



# Sightings Record

## Viking Sun World Cruise

### Los Angeles to Auckland



As the Chair of Trustees of the Sea Watch Foundation it is my great pleasure to share with you the sightings throughout this Viking Sun inaugural World Cruise, Los Angeles to Auckland. The report also includes 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.

It was an amazing experience to be a part of this voyage and we hope you have continued to enjoy good wildlife sightings. I am also delighted to be able to let you know that we will be onboard for most of the next World Cruise too, all the way from Miami to Durban! We look forward to seeing some of you again in 2019.

If you've enjoyed the photography from the voyage, some of which is included in this report, I have created a DVD of my final "wildlife slideshow". This also has some added scenery shots to provide context and is available for £20 to UK customers and \$30 to the US, including P&P and a donation to the Sea Watch Foundation. Order through [TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk](http://TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk) where you can also make donations to the charity.

#### **04/01/18 Los Angeles, California, USA**

Hundreds of Long-beaked Common Dolphins, a distant Fin Whale and a few coastal Bottlenose Dolphins on our whale watching trip from Long Beach as well as Western Gulls, California Gulls and Shearwaters and California Sea Lions

#### **05/01/18 Los Angeles, California, USA**

3 Bottlenose Dolphins in the harbour near BB61 USS Iowa and at least one California Sea Lion alongside Viking Sun until the fireworks started!

## 06/01/18 Sea Day 1, Pacific Ocean

- 0854 Humpback Whale spouting repeatedly, ½ mile off starboard side, sighted by guests  
1257 40+ Common Dolphins ½ mile ahead then in to the bow and down both sides with much leaping, continued in the wake  
A few Western Gulls, mainly immature, also flew around from time to time  
1432 30+ Common Dolphins, in to the bow from the port side then back into the wake. Some surfing, and possibly fishing, alongside  
1520 Whale spotted in the distance by a guest, port side  
1542 12+ Common Dolphins leaping in to the port bow, then in the wake



## 07/01/18 Sea Day 2, Pacific Ocean

Some Flying Fish throughout the day

## 08/01/18 Sea Day 3, Pacific Ocean

More Flying Fish and a couple of Brown Boobies flying with us and hunting as well as a few Shearwaters. One Booby settled on the foremast and was still there as darkness fell. A Storm Petrel was also released from a balcony today.

## 09/01/18 Sea Day 4, Pacific Ocean

Another Storm Petrel, probably Leach's, was reported by Bobbe, Deck 3, which I checked and successfully released.

More Shearwaters were seen throughout the day and 2 Masked Boobies, one immature, made occasional visits. Our own Brown Booby is still with us, mainly riding on the foremast but also hunting Flying Fish!



## 10/01/18 Sea Day 5, Pacific Ocean

Guests reported a Masked Booby resting on deck in the pre-dawn and our hitchhiking Brown Booby, now known as "Sunny", was seen hunting Flying Fish from his foremast perch.

- 0805 20+ Common Dolphins, 200yds+ to port, reported by a number of guests

- 1430 4 Whales spotted by guests, blows and fins seen to port  
2 Dolphins were also seen after lunch, again by guests and one more later in the afternoon Our sightings today were limited to Flying Fish, an occasional Storm-petrel and Shearwater and a distant large unidentified white bird. "Sunny" settled down for a third night on his foremast perch!



### **11/01/18 Sea Day 6, Pacific Ocean**

1420 A quiet day, only a few Flying Fish and no further sightings of “Sunny”

### **12/01/18 Sea Day 7, Pacific Ocean**

Small brown birds, probably Storm-petrels, reported close alongside at c3am!

0830 “Feeding frenzy” of small fish, and possibly Tuna, seen to starboard

0940 An immature Sooty Tern (almost certainly!) released from 8011, thanks to Vicky Ferrari for calling for me!

1027 & 1100 Large white Tern-like bird seen in the distance to port, probably a Tropicbird

1145 & 1155 Two different Shearwaters to starboard, one probably a Sooty

A few more birds in the afternoon, Terns or Tropicbirds, and also Flying Fish.

A “green flash” completed the day at sunset and both Terns and Tropicbirds flew over and around the ship during the night.

### **13/01/18 Taioha’e, Nuku Hiva, French Polynesia**

0605 Dolphins reported during the sail-in, seen by guests

0710 Spinner Dolphins seen and photographed by Roger Strom, port side aft  
Ground Doves, known locally as Nuku Hiva Pigeons and White Terns, known locally as Fairy Terns, around the town

1530-1600 15+ Manta Rays feeding, swimming and mating close to the bow of the ship and around the bay. A large Heron also spotted as well as pairs of White Terns

1647 8+ Spinner Dolphins leaping out of the glare to the starboard bow

1713 5+ Spinner Dolphins photographed by Kris

1718 8+ Pantropical Spotted Dolphins leaping in to the starboard bow and then in the wake

1728 5+ Pantropical Spotted Dolphins leaping ahead then passing quietly down the starboard side, one leaping a few hundred yards off. Kris photographed them surging in the wake

Brown Noddies, White Terns, a Brown Booby and other birds seen at a distance



### **14/01/18 Sea Day**

Only a few birds today, mainly White Terns but others unidentified

### **15/01/18 Sea Day & arrival at Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia**

Lots of Flying Fish as we approached the islands and more seabirds including “white morph” Red-footed Boobies, White Terns, Greater Crested Terns, Red-billed Tropicbirds, a White-tailed Tropicbird and a few Shearwaters of two types.

A Shark, Bonnethead or Hammerhead, was spotted close to the port by guests

### **16/01/18 Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia**

1430 Large Sea Turtle seen and photographed by a guest during sail-away

During the sail-away from Tahiti we recorded Greater Crested Terns, Red-footed Boobies, Brown Noddies, a Brown Booby and a couple of Shearwaters but sadly no Dolphins despite this being an excellent area! However, guests on a number of different boat trips did see them, positively identified by at least one captain as Spinners, but other species may have been seen.

### **17/01/18 Bora Bora, French Polynesia**

Dolphins spotted by guests during sail-in early this morning  
Black-tipped Reef Sharks, Stingrays and Turtles seen by guests on reef trips  
Greater Frigatebirds spotted over the anchorage and Red-footed Boobies, Terns and possible Shearwaters seen outside the reef during sail-away

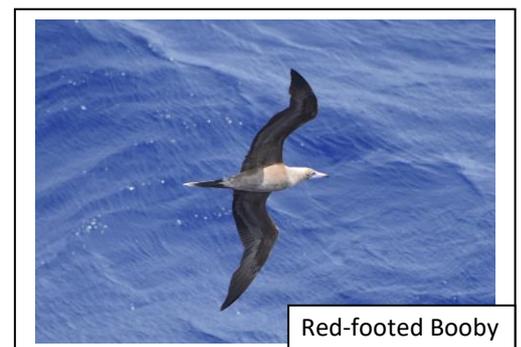
### **18/01/18 Sea Day**

A few Tropicbirds, one definitely White-tailed. Also a few Shearwaters, White Terns and Red-footed Boobies.

1925 What at first appeared, in the dusk, to be a wayward Australasian Gannet turned out to be a “white-morph” Red-footed Booby

### **19/01/18 Raratonga, Cook Islands (circumnavigation and Sea Day)**

A heavy swell unfortunately made landing impossible. Flying Fish and White Terns, Red-footed Boobies and Brown Noddies were seen as well as a couple of Black-winged Petrels



### **20/01/18 Sea Day**

Very few Flying Fish in the morning and distant Black-winged Petrels and White-tailed Tropicbird but no sightings in the afternoon.

### **21/01/18 The Day that Never Was!**

### **22/01/18 Sea Day**

- 1101 12+ White Terns, 2 Shearwaters, 2+ probable Storm Petrels all hunting and feeding in the same area, 200yds to port  
White-tailed Tropicbird and more Shearwaters shortly after  
Flying Fish and occasional seabirds throughout the day
- 1722 2+ White-tailed Tropicbirds, Shearwaters and lots of White Terns to starboard  
Brown Booby and other birds spotted by a guest shortly after
- 1826 20+ White Terns and many Shearwaters and Petrels to starboard
- 1842 Big “fish-boil” 150yds to starboard with maybe 200 birds circling and dipping including Terns, Tropicbirds, Petrels and Shearwaters. Large and small fish jumping

### **23/01/18 Nuku’Alofa, Tonga**

A few Black-naped Terns around the ship with one pair caring for an egg on the old jetty. Lots of fish on the reef. A couple of Black-winged Petrels on the sail-away.

## 24/01/18 Sea Day

- Lots of birds and quite a few Flying Fish today
- 0930 Lots of birds feeding and circling to starboard, Terns, Petrels, Shearwaters and Boobies
- 1034 “White morph” Red-footed Boobies and “Brown morph” Red-footed Boobies and varieties in between! Also 3 Brown Boobies, Black-winged Petrels, Terns and a Tropicbird or two
- 1130 30+ Red-footed Boobies of all varying morphs close to the ship and quite a few small Petrels
- 1245 6+ Red-footed boobies close to the bow
- 1610 5 Red-footed Boobies, including 1 “white morph”
- 1858 50+ birds seen and heard in the gloom, ¾ mile to port, Terns with a black cap and dark wings so probably Greater-crested

## 25/01/18 Suva, Fiji

Fruit Bats (aka flying Foxes) near the President’s Palace and Museum  
Large group of 30+ birds feeding just outside the reef including Terns of at least 2 species, Shearwaters, Petrels and Red-footed boobies. Two Greater Frigatebirds, a Black-winged Petrel and “white morph” Red-footed booby later

## 26/01/18 Sea Day

A rainy, grey day with our only sighting a brief view of a small bird, probably a Storm Petrel. A Sooty Shearwater was photographed by a guest, skimming the waves parallel to the ship.

## 27/01/18 Sea Day

- 1125 Black-winged Petrel photographed skimming the waves around the ship for a while. More joined later, along with Sooty Shearwaters, in ones and twos perhaps up to 10 at one time.

## 28/01/18 Russell, Bay of Islands, Australia

- Australasian Gannets and Shearwaters were frequently spotted as we sailed in.
- 0658 15+ Bottlenose Dolphins surging to the starboard bow then alongside, some leaping. One calf and at least one, perhaps 2, juveniles were part of the group. The dolphins continued to forage around the ship, played around the tenders and pilot boat before moving off. This encounter was enjoyed by many guests, we received numerous verbal reports, and was our final wildlife encounter of a great voyage as we left the following morning in Auckland.

It was an amazing experience to be part of this first Viking World Cruise on the Viking Sun. I hope you enjoyed it as much as we have and you enjoy the photographs I have included with this report and the report of the Miami to LA sector of the voyage.

All these images, and more, are included in a World Cruise 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](http://TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk)

# World Cruise, Los Angeles to Auckland

Western Gull, Los Angeles



Western Gull (immature), Los Angeles



California Sea Lion & Squid, Los Angeles



Shearwater, Los Angeles



Long-beaked Common Dolphin, Los Angeles



Bottlenose Dolphin, Los Angeles



Short-beaked Common Dolphins, Sea Day 06/01/18



Flying Fish, Sea Day 08/01/18



Shearwater, Sea Day 12/01/18



Flying Fish, Sea Day 12/01/18



Crab, Nuku Hiva 13/01/18



Spinner Dolphins, Nuku Hiva 13/01/18 (Kris)



Pantropical Spotted Dolphin, Nuku Hiva 13/01/18 (Kris)



Greater Crested Tern, Tahiti 15/01/18



Black-winged Petrel, Sea Day 18/01/18



Brown Noddy, Rarotonga Sea Day 19/01/18



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Tuna, Sea Day 22/01/18



Red-billed Tropicbird, Sea Day 22/01/18



Black-naped Tern, Tonga 23/01/18



Red-footed Booby 24/01/18



Fruit Bat (Flying Fox), Fiji 25/01/18

Australasian Gannet, Bay of Islands 28/01/18



Bottlenose Dolphins, Bay of Islands 28/01/18



Bottlenose Dolphin, Bay of Islands 28/01/18



I hope you enjoy the report and the photographs, it was a pleasure to be part of your World Cruise on the Viking Sun. I look forward to meeting some of you again sometime!  
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) where you can also buy my Wildlife DVDs.