboard bow

1716 3 Harbour Porpoises, 150yards off starboard bow, +1 more 200 yards to starboard

1719 Harbour Porpoise photographed <50yards from port bow

- 1724 Harbour Porpoise, 100yards off port bow
- 1725 Harbour Porpoise, 100yards off port bow
- 1726 Harbour Porpoise and feeding Gannet, spotted to port by a passenger
- 1728 2+1 Harbour Porpoises, 150yards to starboard  
One possible sighting of a larger creature 1mile to starboard, unidentified
- 1731 Harbour Porpoise , 150yards to port
- 1759 2 Harbour Porpoise, 200yards off starboard bow
- 1804 1 Harbour Porpoise, close off the port bow  
That's at least 17 Harbour porpoises spotted, in ideal conditions, with the enthusiastic help of a number of passengers on the foredeck and one gentleman who came from his cabin, in a robe, to report his sighting! Thanks everyone!

**28/09/17 & 29/09/17 In port, no watch, no sightings!**

**30/09/17 At Sea, Bay of Biscay**

- A few Northern Gannets around throughout the morning
- 1135 4+ Dolphins (probably Common), racing in to the port bow
- 1237 2 Common Dolphins, leaping through the waves to the bow
- 1337 5+ Common Dolphins, starboard side
- 1733 Whale blowing, ½ mile to port, species unknown
- 1742 Whale blowing, ½ mile to port, species unknown
- 1801 Low bushy blow, and again at 1805, large unidentified whale to port
- 1815-1817 Fin Whale across the bow and then to starboard, possibly 2?
- 1825 Fin Whale to starboard
- 1843 Diffuse blow to port  
Well done to Kris and the various passengers who helped with spotting while I wasn't there!

**01/10/17 At Sea, North Atlantic**

- A number of Cory's Shearwaters around since early morning and occasional Northern Gannets, often juveniles.
- 0940 8+ Cory's Shearwaters hunting close to port
- 0958 7 Cory's Shearwaters, close to starboard
- 1034-1040 35+ Common Dolphins leaping in to the bow, alongside and in the wake
- 1101 3+ Risso's Dolphins, 200yards to starboard
- 1106 Single small blow, 200yards off port bow, possible Beaked Whale?
- 1137 15+ Striped Dolphins, 200yards to starboard, 2 others in to the bow
- 1204 2 Risso's Dolphins, 150yards from starboard bow
- 1227 15+ Striped Dolphins ahead then diverted mainly to starboard
- 1313 5+ Dolphins (probably Striped) to port
- 1359 30+ Common Dolphins, feeding actively to starboard (first seen 2miles ahead) then 12+ Common Dolphins, leaping in the wake
- 1424 Fin Whale photographed surfacing close to port bow. Possible a second smaller whale a short distance away

- 1431 50+ Striped Dolphins passing to starboard in a fairly tight group
  - 1458 Blow, fairly large, 3miles ahead then 2miles to starboard at 1501
  - 1601 6 Common Dolphins to port
  - 1602 15+ Common Dolphins, leaping in to port bow
  - 1604 8 Bottlenose Dolphins ahead then in to starboard bow
  - 1609 3 Common Dolphins leaping in to port bow
  - 1614 6 Bottlenose Dolphins leaping in to starboard bow then 2 alongside. One was very pale, almost white over large parts of the body.
- An *awesome* day! Over 200 dolphins, of 4 different species and a Fin Whale!

### **02/10/17 Porto, Portugal**

Hundreds of Gulls around the harbour of various species.

### **03/10/17 At Sea, North Atlantic**

Seabirds including adult and juvenile Gannets, Gulls and Shearwaters seen occasionally

- 1217 Single big splash, 3miles to port. Possible breaching or surging large whale
  - 1222 5 large birds of prey, possibly Buzzards, crossing our wake, heading to Africa?
  - 1242 75+ Shearwaters (probably Cory's) wheeling around and feeding 1 mile to port as well as a few Gannets and a couple of Great Skuas.
  - 1302 Possible whale blowing 2miles to starboard (passenger sighting)
  - 1339 8+ Atlantic Spotted Dolphins surging in to starboard bow then leaping to port of our wake shortly after
- A quiet afternoon after that, but that's the 5<sup>th</sup> dolphin species on this cruise!

### **04/10/17 Leaving Malaga**

- 1829 A single leaping Bottlenose Dolphin, 250yards to starboard
  - 1844 8+ Bottlenose Dolphins, leaping in to the bow from ahead
  - 1904 150+ Common Dolphins, on both sides of the ship, some leaping and surging in to the bow and playing in the wake for at least 10 minutes. Initially spotted in the distance to port about 5 minutes earlier. More were seen feeding and occasionally leaping away towards the horizon. How many? Who knows but maybe 100+ more!
  - 1943 25+ Common Dolphins, leaping and surging towards the port bow and alongside
  - 1947 12+ Common Dolphins leaping towards the bow and alongside
  - 1958 2 Dolphins (probably Striped), leaped across the bow from port to starboard
- in to port bow
- 1852 5+ Dolphins leaping in to starboard bow, unidentified species

### **04/10/17 Leaving Cartagena**

- 1907-1916 Repeated sightings of Striped Dolphins, both sides of the ship, with a few leaping towards the bow and also in the wake. Probably 50 or more in total in small groups, mainly feeding and foraging
- 1927 Tuna leaping and seabirds swirling above, 1mile to starboard. Similar splashing seen c.1915 to port. Another great sail-away!

# Photographs – Viking Star, Bergen to Barcelona



On the following page is a selection of photographs taken during the cruise to illustrate some of the encounters above. It is my intention ultimately to create a gallery of photographs on my website for sale but until then, I would be happy to discuss any interest by email.

Please consider making a donation to [www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk](http://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk) on their website or via mine at [www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk](http://www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk)

I hope we meet again on a future cruise, Best Wishes, *Robin*

Pilot Whales (as seen after Bergen but taken elsewhere)



Black-headed Gull (Amsterdam)



Harbour Porpoise (Zeebrugge)



Northern Gannet (E Channel, Biscay & N Atlantic)



Cory's Shearwater (N Atlantic)



Cory's Shearwater (N Atlantic)



# Photographs – Viking Star, Bergen to Barcelona

Risso's Dolphin (N Atlantic)



Striped Dolphins (Mother & calf, N Atlantic, Kris)



Common Dolphin (N Atlantic)



Fin Whale (N Atlantic)



Common Dolphins (N Atlantic, Kris)



Greater Black-backed Gull (N Atlantic, near Leixoes)



Atlantic Spotted Dolphins (Mums & calves, nr. Leixoes)



Bottlenose Dolphins (Mum + calf, leaving Malaga)

