



Sightings Record

West Indies to Spain



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 San Juan to Barcelona, 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.

04/03/18 San Juan, Puerto Rico (sailaway)

A few Roral Terns and a Brown Booby as we sailed out of the very rough channel!

05/03/18 At Sea, Day 1

- 0700+ Brown Booby flying with us, probably the same one reported by guests even earlier
- 1015 Female Magnificent Frigatebird
- 1017 Brown Booby
- 1153 Tropicbird (either White-tailed or Red-billed)
- 1310 Magnificent Frigatebird circling and fishing to starboard aft
- 1346 Magnificent Frigatebird to starboard, heading aft
- 1456 6+ Dolphins (probably Striped) leaping above the surf, ½mile to port
- 1538 Male Magnificent Frigatebird ahead and then down starboard side
- 1615 Male Magnificent Frigatebird ahead and then to port
- 1731 Male Magnificent Frigatebird ahead and then to port

These sightings may, or may not, have been the same bird. Kris also observed Masked Boobies and a Red-billed Tropicbird aft of the ship during the afternoon and Flying Fish were regularly spotted by guests and ourselves

06/03/18 At Sea, Day 2

- 0915 Magnificent Frigatebird reported by a guest
- 1015 A small gull spotted turned out to be a Bonaparte's Gull which breeds only in Alaska and northern Canada but is very rarely sighted as a "vagrant" in Europe.

- 1115 The Bonaparte's Gull, at that time still unidentified, was reported around the ship by guests, seen "hitchhiking" on the bow and flying past stateroom 4000 at 1215
- 1115 Dolphin reported by another guest, off the starboard bow
- 1219 White-tailed Tropicbird
- 1724 Male Magnificent Frigatebird ahead then to port, high!
- 1751 Storm Petrel, 500yds off starboard bow

07/03/18 At Sea, Day 3

Flying Fish of various species at intervals throughout the day

Thanks to guests in stateroom 4000 for all the Cory's Shearwater sightings, at 1522, 1535, 1539, 1542, 1547, 1549, 1551. We also logged sightings at 1232, 1420, 1513 and on numerous occasions over lunch and between 1516 and 1710 by Kris alone

- 1426 Sperm Whale seen ahead and to port then within 25yds of the starboard side, resting and blowing at the surface before a shallow dive
- 2305 Guests and the boys from the show team heard a whale blow hard nearby!

08/03/18 At Sea, Day 4

A whale was heard blowing by Ian (assistant Cruise Director/Elvis) and some colleagues early this morning

- 0840 Flying Fish and one seabird off the port side reported by guests
- 1011 White-tailed Tropicbird foraging ahead and to port

This was otherwise a quiet day, except for a few Flying Fish from time to time

09/03/18 At Sea, Day 5

- 0910 Whales announced by the bridge, 3+ ahead and on the port side, and also seen by guests in Explorers'. One actually dived near the bow and was identified by guests who'd seen the previous one as a Sperm Whale. Two further whales a mile to starboard were also described to me and were probably also Sperm Whales. Unfortunately we saw none of them as we were at breakfast and the whales ended up 3 miles to starboard, passing down the starboard side!

- 1251 Whale blowing and a glimpse of back 1 mile ahead, species unidentified
- 1423 2 whale blows observed 3 miles to starboard, again unidentified

We also continued to see Flying Fish

10/03/18 At Sea, Day 6

- 0920 A very quiet day, just a little Sargassum Weed in small drifts (see right)



11/03/18 At Sea, Day 7

- 1026 Black-legged Kittiwake flying alongside
- 1036 Shearwaters (possibly Sooty) seen ahead briefly
- 1155 Many small fish jumping at the surface on both sides
- 1523 Large (8ft+) grey/white fish, probably a shark, to starboard

- 1650 15+ Atlantic Spotted Dolphins leaping in to the starboard, then port, bow. Also seen by guests at the stern where the dolphins were active for a while
A couple of Cory's Shearwaters and possible Storm Petrels seen today

12/03/18 Funchal, Madeira

Yellow-legged Gulls (adults and juveniles), Black-legged Kittiwakes and Terns (species unidentified) around the harbour and during sail-away

Many Cory's Shearwaters, continually until 1920, when we stopped watching!

- 1808 30+ Common Dolphins leaping and surging to both sides of the bow in two waves. Many also seen in the wake shortly after.

13/03/18 Sea Day

- 0830 4+ Dolphins seen by guests from Explorers', starboard bow
0850 5-6 Dolphins seen by guests from staterooms and the World Café, port side 50-100yds
1144 The first of 3 Sea Turtles seen today, port side
1257 8+ Striped Dolphins leaping to the starboard bow then away from the ship
1540 The second Sea Turtle, port side
1555 Northern Gannet took off from the sea, near starboard bow
1737 Northern Gannet flew right to left, ahead of the bow
1836 5+ Common Dolphins, surging in to port bow, then leaping ½mile to starboard
1908-1913 Breaching Humpback Whale ahead and to starboard (right), then reported from the World Café by guests, 1915-1920!
A whale was also seen, port side aft, a little later by the Finance Manager and a number of guests



14/03/18 Cadiz, Spain

Yellow-legged and Lesser Black-backed Gulls around the harbour

20+ Gulls of both types followed us out to sea, the Yellow-legged leaving first and a few Terns (Sandwich?) and 3 Northern Gannets

15/03/18 Sea Day

- 1050 2 Dolphins to the bow, then 2 to port, both very briefly
1118 2 Dolphins moving on and off the bow, probably Striped
1158 12+ Striped Dolphins surging to the bow from ahead
1301 1 Dolphin barely surface twice, off the port bow
1305 Risso's Dolphin photographed close to starboard bow (see above)



1313 3 Common Dolphins from ahead and down port side

1315 2 Dolphins seen by guests on starboard side

1319 1 Striped Dolphin leaping in to port bow

1750 3 Dolphins reported by guests on the starboard side

1846 3 Common Dolphins leaping and surging to the port bow

This was an interesting day with many encounters but all were very brief, the Dolphins all being spotted only when already close to the ship. A Mediterranean Gull was also seen, as well as a Great Skua.

16/03/18 Valencia, Spain

A few Mediterranean and Yellow-legged Gulls around the harbour which were our last wildlife sightings before disembarkation in Barcelona.

This was a great Transatlantic crossing, especially the close sightings of Sperm Whales, a breaching Humpback Whale and numerous Dolphin encounters including a solitary Risso's!

I hope you enjoyed the crossing and the passage through the Strait of Gibraltar on the beautiful Viking Sky as much as we have and you enjoy the photographs I have included with this report which are available as prints or jpegs from my website.

I am also working on a DVD of my wildlife photographs for £20 (UK, PAL) or \$30 (US, NTSC)

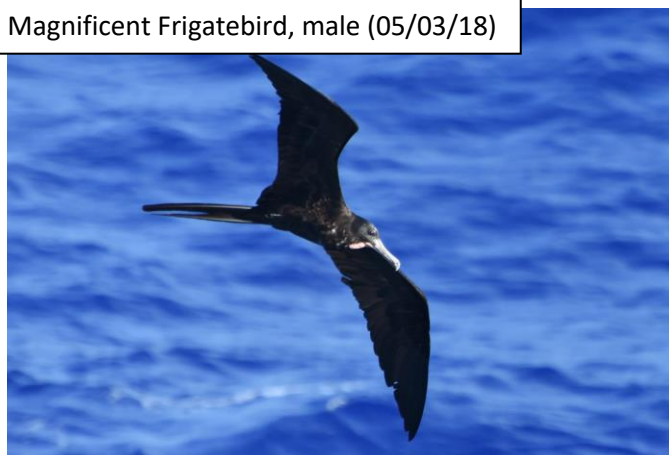
Robin Petch, aka TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk

Viking Sky, West Indies to Spain

Striped Dolphin (05/03/18)



Magnificent Frigatebird, male (05/03/18)



Masked Boobies (Kris, 05/03/18)



Flying Fish (05/03/18)



Bonaparte's Gull (06/03/18)



White-tailed Tropicbird (06/03/18)



Sperm Whale (07/03/18)



Cory's Shearwater (07/03/18)



Black-legged Kittiwake (11/03/18)



Atlantic Spotted Dolphin (11/03/18)



Yellow-legged Gull (12/03/18)



Black-headed Gull (17/03/18)



It was a great pleasure sharing this Viking Sky Transatlantic Voyage with you and I hope you have enjoyed the report and photographs. Please consider making a donation to support our work at www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk or on my website www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk