



Sightings Record

Viking Sun World Cruise 2019

Valparaiso to Sydney



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, Valparaiso to Sydney. The report also includes a few of the photographs Kris and I have taken. These sightings will be used to help us 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 around £25 to UK customers and £30/\$40 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 of whales, dolphins and seabirds, in 6x4" or 7x5", are also available, including those from this report. 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

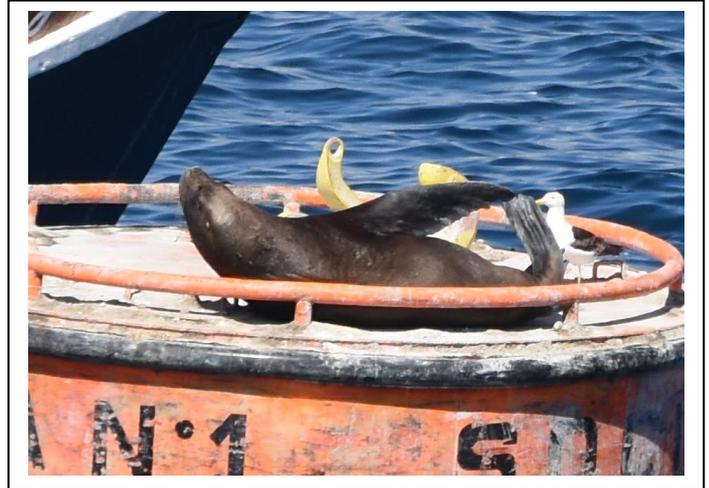
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wolfgang".

World Cruise Sightings Record

Valparaiso to Sydney 2019

12 Feb 2019 – Valparaiso, Chile

Up to 3 South American Sea Lions on the large mooring buoy near the floating dry dock. Lots of Kelp and Brown-hooded Gulls as well as another species, Neotropic Cormorants, Brown Pelicans (*below left*) and a new (to us) species, the Red-legged Cormorant (*below right*)



13 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

1000+ One or two Albatross and groups of 10-12 Petrels, species unidentified. Also a couple of Sea Lions lying on their backs, waving flippers in the air! Sightings of Petrels and later, Shearwaters, included at least 4 species including Great Shearwater

1700 Large Whale reported by a guest, blowing to starboard

1712 Blue Whale photographed surfacing, blowing and diving <math>< \frac{1}{2}</math> mile to port (*right and over*)

1745 175+ Dolphins 2-3 miles to starboard surging and leaping on a parallel course. Species unknown, but possibly Common Dolphins.





14 Feb 2019 – ROBINSON CRUSOE ISLAND, Chile

Very few sea birds near or around the island, partly due to cats and rats wiping out the endemic Juan Fernandez Petrel which now nests on other islands in the group. Thousands of crickets, many Shore Crabs (*below left*) and a beautiful Juan Fernandez (American) Kestrel (*below right*) seen ashore.



Some Juan Fernandez Petrels (*below left*), and maybe Shearwaters, seen during sail-away.



15 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

A few Petrels and Shearwaters, including one behind the Infinity Pool released by the Deck Crew (*above right*). A guest reported two possible blows to starboard c0915-1000 but this was not confirmed.

1903 6+ Pantropical Spotted Dolphins (probably more) leaping and perhaps feeding 2 miles to port (*below left*), in company with many Petrels and/or Shearwaters.



1937 2 Southern Bottlenose Whales repeatedly breaching (*above right*) during the sunset, swimming on the surface then diving, 2-3 miles off the port bow. An amazing end to the day!

16 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

0850 6-8 Dolphins reported by guests, starboard side

0915-0930 A pair, then one, then another pair of Red-tailed Tropicbirds passing by, in the direction of Easter Island

1215 A couple of Shearwaters or Petrels

1238 Red-tailed Tropicbird photographed by Kris, close to port (*right*)



Huge Flying Fish, airborne twice, close to the port bow on a parallel course

17 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean (F7, 30kt winds, heavy swell)

One or two Petrels around at c0900 and more later. Also a few Prions and a probable Tropicbird in the distance.

18 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

Flying Fish, some quite big ones and occasional groups of 20-30+

1127 Red-tailed Tropicbird on the water to port then flying away

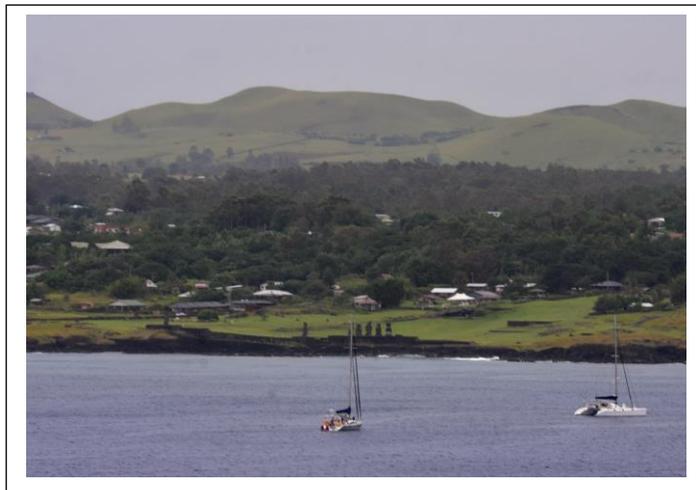
1148 Large fish just below the surface to port, perhaps 3-4ft long

1203 Shoal of Pacific Flying Squid, yes really, photographed by Kris and Bruno (*right*)



19 Feb 2019 – EASTER ISLAND, Chile (circumnavigation)

A huge swell sadly made tendering impossible but a very close circumnavigation with 360 spins in key locations gave everyone an amazing view of the island before the weather closed in and the sea conditions worsened considerably. After leaving the anchorage (*right*) we passed the small harbour and nearby market and moai (*below left*) and then later passed the



rocky islands where competitors from the Birdmen cult collected eggs, and then saw the quarry area of Rano Raraku (*above right*) and Moai sites of Ahu Tongariki (*below left*) and Ahu Nao-Nao, Anakena (*below right, Bruno*)



Wildlife sightings included Masked Boobies (*left, over*), a few of which were immature birds, Great Frigatebirds, one or two distant Tropicbirds and quite a lot of Flying Fish, including one caught by a Masked Booby, superbly photographed by Bruno (*right, over*)



20 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

A typical Pacific sea day, lovely blue ocean but very quiet apart from a few Flying Fish from time to time. A distant survey ship was seen on the horizon to port and guests reported a “brown and white bird” possibly a Booby or Shearwater?

21 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

- 0946 Red-tailed Tropicbird (*right*)
- 0959 Very large Flying Fish
- More Flying Fish of various sizes throughout the morning and a



baleen whale heard blowing then clearly seen alongside by a guest walking on Deck 2! Two blowholes clearly seen.

Late in the day I photographed a White Tern flying close to port, with a fish in its beak!



22 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean (leaving Pitcairn and associated islands)

Birds seen from early in the day including Masked and Red-footed Boobies, White Terns as well as a Petrel or Shearwater. Quite a few Flying Fish too and glimpses of other fish below the surface. A flight of 3 Red-footed Boobies crossed ahead, low on the water and a large fish, probably a Shark, was spotted close to port.

23 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

Flying Fish were seen from time to time throughout the day as well as occasional birds including White Terns and Red-footed Boobies for certain.

- 1130 Our position was due south of Maria Atoll, visible on the horizon.

24 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

Quite a few birds early in the day, mainly White Terns but also distant larger birds which were perhaps Tropicbirds or Boobies. Flying Fish were seen throughout the day but not frequently. Late in the day a few dark coloured birds were seen close over the ocean which were probably Shearwaters or possibly large Petrels.

25 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean, approaching Tahiti

0845 Mehetia Island visible 14NM NNE and a few White-tailed Tropicbirds and White Terns were flying quite close to the ship

0950 As we passed the island (to our starboard) around 50 Red-footed Boobies were seen (*below left*), mainly immature and intermediate morphs but also a couple of white morph and one or two Brown Boobies (*below right*) as well as a few Petrels and Shearwaters



0955 Turtle close to port side, swimming strongly away. Flying Fish seen frequently, some being chased by the Boobies

1106 A Brown Booby alighted on the foremast (*right*) from where he/she preened and occasionally went fishing until about 1205

Only a few Red-footed Boobies and glimpses of other birds including Terns, Tropicbirds, Petrels and Shearwaters during sail-in



26 Feb 2019 – Papeete, Tahiti

Frigatebirds, Brown Boobies, Flying Fish and Spinner Dolphins (*left*) seen on the “Ohana” catamaran tour. Many fish and even a Black-tipped Reef Shark in the marina seen from the promenade walkway. During a beautiful sunset sail-away Great Crested Terns (*left, over*) and Spinner Dolphins were seen,





27 Feb 2019 – VAITAPE, Bora Bora

Great Frigatebirds (*above, right*) and White Terns seen around the anchorage and Stingrays (*right*) and an Eagle Ray on our boat tour. Other guests also saw Black-tipped Reef Sharks and Spinner Dolphins.

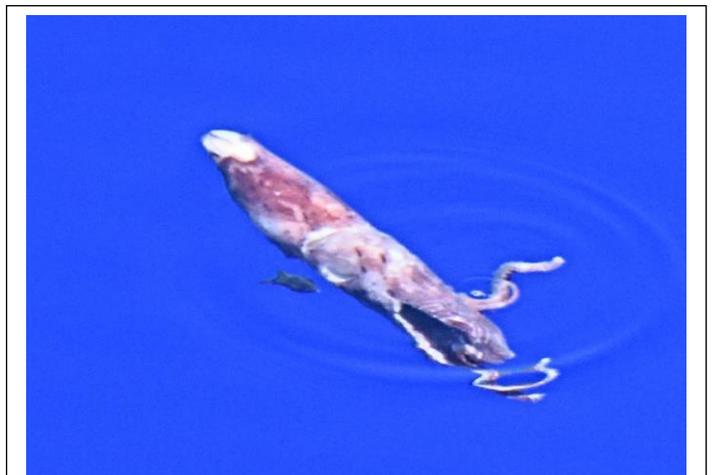


28 Feb 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

A few Flying Fish throughout the day and a couple of Petrels or Shearwaters. White Terns at the end of the day during another beautiful sunset.

1 Mar 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

A beautiful smooth surface, almost no wind but a deep, rolling swell. Incredible views of Flying Fish and their trail on the surface, even (*below, left*) reflections! A dead Squid (*below right*) was being nibbled by a small fish and other small and larger fish, including probably a Shark were spotted during the day.



2 Mar 2019 – LOST IN THE SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM, Alternative Pacific Ocean Dimension

Crossing the International Dateline seriously messes with your head! This is the day that never was, although back home Hull City beat Birmingham City 2-0!

3 Mar 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean (60 knot winds and 5 – 6 metre swells!)

A few Shearwaters spotted skimming in the troughs between the swells and a Sooty Tern sheltering on a Deck 4 balcony (thanks Joe). Later in the day, as it seemed to still be struggling to take off due to the deck furniture I caught and released it and watched it soar and fly away strongly.



4 Mar 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean (30 knot winds and 3 – 4 metre swells)

Better, but still challenging conditions for sea watching. As usual a few Petrels and Shearwaters spotted briefly skimming low between swells.

5 Mar 2019 – AT SEA, Pacific Ocean

10-12 birds were seen on Deck 2 (and balconies) early in the morning, at least 2 of which were identified from photographs as probably Soft-plumaged Petrels. Other, often larger, species were wheeling around the ship as well as Shearwaters.

0830 Dolphins seen to starboard by a guest

A few more Shearwaters (Flesh-footed, Sooty or similar) and Petrels (including Grey-faced) during the morning and early afternoon

1610 Large Whales, possibly Sperm Whales, reported 4-5 miles to starboard by guests

1706 Antipodean Albatross (*below, left*) flying parallel to the ship, ½ mile to port

1716 4 Beaked Whales (probably Blainville's) 1½ miles off starboard bow (*below, left*)



1832 5 Striped Dolphins to port, swimming away from the ship and surfacing occasionally (*above, right*)

1941 6+ probable Striped Dolphins ahead then swimming away to port, again covertly!

1948 A very visible green flash as the Sun dropped below the horizon!

6 Mar 2019 – WAITANGI, Bay of Islands, New Zealand

0704 5+ Bottlenose Dolphins chased in to the bow then disappeared!

A few Australasian Gannets (*right*), Red-billed Gulls, Cormorants and other birds seen during the sail in and throughout the day

Lunchtime 15 Bottlenose Dolphins, including calves, seen swimming around the ship by guests

In Paihia, Red-billed Gulls (*below*),



Stingrays and Black Oystercatchers (*below*).



Tūi photographed in the Treaty Grounds, a black bird with amazing throat tufts known as “poi” and an incredible voice which can sing two different songs simultaneously! (*right*)

6 Little Blue Penguins seen towards the mouth of the bay by guests on a boat trip

1849 Large group of Bottlenose Dolphins surging and jumping 2 miles to port and heading towards us before being dispersed by a fast-moving speedboat

Numerous Shearwaters and a few more Australasian Gannets



7 & 8 Mar 2019 – AUCKLAND, New Zealand

Many Gannets and chicks seen by guests visiting the colony

A rainy, misty sail-away into the Hauraki Gulf where many seabirds were seen – 20s and 30s, even hundreds occasionally of Bulwer’s and Flesh-footed Shearwaters, unidentified Petrels and of course Australasian Gannets (including immatures)

1642 15+ Common Dolphins ½ mile off the starboard quarter, surging towards us then across the wake where they appeared to begin feeding (*see over*)



The Hauraki Gulf outside Auckland is the focus of important research into both Common Dolphins (*left*) and Bryde's Whales led by teams supported by local universities and boat operators.

9 Mar 2019 – AT SEA

Plenty of seabirds including Australasian Gannets (*right*), Flesh-footed (*below*) and Bulwer's Shearwaters (*right, demonstrating how shearwaters got their name*),



Grey-faced Petrels (*below*) and other smaller



species. One Wandering Albatross was also spotted as well as Flying Fish and a Mola mola (Ocean Sunfish)!

1840 A huge flock of 200+ Petrels or Shearwaters

1913-17 3 Bryde's (or possibly Fin) Whales to starboard, in company with seabirds
A Wandering Albatross and a lovely sunset finished the day

10 Mar 2019 – WELLINGTON, New Zealand

Only a few Australasian Gannets and Red-billed Gulls during the sail-in which was largely in the dark.

Our trip to Zealandia Eco-Reserve though resulted in some nice photographs of unique and often endangered NZ wildlife including Tuatara (*right*), Kākā (*below*),



Kakariki (*above*) North Island Robin, Tūī, North Island Saddleback (*left*), Pied Shag (*below, right*) and Tree Weta (*below, left*)



11 Mar 2019 – AT SEA, West Coast of South Island, New Zealand

A few Australasian Gannets and a good number of Shearwaters and Petrels with nice sightings of both White-capped and Royal Albatross as well as a young Red-billed Gull who adopted the ship as home for most of the day.

1920

Dolphins (perhaps 15+) seen by many guests, with some leaping close to the port side. Descriptions varied but they are likely to have been either Dusky or Common

This was a good day for Albatross sightings with around 50 sightings of at least 2 or maybe 3 species.

12 Mar 2019 – SCENIC CRUISING, Doubtful Sound and Milford Sound, New Zealand

A few White-capped Albatross (right) before and after Doubtful and Thompson Sound as well as Shearwaters, Fur Seals (*below*), and Red-billed Gulls



1142 2 Dolphins, probably Dusky, alongside midships briefly
7 Fur Seals lazing on a rock on the north side of Milford Sound

1808 An amazing close encounter down on Deck 2 with a Wandering Albatross (*right, Kris*) close to the starboard quarter which then flew close to many balconies!
Guests reported seeing Dolphins soon afterwards, while eating in The Restaurant

13 Mar 2019 – AT SEA, Tasman Sea

Decks closed due to strong winds and rough sea but Albatross, including Wandering or Royal, seen from early in the day as well as Shearwaters and a few Gannets.

0924 20-30 Common Dolphins (*right*) to starboard, some leaping, on a parallel and converging course



14 Mar 2019 – AT SEA, Tasman Sea

Petrels and Shearwaters seen throughout the morning including large groups of Grey-faced Petrels (one of which was photographed completing its meal of squid before being disturbed by the ship!

15 & 16 Mar 2019 – SYDNEY, Australia

Not much to see during sail-in (it was dark) but plenty of Silver Gulls (*top left*) around the harbour and Shearwaters at sea. Wildlife photographed in Sydney and New South Wales included the Welcome Swallow, Pied Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Australian Magpie and Australian White Ibis.



For additional wildlife photographs from around Sydney and New South Wales, have a look at the Sydney to Durban Wildlife Report which includes further photographs from the area as well as subsequent encounters during the voyage. This should be available at the end of April 2019, once we have returned home!



Sightings Record

Viking Sun World Cruise 2019

Valparaiso to Sydney

It was an amazing experience to be part of this third 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 Valparaiso to Sydney 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 £25 (UK, PAL) or \$40 (US, NTSC) in late April 2019 (when I get home!) Keep checking my website for the final price and availability.

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

Robin Petch, aka TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk

All sales help to support my own work and also include a 20% donation to Sea Watch Foundation, the premier UK cetacean research charity, of which I am proud to serve as Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in my work, and the wonderful wildlife of our ocean world

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Petch'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.