



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

Arctic Norway & Svalbard on Balmoral - Sightings Record

_Robin Petch - www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk



Thank you for joining me on Deck 7 throughout the cruise and helping to spot and record whales, dolphins, porpoises and other marine life.

As the Chair of Trustees for the Sea Watch Foundation it is my great pleasure to share with you the sightings throughout this Balmoral cruise, from Newcastle to Arctic Norway & Svalbard and back, along with a few of the photographs Kris and I have taken.

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.

10/06/17 Leaving Newcastle

Many Kittiwakes flying around Tynemouth Pier with more amongst the Herring Gulls, Black-backed Gulls and Gannets feeding offshore

11/06/17 At Sea, North Sea

Lots of Gannets and Fulmars flying and feeding around the ship, especially in the wake

- 1210 Whale sighted, port side, probably a Minke (Passenger sighting, Horrigan)
- 1535 Large whale, c.100m from starboard bow, travelling R-L, species uncertain (spotted again by a passenger to starboard, 5 minutes later)
- c.1730 Dolphin, starboard bow (Passenger sighting)
- 1807 One male and three female/young Orca on port side c.400m, travelling SE. Females/young ahead, male 50m behind (Jones 5128) Great sighting!
- 1810 Orca on port side, one breached. Also 2 Storm Petrels, many Fulmars and some Skuas

(Mike Sewell 8052)

What a great day! Thanks for all the sightings. As well as the Gannets and Fulmars, a few Greater Black-backed Gulls were seen and also Great Skuas, one making a sustained attack on feeding Gannets.

12/06/17 Alesund

Only birds on the sail in to Alesund, including Kittiwakes and at least one Puffin as well as Herring Gulls and Black-backed Gulls. Other things were seen by passengers.

- On arrival at Alesund there were around 40 Eider Ducks on a rocky island to starboard.

- Grey Heron on the island with Eider Ducks on arrival (HP)

- In Alesund, pink Jellyfish

1548 Seal, close to the port side

2047 Harbour Porpoise (63°11.56N 007°57.39E, Paul & Lorraine)

As described above, mainly assorted seabirds today including Common, Herring and Black-backed Gulls, Kittiwakes, a Storm Petrel, a couple of Great Skuas, our first Common or Arctic Terns, two Sea Eagles on a small island and then Merganser and Eider Ducks, a Heron, Swifts, Hooded Crows and a Magpie.

13/06/17 Through the islands and fjords

0636 White-tailed Sea Eagle swimming to shore with captured fish, and climbing out

0704 Harbour Porpoise (64°55.59N 011°26.14E, Paul & Lorraine)

0726 Minke Whale 300m ahead, then to starboard and aft

0730 Fox, port side, close to water's edge (Reg Cox)

0754 Harbour Porpoise (65°03.59N 011°45.14E, Paul & Lorraine)

by 0800 Already 7 Sea Eagles sighted by myself and observant passengers!

1130 2 Red-throated Divers flew over the ship (Dorothy & Tracy)

1300 4 Harbour Porpoise, 2 Oyster Catchers, 2 Sea Eagles, 12 Terns, 1 Heron, 1 Guillemot, 1 Cormorant, Common Gulls (Passenger sighting)

1310 Sea Eagle and Puffin on the water (Ruth)

2116 2 Harbour Porpoises to port (Kris)

Kittiwakes and 2 Mergansers near the Arctic Circle monument and Black Grouse, Sea Eagles, Goosanders, Long-tailed Ducks, Red-throated Divers, Puffins, Razorbills spotted by Paul and Lorraine during the day.

14/06/17 Tromso

0840 2 Harbour Porpoises, one possibly a calf

0845 2 Harbour Porpoises

1145 2 Harbour Porpoises to starboard, close to shore

Bird sightings include Arctic and Common Terns, Arctic Skua, assorted Gulls, Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills, Scoters, Eiders and Oyster Catchers. Sea Eagles were seen from the coach during a tour by passengers in 5014

2300 15+ Dolphins, port side, probably White-beaked (Paul 4124)

A few passengers reported seeing up to 100 Dolphins through the library windows, c.2300

15/06/17 Honningsvag

0800 30+ Reindeer on port side (Paul 4124)

0810 c.10 Reindeer at water's edge (Chris, John)

1130 Raven pursued by 2 Crows passed ship on starboard side (Jon 9053)

1200 Otter in the harbour

During the day, Black Guillemot were seen in the harbour (John 5055), Oyster Catchers on the jetty and adjacent islet (Pauline 4097) and a Hooded Crow was seen chasing a cat!

Passengers also spotted Magpies, Sparrows and Kittiwakes.

2322 2 whale blows, port side aft (seen by 3 passengers)

16/06/17 At Sea

Passengers sighted lots of whales and dolphins since 0630 this morning while I was working on the computer! I had just arrived on deck at 1030 when the captain made his announcement of the whales we had spotted ahead of us!

0950 16+ Dolphins, port side (seen by passengers from the restaurant)

1005-1015 Dolphin pod and 2 whales seen to starboard (Passenger sightings)

1036 5 Humpback Whales, just over a mile to port

1 or 2 Fin Whales, 3 miles or more off port bow

1 Humpback Whales with calf, 2 miles to port

Numerous White-beaked Dolphins also in amongst the whales, feeding activity observed

1056 3 Humpback Whales, 3 miles to port

2 Humpback Whales, 2 miles to port

1105 3 Humpback Whales to starboard

1121 2 Humpback Whales to port, 1 Humpback Whale to starboard

1124 1 Humpback Whale dived close to port bow and surfaced astern

1127-1129 2 Humpback Whales to port

1206 2 Humpback Whales to starboard

1208 2 Humpback Whales to starboard

That's 23 Humpback Whales and a couple of Fin Whales in a series of encounters over an hour and a half! Kittiwakes, Fulmars, Guillemots, Razorbills and Puffins were also seen.

1438 1 Dolphin, probably White-beaked spotted

1630 100s, probably 1000s, of Fulmars all around us, on the sea and flying. An amazing sight!

1632 Dolphin, identified as White-sided (Passenger sighting)

1634 15+ Dolphins, probably White-beaked, between us and the trawler

1930 15+ Whales, including 2 Fin, 2 Sei, 1 Minke and 2 Humpback seen to port

1935 3 Humpback Whales to port, including a mother and calf

1930-1940 The whales above were also seen by Val 4149 & E Hoyle 4054 from the Spey restaurant

2005 Whale seen to starboard, reported by the ship's photographer

2133 Large blows to port including 1 probable Blue Whale, 1 Fin Whale and another probable Fin whale

2315 Whale with small dorsal fin,

17/06/17 Pyramiden

0830 Minke Whale surfaced twice, very close to the ship (Passenger sighting)

Eider Ducks, Kittiwakes and Fulmar in the fjord as we sailed in

1100 Ptarmigan near the buildings in town, eating seeds

c.1130 Snow Buntings around the buildings in town, song heard first (Passenger sighting)

Several Snow Buntings and two buff-coloured hawk-like birds with dark "spectacles", as well as Eider Ducks near the landing and 2 reindeers, were seen ashore (Passenger, 4026)

Another passenger spotted a Puffin amongst all the Fulmars in the fjord

1920 4 Beluga Whales inshore to port as we approached the glacier. A great spot by Kris!

2123 3 blows, then a tail-up dive, probably a Humpback Whale, 2 miles off the starboard bow as we approached the fjord for the Tuna Glacier

Sadly, the numerous "Polar Bear sightings" as we sailed away were all confirmed as either Reindeer, pale coloured rocks or lumps of ice!

18/06/17 Longyearbyen

- 1300 Arctic Fox, with a coat changing from winter to summer, seen on the road towards the glacier by a passenger
- 1330 A pair of Arctic Skuas on the road near the church
- c.1500 2 Common Eider Duck in a field and Barnacle Geese flying overhead
Barnacle Geese, Snow Buntings and a Purple Sandpiper at the Husky kennels. Eider Ducks & Ptarmigan on the hillside. A Black Guillemot and Little Auk near the ship (seen by Ruth)
- c.1600 Juvenile Snow Bunting on the quayside, (from the cabin window by Pauline 4097)
- 2015 Minke Whale (or Fin Whale?) 250m to starboard (Reported by 2 passengers)
- 2135 2 Whales, small, seen to port (Passenger sighting)
With thanks Particularly to Paul and Lorraine, along with other passengers, we also have the following sightings, as well as a Walrus near the fjord to Barentsberg
- 2225 Fin Whale to starboard
- 2254 2 Humpback Whales to starboard
- 2320 Blue Whale close to starboard bow, then port aft
- 2330 Dolphins seen from a passenger's cabin window
- 2348 Sperm Whale and White-beaked Dolphins to starboard (also seen by passengers in the Observatory)

19/06/17 At Sea (Very windy (F5-7))

- 1045 Tall, distant, blow to port. Possibly Fin or Blue Whale
- 2030 2 Whales in the distance, to port (Passenger from Deck 9 balcony)
- 2045 9+ White-beaked Dolphins surging quite close to port (Passenger from Deck 9 balcony)
- 2105 8 White-beaked Dolphins, close to port (also seen at dinner by Kathryn and others)
- 2155 3 Humpback Whales, starboard side (Paul & Lorraine)
- 2300 Unidentified Whale to starboard (Paul & Lorraine)

20/06/17 At Sea

- 1125 Blow, 5 miles to starboard
- 1131 Blow, 3 miles to starboard aft
- 1315 3-4 Orca, port side aft
- 1321 2 Sperm Whales, 2 miles to port, logging and blowing
- 1425 2 Orca, starboard midships (Passenger sighting)
- 1428 Whale, probably Minke, close to port and heading aft
- 1436 3+ Orca passed down starboard side, very active in wake (also reported by passengers)

21/06/17 Kristiansund

- 1505 Red coloured Jellyfish in the harbour
- 1515 Sea Eagle flying over the water near the Atlantic Road (Anne)
2 Herons by the water's edge were seen by passengers on a coach approaching the Great Atlantic Road. On return, an adult deer and one young emerged from the woods.

22/06/17 Hellesylt and Geirangerfjord

- 0750 Sea Eagle in Geirangerfjord
0824 2 Harbour Porpoises, near 7 Sisters Waterfall, then more nearer Geiranger
Birds seen by passengers in Hellesylt included Oyster Catchers, several House Martins, 2 Pied Wagtails, White Wagtails near the church and below the bridge, Redshank on the grass near the moorings, a Dipper on the river and a Diver being mobbed by Common Gulls after disturbing their chick. An otter was also seen on the rocks near the jetty and a Red Squirrel in the woods above the town.
2011 Harbour Porpoise inshore, moving fast near the fish farm and some ducks

23/06/17 At Sea, North Sea

- 0915 2 Dolphins, port side aft (Seen by passengers in the Spey Restaurant)
1018 Minke Whale spotted by Kris
Gannets and Fulmars were also seen regularly on this, our last sea day.

Below, and on the following page are a selection of photographs taken during the cruise to illustrate some of the encounters above. I intend ultimately to create a gallery of photographs, and a DVD, on my website for sale to support my work and that of the charity so do keep checking. Please consider making a donation to www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk on their website or via mine at www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk

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

Photographs – Arctic Norway & Svalbard

Great Skua, 11/06/17



Orca, 11/06/17



Kittiwake, 16/06/17



Fulmar, 16/06/17



Sei Whale, 16/06/17



Fin Whale, 16/06/17



Humpback Whale & calf, 16/06/17



Humpback Whale and Kittiwakes feeding, 16/06/17



Humpback Whale tail, 16/06/17



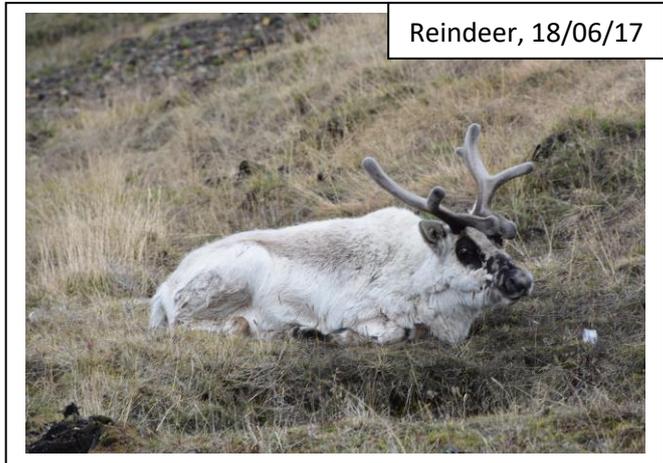
Humpback Whale pectoral fin slap, 16/06/17



Beluga Whales, as seen 17/06/17, taken on earlier trip



Reindeer, 18/06/17



Puffin, 18/06/17



Guillemot, 18/06/17



Little Auk, 18/06/17



Eider Ducks, m+f, 18/06/17



Snow Buntings, 18/06/17



Gannet, 20/06/17



White-tailed Sea Eagle, 22/06/17



Common Gulls, 22/06/17

