



Sightings Record

Viking Sun World Cruise 2019

Miami to Buenos Aires



As the Chair of Trustees of the Sea Watch Foundation it is my great pleasure to share with you the sightings from this sector of the Viking Sun World Cruise 2019, Miami to Buenos Aires. 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.

Sightings Records for each sector of the cruise, and my previous voyages, are available as free pdf downloads from my website – www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk

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.

We were proud to be involved with the first part of the inaugural Round the World voyage in 2018, from Miami to Auckland, and we are delighted to be able to let you know that we will be onboard for a significant part of the next World Cruise too, all the way from Los Angeles to London! We look forward to seeing some of you again in 2020.

If you've enjoyed the photography from the voyage, as seen in my talks and as included in this report, I will be creating a DVD of my final "wildlife slideshow". This will include some added scenery shots to provide context and will be available for £20 to UK customers and \$30 to the US, including P&P and a donation to the Sea Watch Foundation. A DVD of the 2018 voyage, and another of my Amazon cruises can be found in the shop onboard. A number of photopacks, in 6x4" or 7x5", are also available. Alternatively, order through my website, **TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk**, where you can also make donations to the charity.

Thank you again for your interest and I hope to sail again with you sometime, somewhere!

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kris".

World Cruise Sightings Record

Miami to Buenos Aires 2019

4 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, North Coast of Cuba

Lots of Flying Fish throughout the morning.

- c.0800 20+ possibly Spinner Dolphins reported by Kathy Reimer, seen whilst walking Deck 2, to starboard and near the bow
- 0900 6+ Dolphins reported by guests, approaching the starboard bow, then diving
- c.0930 Two more Dolphins reported to starboard at breakfast
- 1212 12-15 Short-finned Pilot Whales, 400yds to port, parallel course (*right*)
- 1219 4 Short-finned Pilot Whales 250yds to port, apparently foraging
Two cruise ships passed on a reciprocal course, Azamara Journey and Carnival Conquest
- 1442 Immature Magnificent Frigatebird circling overhead and then aft
- 1533 Royal (or possibly Caspian?) Tern hunting ahead, then to port



All in all, a pretty good start to the cruise!

5 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, North Coast of Dominican Republic

A quiet day. Lots of Flying Fish and just a glimpse of a white seabird. A Brown Booby was seen by a guest, taking a Flying Fish, early in the day

6 Jan 2019 – SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico

A Magnificent Frigatebird circled above the harbour during the morning and Brown Pelicans and a few unidentified Gulls and Terns were seen throughout the day

7 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Caribbean

- Up to 5 Masked Boobies and 1 Brown Booby flying above and alongside, hunting the many Flying Fish
- 1029 3 Atlantic Spotted Dolphins (*right*)
Just one Masked Booby in the afternoon but lots more Flying Fish
- 1716 5+ Spinner Dolphins leaping and spinning to port, aft



Guests reported Terns during the day, probably Royal Terns

8 Jan 2019 – ST GEORGE’S, Grenada

A female Magnificent Frigatebird, two or three Brown Boobies, two Royal Terns and three Brown Pelicans around the port

9 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean

Two Dolphins reported by a guest, leaping out of the water beyond the surf alongside the ship. They would be longer than the 4-5ft reported, 6-9ft is the range

c.0930 Spinner Dolphins (probably) leaping and spinning in the surf to starboard - *Bruno*
One Brown, and up to 12 Masked Boobies including a first season immature, riding the air currents and hunting Flying Fish on the port side

1530 6-8 Dolphins reported c.500yds to starboard - *Viola*

10 Jan 2019 – ILES DU SALUT, French Guiana

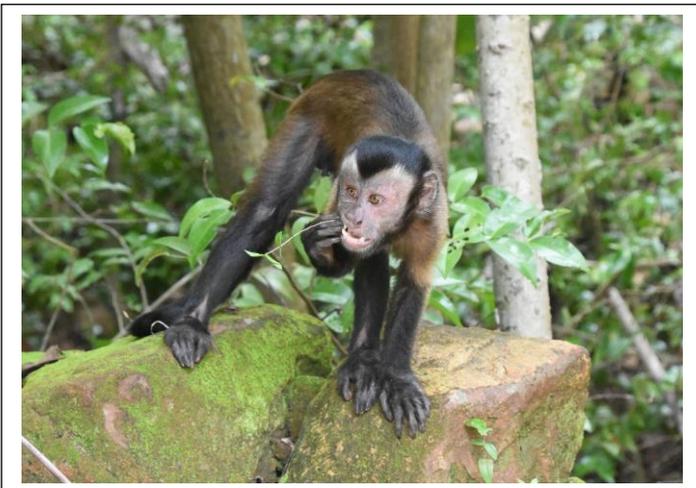
0803 5+ Bottlenose Dolphins, close to starboard with 2 more reported to port

0915 Guests on Deck 2 reported a pod of Dolphins swimming near the bow with at least 3 playing in the swell

- A female Magnificent Frigatebird, numerous Laughing Gulls (*below left*) and a few Royal Terns (*below right*) were seen on approach to Ile Royale and later smaller, possibly Common Terns and two larger, darker Gulls



Around the island, Brown (Tufted) Capuchins (*below left*), Spider Monkeys, Iguanas (including one with 7 Ticks in its neck, *below right*), Green Turtles, Kiskadees or



similar “Tyrant Flycatchers” Agoutis (*below left*), Ruddy Turnstones (*below right*), and various small lizards, finches and other wading birds could all be seen



11 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean

1411 3 Dolphins surfing alongside to starboard, possible Pantropical Spotted
No Flying Fish seen today and just one distant bird!

12 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean

Just one immature Masked Booby for a short time in the morning

1355 3 Sperm Whales (*below left*) ahead and to starboard, one so close that the ship had to adjust course to port! Another whale was reported breaching to port in the middle distance at around the same time, seen by a guest from his balcony
Flying Fish were being seen again, as well as a couple of Masked Boobies

1726 5-6 Dolphins to port, some leaping

1739 8+ Pantropical Spotted Dolphins (*below right*), surging in to the port bow, alongside and then aft. Much leaping observed, and two mother/calf pairs



13 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean

No sightings during the morning, except for a few Flying Fish but a shark was spotted alongside by a guest in the early afternoon!

Kris also photographed our first Scopoli’s Shearwaters, birds which breed on the Cape Verde Islands, 1400 nautical miles away, off the coast of North Africa

1702 Red-billed Tropicbird to port

14 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean

2 Masked Boobies (*below left*) during the morning, hunting Flying Fish.

1304 15+ Masked Boobies flying with the ship and hunting Flying Fish. This number gradually rose to 25!

At around 1315, we began to transit from the deep ocean (7500ft+) onto the continental shelf (120-150ft) so wildlife possibilities were potentially much higher. We began to see large groups of seabirds, including 2 species of Terns and more Scopoli's Shearwaters (*below right*) including immature birds



1358 6+ Spinner Dolphins (*below left*) leaping and surging close to port then dropped back into the wake to leap some more!

Masked Boobies at their peak of 25

1401 More Dolphins spotted perhaps 250yds to starboard – *Bruno*



1450 A Magnificent Frigatebird (*above right*) joined us and began hassling the Boobies for their fish and occasionally catching her own!

1715 All the birds were still with us but began to depart as evening approached. A great afternoon, with wonderful close-up views of wildlife throughout!

15 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean

0700 1 Masked and 1 Brown Booby flying in formation (*next page, left*), later joined by 3 more Masked Boobies. Plenty of Flying Fish too!



- 0730 Dolphin spotted by a guest, perhaps 2, port side midships
A young Red-footed Booby (*above right and bottom left with Flying Fish*), our first of the cruise, joined us then suddenly...
- 1223 3, then a 4th, Cuvier's Beaked Whales surfaced 200yds to port and then again a few times into the distance astern. A fabulous close encounter with a deep-diving species which is not often seen, although the best known of its kind! (*Below*)



- c.1330 6 Dolphins reported close to the port side, seen by guests from their balcony
Flying Fish and a few Masked Boobies seen during the afternoon
1700-1725 20-30 Scopoli's Shearwaters, and more in the distance, spread out to port from 250yds to over a mile (*below right*)



16 Jan 2019 – SALVADOR DA BAHIA, Brazil

Interestingly, most of the birds around the harbour seemed to be pigeons! Just a few distant Gulls seen, and a Brown Booby just after sailing!

17 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean, Coast of Brazil

Two Shearwaters, a few Masked Boobies and a hitchhiking Brown Booby (*below left*), quickly named Sunny II after a bird which joined us in 2018 for 3½ days shortly after leaving LA! (*Below right, my best picture of a Flying Fish so far!*)



1510 2 Dolphins, leaping near the starboard bow

1516 Sea Turtle, close to the port side, spotted by Kris

1809 The first of three waves of Dolphins, totalling at least 50+, over the period to about 1830. Some guests reported “hundreds!” Sadly I missed them, species is unknown!

18 Jan 2019 – BUZIOS, Brazil

A few Brown Boobies and a Magnificent Frigatebird during the sail-in as well as 2 Sea Turtles

1136-1156 2 Bryde’s Whales blowing and surfacing just outside the bay, to the left of the island (1½ miles) heading north and then a few minutes later what may have been a third to the right of the island, heading down to Rio!

Lots more Brown Boobies and a few Great Egrets during the afternoon

19 Jan 2019 – RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil

Brown Boobies and Magnificent Frigatebirds around the port and bay. Black Vultures around Sugarloaf Mountain (*right*) and the Christ of the Andes. Guests reported V-formations of birds flying low over the water on both days in Rio. These may have been Geese but probably were Cormorants or even Brown Boobies.



20 Jan 2019 – RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil

Magnificent Frigatebirds and Brown Boobies hunted in the wash on departure then two of the former had a mid-air disagreement or courtship a little later! (*Below left*)



1523 8+ Bottlenose Dolphins (*above right*) ahead then surging in the surf at both sides of the ship

1553 Sea Turtle to port, quite close

1606 Mola mola Sunfish, photographed very close to port side



1607 Sea Turtle, photographed close to port side

1625 5 Bottlenose Dolphins ahead, in to starboard bow then close alongside

1702 2 large brown Skuas, flying right to left across the bow

1728 Multiple groups of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins (*below*), 50+ in total, feeding ahead



then many surging to both sides of the ship, bow and wake riding

20+ Spinner or Clymene Dolphins, feeding ahead then a short distance to starboard

1808 Our first Albatross, species unidentified, ½ mile to port

21 Jan 2019 AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean

1030 Leatherback Turtle, reported to port by a guest

1100 Whale, 2 miles to starboard, blew twice at the surface and then arched its back and presumably dived. Possibly a Sperm Whale

1102 20-30 Dolphins spotted close to the same area, much splashing and some leaping

1159 3 Bryde's Whales surfaced, fine on the port bow, and then crossed close ahead. Clearly seen immediately under the port bridge "wing", a mother and calf just below the surface with another adult in company and then surfaced to port aft

1216 3-4 Dolphins, 2 leaping towards the bow, then disappearing at about 100yds

1300-1330 A few Scopoli's Shearwaters and a smaller, darker species

1450 30+ Atlantic Spotted Dolphins, (right) leaping ahead then on the bow wave, wake surfing and down both sides of the ship

1534 Dolphins about 1 mile away, 1 leaping twice towards the bow and at least 2 others nearby but then vanished without trace!

1730 2 more Scopoli's Shearwaters. If they are from the nearest breeding colony, on the Cape Verde Islands, then these are 3000 miles from home!



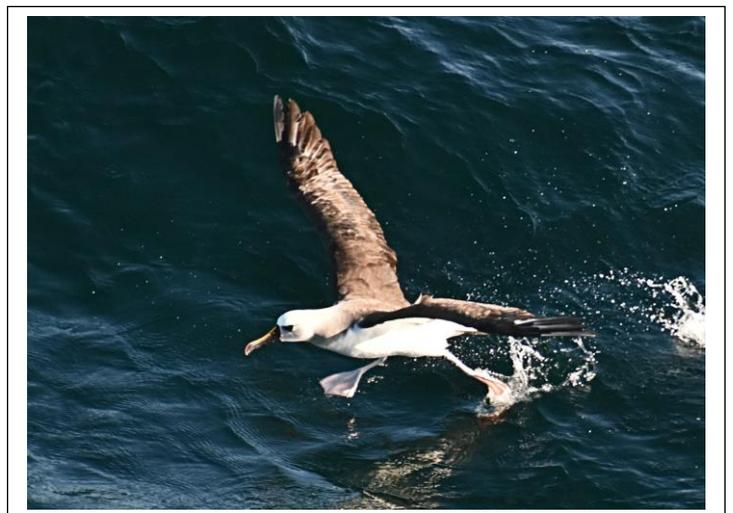
22 Jan 2019 – AT SEA, Atlantic Ocean, Coast of Brazil

A quiet morning with just a few birds, including...

1023 Our first confirmed Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross (right)

1713 The Viking Sun crossed from Brazilian into Uruguayan waters

The afternoon was filled with hundreds of seabirds including Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatrosses Shearwaters, Petrels, Gulls and more! Lots of photographs to analyse and bird ID checks to complete in the coming days!



23 Jan 2019 – MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay

Hundreds of Neotropic Cormorants and various Swallows and Martins around the port and lots of Kelp Gulls (*below left*), Brown-hooded Gulls (*below right*) and other species feeding in our wash. Southern Lapwings in the parkland around the coast.



24 Jan 2019 – BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

Neotropic Cormorants around the port and a Rufous Hornero, the national bird, in La Recoleta Cemetery (right)

25 Jan 2019 – BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

Just a few Neotropic Cormorants on a very wet final day in port



It was an amazing experience to be part of this first sector of the Viking Sun World Cruise 2019. I hope you enjoyed it as much as we have and we look forward to continuing the cruise onwards to Durban and hopefully meeting you again on a future cruise.

If you have enjoyed this report of the Miami to Buenos Aires sector of the voyage, and the photographs I have included, please consider making a donation to www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk on the charity's website or via mine at www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk

All these images, and many more, will be included in a 2019 World Cruise Wildlife DVD available for £20 (UK, PAL) or \$30 (US, NTSC) in late April 2019 (when I get home!)

Various photopacks, as 6x4" or 7x5" prints, as well as selected images from this report, are also available from:

Robin Petch, aka TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk