



Sightings Record

Caribbean to the Amazon

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 the Caribbean to the Amazon, along with a few of the photographs Kris and I have taken. These sightings will be used to help understand the distribution of marine wildlife 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.

11/02/18 Miami, Florida, USA

Laughing Gulls were busy around the harbour and Dolphins, probably Bottlenose, were reported in the bay before we sailed!

12/02/18 At Sea

- 1040 The first report of Flying Fish, about a dozen off the port side, and sightings continued throughout the day.
 - 1222 2+ Dolphins, seen leaping towards the starboard bow by Kris.
 - c1240 2 or more whales reported at the surface, perhaps 1 mile to starboard. Probably Sperm Whales from the description.
- A couple of Frigatebirds were also seen but I discounted the report of a mermaid!

13/02/18 At Sea (difficult conditions)

- 0915 4 Dolphins reported to starboard (described as small and uniformly grey-green), with a number of Flying Fish also seen.



A Brown Booby (right) was with us for some time, late morning, chasing Flying

Fish and then a Masked Booby (left) was described to me by a gentleman who'd watched it from his balcony early in the afternoon. (Photographs from a previous cruise).



1705 Guests in the Explorers' Lounge reported more Flying Fish.

14/02/18 At Sea (conditions still difficult, Sea State 7 and Heavy Swell)

More Flying Fish during the morning and a brief view of a Red-billed Tropicbird and an even briefer view of what might have been a Shearwater.

1220 Flying Fish reported, along with 6-8 circling and diving birds, probably Boobies. A Masked Booby was with us for part of the late afternoon.

15/02/18 Grenada

0720 Frigatebird reported soaring above us.

0725 Many smaller birds were reported as flying low over the water but Brown Boobies and possibly Red-footed Boobies were certainly seen as well as Terns (red billed).

0850 A juvenile Magnificent Frigatebird was close to the bow, with Brown Boobies on the jetty and buoys.

1815 4 Brown Boobies on the buoy alongside the berth.

A female Magnificent Frigatebird was seen during sail away and there was just a hint of "green flash" in my photograph of the sunset!

16/02/18 At Sea (still difficult conditions, Sea State 7 and Heavy Swell)

Masked Booby to starboard at breakfast.

1105 At least 20 seabirds circling to port, probably mainly Sooty Terns but also two or more Brown or Red-footed Boobies and possibly other species too.

1245 10+ Dolphins reported by guests at lunch, surging along the starboard side. Many Flying Fish again throughout the day.

17/02/18 At Sea (marginally improved, but Sea State 6 and Heavy Swell so no Iles du Salut)

0920 6+ Dolphins spotted, starboard side aft, by guests at breakfast.

1537 Dolphins seen by guests on the port side. We missed these too!

18/02/18 At Sea (Sea State 5 but still Heavy Swell, although slightly improved)

0930 Dolphins seen by guests at breakfast again! Possibly Spinner or Pantropical Spotted, seen on both sides of the ship, aft.

I helped Linda Jane Brown release a Storm Petrel which she had rescued (right)

1232 5+ Bottlenose Dolphins, surfacing close to starboard bow then 2+ more, 200 yards to port (right)

1549 Brown Booby to port



Lots of Flying Fish again, one guest counting around 200-300 during just one hour!

19/02/18 Macapá, entry to the Amazon

Early in the morning, in the dark near the river mouth, many Terns and possibly Tropicbirds and Laughing Gulls were feeding around the ship. Lots of moths, beetles, crickets, bugs and other critters on deck!

0630 Boto (aka Amazon River Dolphins or Amazon Pink Dolphins) seen by guests

0730 White-winged Swallow photographed on the starboard rail

0846 Boto seen through his cabin window by Ian (Assistant Cruise Director/Elvis!)

Further glimpses of “possibles” throughout the day
More White-winged Swallows, Gray-breasted Martins, a flock of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, and late in the evening, 4 Macaws (or similar) flew across the river ahead of us.

A small bird on Penny Watkins’ balcony turned out to be a Gray-breasted Crake (right)



20/02/18 Santarém, Brazil

Turkey and Black Vultures above the harbour and town, Large-billed Terns everywhere! A large Kingfisher was also spotted from the ship and lots more moths, Tawny Mole Crickets, beetles etc. on board this including Giant Water Bugs. We saw Tucuxi (Amazon Grey Dolphins) and Boto on the Piranha Fishing & Maica Lake tour as well as Three-toed Sloths, Osprey (with fish), Yellow-headed Caracara (including a juvenile) and Water Buffalo. Neotropic Cormorants, Large-billed Terns and a Great White Heron hunting were photographed on the return trip. Oriole Blackbirds and Fork-tailed Flycatchers were busy around the port.

21/02/18 Parintins, Brazil

White-winged Swallows, Barn Swallows and Grey-breasted Martins were hunting around the ship from early in the morning. Many butterflies, moths, beetles and crickets on board again! Guests reported many bats seen from the balcony at 6am. Plenty of wildlife at the Boi Bumba! What a performance! Turkey and Black Vultures circled above the town and Oriole Blackbirds were around the streets. Large-billed Terns and Black Skimmers were observed perched on numerous floating logs in the river and sometimes flying around. Cattle, Horses and Water Buffalo could be seen along the shore and there are at least two Bats on board.

22/02/18 Manaus, Brazil (Approaching and docking)

At least one Boto near the “Meeting of the Waters” and Large-billed Terns. Lots of Turkey and Black Vultures over the city and harbour. Another Boto amongst the ferry vessels as we docked and more seen both in the river and harbour during the afternoon.

Birds included Great Kiskadee, Fork-tailed Flycatchers, Neotropic Cormorants and various “tyrant-flycatchers.” Lots more moths and other critters around the decks!



23/02/18 Manaus, Brazil

The “Meeting of the Waters” tour was terrific for wildlife with Wattled Jacana, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Black Vulture, Yellow-headed Vulture, Tucuxi, Boto, and Squirrel Monkeys (right). Other guests reported Kingfishers, Eagles and many of the same species. Guests on the ship saw Boto swimming around the harbour.



24/02/18 Sailing the River Amazon (Parintins to Santarem and beyond)

- 1000 Brief glimpse of Boto as well as a few birds
Only splashes where dolphins might have been for the rest of the day but good views of Large-billed Terns, Great Egrets and a large Kingfisher crossing the river. One guest spotted a Yellow-headed Caracara carrying a snake crossing only 100yds ahead of the ship.

25/02/18 Sailing the River Amazon

- 0800 Unresponsive small Bat huddled on Deck 2 aft reported to me by guests
0900 Two Macaws flying over the ship, vocalising and a large green Parrot (Festive?) spotted in a tree on the shore by observant guests!
Only glimpses of possible Dolphins but towards the end of the day we saw numerous Great Egrets and Large-billed Terns and finally three large v-formations of what were probably Black-bellied Whistling Ducks.

26/02/18 At Sea

- 0901 Guest reports of at least two Dolphins passing down the port side, 100yds away
1305 6+ probable Bottlenose Dolphins to port and 3+ to starboard reported to us at lunchtime so we managed a brief glimpse of 2 leaping in the bow wave (Robin) and port side aft (Kris)
1516 We crossed the Brazil/France (French Guiana) International Border!
1628 3-4 Dolphins, possibly Bottlenose, reported port side midships

27/02/18 At Sea

- 0830 Two Dolphins reported by guests, described as “green/grey/yellow nondescript”
1100 Hundreds of Flying Fish of 3 species and three large fish (2ft+) with pinkish bodies and large blue iridescent pectoral fins reported by the same guests
1500 Masked Booby again reported by the guests above. Thanks for all the sightings!
In fact there were Flying Fish on and off all day of varying sizes and species. After the Masked Booby mentioned above, we were joined by an immature Red-footed Booby and increasing numbers of often immature Brown Boobies. By 1715 we had 7 in total but they gradually departed.

28/02/18 Bridgetown, Barbados

Two Magnificent Frigatebirds over the town

01/03/18 St John's, Antigua

Lots of Flying Fish during sail-in and one female and one male Magnificent Frigatebird. A flock of unidentified small white birds was spotted by one guest passing close to the bow. Two Brown Pelicans and 3 more magnificent Frigatebirds, including a juvenile (right) were seen near the harbour as well as Great White and Cattle Egrets.



A number of guests reported one or more Humpback Whales just outside the harbour and Jim McVey reported another breaching in the far distance. All are possibilities as a few Humpbacks were known to be in the area but there are also a number of rocks and reefs where waves break in all the areas pointed out to us which sadly was all we saw throughout our watch until nightfall.

02/03/18 Basseterre, St. Kitts & Nevis

Two Hawksbill Turtles were reported in the channel between Nevis and St Kitts by Jim McVey

Guests saw Dolphins, and possibly a Whale, during the various tours today. Brown Pelicans and Magnificent Frigatebirds were around as usual and distant white birds may have been a large Tern species.

03/03/18 Charlotte Amelie, St Thomas

Just one Magnificent Frigatebird over the harbour in the morning and an Iguana spotted at the mountain top, despite the Banana Daquiri! A Brown Booby was sitting on a buoy when we sailed.

Amazon cruises are always amazing and this was no exception! The sea days and islands are also full of opportunities and Viking Sky is a beautiful ship. I hope you enjoyed it as much as we have and you enjoy the photographs I have included with this report.

All these images, and many more, are included in an Amazon Wildlife DVD which is available for £20 (UK, PAL) or \$30 (US, NTSC) and prints or jpgs are also available from:

Robin Petch, aka TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk

Viking Sky, Caribbean to the Amazon

Bottlenose Dolphins, 18/02/18



Red-footed Booby, 27/02/18

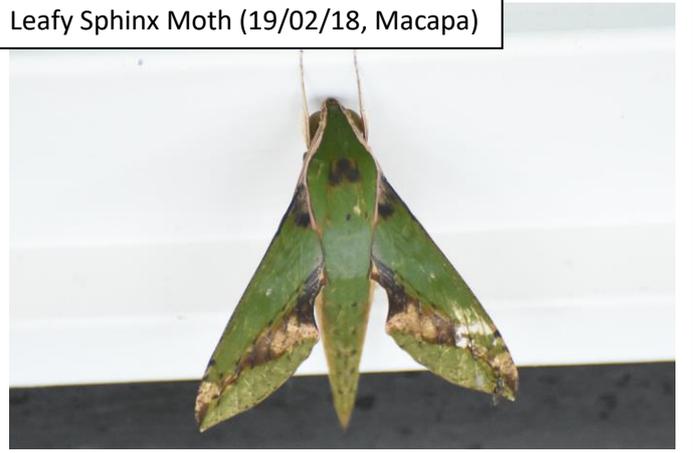


Wildlife on Deck, Caribbean to the Amazon

Storm-petrel (At Sea, 18/02/18)



Leafy Sphinx Moth (19/02/18, Macapa)



Grey-breasted Crake (20/02/18, Santarem)



Streaked Sphinx Moth (20/02/18, Santarem)



Giant Water Bug aka Toe-biter (20/02/18, Santarem)



Katydid aka Bush Cricket (20/02/18, Santarem)



Mole Cricket & Beetles (20/02/18, Santarem)



Bat, species unknown (25/02/18, Roy Vandenburg)



Viking Sky, Caribbean to the Amazon

Tucuxi, aka Grey Dolphin (Santarem)



Three-toed Sloth (Santarem, Piranha Tour)



Osprey with fish (Santarem, Piranha Tour)



Yellow-headed Caracara (Santarem, Piranha Tour)



Boto, aka Pink Dolphin (Santarem, Piranha Tour)



Large-billed Tern (Santarem, Piranha Tour)



Neotropic Cormorant
(Manaus, Kris)



Great Kiskadee (Manaus, Kris)

