



# Sightings Record

## Panama and Central America

As the Chair of Trustees of the Sea Watch Foundation it is my great pleasure to share with you the sightings throughout this Viking Sky cruise, from Miami to Miami, along with a few of the photographs I have taken, with thanks to the passengers who also submitted reports. These sightings will be used to contribute to marine conservation work around the world.

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.

### **12/11/17 Miami, Florida, USA**

Laughing Gulls on our stern lines, and flying around the ship with a few Terns and also Turkey Vultures high above.

### **13/11/17 Key West, Florida, USA**

Around the harbour and town: Black Vultures, Florida Osprey, Royal Terns, Brown Pelicans, Great Egret. At the fort: Turkey and Black Vultures, Florida Osprey, Double-crested Cormorant, Green Iguanas, Great Blue Heron

- 1400 Green Heron and Peregrine Falcon reported by passengers
- Brown Boobies, Northern Gannets and a Shearwater seen during sail-away and...
- 1704 1 Bottlenose Dolphin, swimming slowly towards the starboard bow
- 1709 12+ Bottlenose Dolphins surging in to starboard bow
- 1717 12+ Bottlenose Dolphins, leaping towards starboard bow, at least 2 juveniles/calves

### **14/11/17 Sea Day**

2 Dolphins seen by passengers from Deck 2, early in the morning, swimming towards the ship, then the stern.

Flying Fish and a couple of Magnificent Frigatebirds

- 1120 8+ Pantropical Spotted Dolphins leaping towards the port bow
- 1330 Leach's Storm-petrel and Audubon's Shearwater, seen port side by passengers
- 1333 3 Dolphins seen by passengers near the port bow, and a Brown Booby
- 1445 Sooty Shearwater spotted by passengers, flying port to starboard across the bow
- 1450 The Brown Booby hitched a ride on the bow for a while before flying away!

1701-1704 16+ Dolphins in 4 groups (2+4+4+6), probably Pantropical Spotted, leaped in to the starboard bow and from ahead of the ship

1707 2+ Dolphins leaping in to the port bow, again probably Pantropical Spotted

### **15/11/17 Approaching Belize City, Belize**

A quieter morning than expected...

A glimpse of a probable Dolphin and a Shark as well as a long, slender fish jumping away from the port bow. Two Magnificent Frigatebirds circling and Brown Pelicans sitting on the channel markers. A few distant Terns were also spotted.

### **16/11/17 Roatan, Honduras**

0900 3 Royal Terns and 10 Laughing Gulls spotted and reported by guests

1215 2 Canivet's Emerald Hummingbirds, 2 Roadside Hawks and a Common Yellowthroat were reported by guests visiting the Carabola Gardens

Pipefish and Parrotfish were plentiful in the harbour and a couple of female Magnificent Frigatebirds, a Brown Noddy and Terns were seen during sailaway.

### **17/11/17 Sea Day**

0835 A large fish and then a Sea Turtle swimming alongside were reported by one guest and a small brown bird was reported on a Deck 6 balcony

1137 A solitary dolphin swam close to the starboard bow then surfed briefly in the midships wake. It remains unidentified but was possibly a Rough-toothed Dolphin. Otherwise a quiet day with a few Flying Fish and a Brown Booby but late in the day a Kestrel or Hawk landed on the ship.

### **18/11/17 Puerto Limón, Costa Rica**

Room 8014 reported a small brown, white-breasted bird initially on its back on the balcony, apparently stunned. Guest Services came and found it huddled against the ledge, released it and it flew away. Probably a Storm-petrel or perhaps Shearwater

0930 Guests reported Neotropic Cormorants, Brown Pelicans, Brown Boobies, Black and Turkey Vultures in and around the harbour and Egrets in the distance.

Royal Terns, and Frigatebirds circling above, were also seen as we sailed in and a Kestrel or Hawk was still onboard, having first been seen late yesterday.

In the Tortuguero Canals, our sightings included... Spider Monkey, Two- and Three-toed Sloth, Blue Heron, Night Heron, Snowy Egret, Basilisk "Jesus" Lizard, Great Kiskadee, Tropical Kingbird, Double-toothed Kite, Toucan and Bats and a Gartered Trogon were reported by guests

### **19/11/17 Colón, Panama**

A successful bird-watching trip encountered two types of Trogon, a Manikin, at least three types of hummingbird, Wattled Jacana, Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Social Flycatcher, Double-toothed Kite and Black and Turkey Vultures. An Agouti and Howler Monkeys were also seen.

1600 A Yellow-headed Caracara was reported by guests, flying over the port area

## 20/11/17 Panama Canal (Partial Transit)

Magnificent Frigatebirds and both Black and Turkey Vultures were circling and Brown and White Pelicans were also spotted. Cormorants and Blue Herons could be seen on buoys and along the shore where Swallows darted back and forth. An immature Yellow-headed Caracara swooped and landed near the Ohio crane and at least 4 Crocodiles were seen during the morning. Guests reported Gray-headed Kite, Fork-tailed Flycatcher and large flocks of Swifts.

- 1630 A large Crocodile, watched by 3 Egrets, was photographed in the shallows to starboard just after we left the last lock  
Another guest also photographed a small group of Capybara a few minutes earlier, one with a bird on its back!  
Three Brown Boobies joined us out at sea and left just before dark.

## 21/11/17 Cartagena, Columbia

A few Flying Fish during the morning and then as we approached Cartagena, Royal Terns and a smaller species, two species of Gull, Brown Pelicans and Frigatebirds

## 22/11/17 Sea Day

- 1130 Brown Booby flying alongside to starboard for 30min+, reported by guests  
1415 Masked Booby alongside to starboard and diving for fish, reported by guests  
In fact we had two Brown Boobies for most of the day, and a third briefly as well as the Masked Booby. All were hunting Flying Fish and plunging into the sea after them. A small raptor, possibly a Merlin, slept on the bow foremast last night. A Martin or Swallow has also been seen a few times.

## 23/11/17 Montego Bay, Jamaica

Royal Terns were seen during the sail-in and one lady spotted a Stingray close alongside

## 24/11/17 George Town, Grand Cayman

- 1635 3 Pilot Whales, 300yds to starboard, spotted by guests in 4059  
1644 15+ Pantropical Spotted Dolphins to the port and starboard bow then surfing in the wake. A great end to the afternoon!

## 25/11/17 Sea Day

- 1118 12+ Pantropical Spotted Dolphins, photographed by Kris



I hope you enjoy the report and the photographs, it was a pleasure to be part of your cruise on the Viking Sky.

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)

You may also be interested to know that I am working on a DVD of "Wildlife from Cruise Ships" which should be available mid-2018

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



# Viking Sky, Panama and Central America

Iguana, Key West



Osprey, Key West



Bottlenose Dolphin & juvenile, Key West (Kris)



Bottlenose Dolphin, Key West



Pantropical Spotted Dolphin, Sea Day 14/11/17



Collared Aracara, Belize



Sloth, Costa Rica



Snowy Egret, Costa Rica



Spider Monkey, Costa Rica



Double-toothed Kite, Costa Rica (Kris)



Green Basilisk "Jesus Christ" Lizard, Costa Rica (Kris)



Hummingbird, Panama



Agouti, Panama



Turkey Vulture, Panama (Kris)



Black Vulture, Panama



Crocodile, Panama



Magnificent Frigatebird, Panama (Kris)



There are more photographs from the identical cruise on 26/11/17 – 10/12/17 and this report can also be downloaded from [www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk](http://www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk) DVDs, prints and large files can also be ordered



Royal Tern, Cartagena (Kris)



Merlin? Viking Sky 22/11/17



Brown Booby, Sea Day 22/11/17



Masked Booby, Sea Day 22/11/17



Green Turtle, Grand Cayman



Flying Fish, Sea Day 25/11/17 (Kris)



Pantropical Spotted Dolphins, Sea Day 25/11/17 (Kris)



Pantropical Spotted Dolphin, Sea Day 25/11/17 (Kris)



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Robin Petch, aka [TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk](http://TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk)