



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

Islands of the Azores & Portugal Black Watch Sightings Record

Robin Petch - www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk



Thank you for joining us on Deck 7&8, and occasionally the Observatory, throughout the cruise and helping to spot and record whales, dolphins, porpoises and other marine life.

As the Chair of Trustees for the Sea Watch Foundation it is my great pleasure to share with you the sightings throughout this Black Watch cruise, from Liverpool to the Azores and Portugal and back, along with a few of the photographs I, and other passengers have taken. I'd

particularly like to thank Nigel Woodley for the photographs he has contributed but also the significant number of sightings recorded from Deck 8 aft and also Bill Ryder and Colin Hampson for their photographs and sightings too.

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.

I hope you enjoy this report on sightings during the voyage, as well as the photographs we took. If you would like to make a donation to Sea Watch Foundation to help us study and protect our UK whales, dolphins and porpoises you can do so on either of two websites:

www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk or www.seawatchfoundation.co.uk

11th May 2019 Leaving Liverpool

Numerous seabirds including Gannets (*right*), Great and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Herring Gulls, Terns, a Cormorant, A guillemot and, briefly, a Seal (probably Grey).

12th May 2019 At Sea (Celtic Sea)

0615 15+ Common Dolphins (*Nigel*)
0634 Minke Whale



Quite a few Gannets and Fulmar throughout the day and then...

- 1537-39 3+ Beaked Whales, possibly Cuvier's or Blainville's with perhaps a dozen Gannets circling above. Brownish in colour with a relatively small and noticeably larger than dolphins. One was tail slapping and two others were surfacing together about two miles away. One appeared to swim quickly towards us and closed to around one mile but all three soon disappeared astern
- 1800 Large fishing boat to port with 20+ Fulmar in attendance and more astern of us, over the wake as well as 4 Gannets soaring above.
- 1920 Collared Dove seen for the first time, settled in for the night! (*Nigel*)
- 1930 A flock of waders, possibly Knot, was spotted by guests

13th May 2019 At Sea, North Atlantic

- 0638 Whale, short blow, to port (*Nigel*)
- 0800 2 Whales, short blow, starboard (*Nigel*)
- 0917 Whale, large blow, starboard (*Nigel*)
- 0940 3 Whales blowing, 300yds to port (*Phil Newton*)
- 1050 3 Dolphins, probably Striped, across the wake from port to starboard (*Nigel*)
- 1112 40+ Striped Dolphins leaping and travelling quickly aft, 300yds to port (*above, right*)
- 1116 Large Whale underwater, passing alongside very close to port
- 1140 Fin, or possibly Blue Whale blowing and surfacing 2 miles to port
- 1350 3 apparently very dark, almost black, Dolphins or Pilot Whales seen to port by a guest
- 1403 3 Pilot Whales (*Nigel*)
- 1630 Minke Whale (*Nigel*)
- 1718 Peregrine Falcon (*Nigel, who hoped the Collared Dove was still around!*)
- 2043 Probable Beaked Whale dived close to port side, aft then breached three times, away aft (seen from a Deck 6 window!)



14th May 2019 At Sea, North Atlantic

- 1115 Flock of "small brownish birds" to starboard reported by guests may have been Storm-petrels
- 1205 6+ Striped Dolphins leaping away from close to port, more to starboard reported by passengers (*first reported by the Captain and Julie from Titan Travel*)
- 1221 3 Sei Whales, 2 miles to port, 2 swimming away and one on a reciprocal course
- 1232 2-3 Fin Whales, 2 miles to port, on a reciprocal course
- 1238 Whale blowing, 1 mile from port bow, not seen again
Dolphins reported to starboard, with 2 birds in association
- 1345 Dolphins passing down the port side, seen by us from the Deck 6 tea station!
- 1421 Fin Whale, port side, seen and photographed by Bill Ryder
- 1422 Fin Whale, starboard side, seen and photographed by Bill Ryder
- 1444 Fin Whale, port side, seen and photographed by Bill Ryder
- 1501 Fin Whale, port side, seen and photographed by Bill Ryder
- 1520 15+ Striped Dolphins, leaping away, 1+ mile to port
- 1540* 8-10 Striped Dolphins, port side



1544*

2 Cuvier's Beaked Whales to port (*left*)

1556*

2 Fin Whales (one with a damaged fin) to port (*below*)

* All seen and photographed by Kris and others while I gave my talk!



1753 3 large whales blowing 3-4 miles to port

1815 2 Fin Whales 4 miles to port, first seen off port bow

1833 3 Fin Whales 2-3 miles to port, on a reciprocal course

1930 Dolphin seen to starboard by passengers in the restaurant

2030 Whale seen surfacing to port by a passenger, seemed big but no blow was seen
Nigel also had a great day watching from Deck 8 aft, where he was joined by David for much of the day. His sightings marked * below are probably duplicates of mine (although sometimes with different numbers sighted).

1150 15 Striped Dolphins and 3 Cory's Shearwaters following to starboard aft

1204 Whale blowing

1230* 2 Whales blowing

1245* 2 Whales blowing

1313 Collared Dove flying around the ship so the Peregrine didn't catch it!

1330-1415 3 Whales blowing to starboard

1445* 4 Fin Whales, starboard side, 2 Fin Whales, port side

1448* 3 Whales blowing, port side

1451* 1 Whale blowing, port side

1535 1 Whale blowing, starboard side

1640 7 Striped Dolphins, starboard side

1645 1 Cuvier's Beaked Whale, port side

1705 Fulmar flying alongside

1724-1810 5 Whales blowing to starboard and a Cory's Shearwater

1820-37 3 Sei Whales to starboard

1910 2 Cory's Shearwaters and a Fulmar

2045 Large Dolphin swam to port side and then possibly passed under the ship

15th May 2019 Praia da Vittoria, Terceira, Azores

Many Cory's Shearwaters as we got closer, a few Yellow-legged Gulls and an Egret!
Sail-away sightings included many more Cory's Shearwaters and one or two Roseate terns

16th May 2019 Horta, Faial, Azores

Cory's Shearwaters in some numbers and Common Terns, as well as a few Yellow-legged Gulls on sail-in this morning

0620 4 Dolphins, starboard side (*Nigel*)

I photographed Common Terns and shore crabs (*right*) as well as a lizard along the shoreline. Nigel's list from the ship's bird watching trip included... Yellow-legged, Gull, Common Tern, Starling, Common Buzzard, Wood Pigeon, Blackcap, Atlantic Canary, Turnstone, Azorean Chaffinch, Whimbrel, Grey Wagtail, House Sparrow, Blackbird, Goldcrest, Robin

Literally hundreds of Cory's Shearwaters during sail-away, many rafts each of 100+ birds! (*right, below*)

2025 3 Dolphins reported by passengers, 100yds to starboard

2035 3 Dolphins, port side (*Nigel*)

17th May 2019 Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, Azores

0619 12+ Common Dolphins, 200yds to starboard, one quickly to the bow before re-joining the group aft

Nigel's report from the Futurismo Whale and Dolphin Watch tour included 100

Striped Dolphins, 70 Common Dolphins, a Loggerhead Turtle (*photograph below by Bill Ryder*) and a juvenile Blue Shark as well as Cory's Shearwaters, Yellow-legged Gulls and Common Terns

Passengers on the Moby Dick boat saw Striped Dolphins too, at around 1230 and then a Blue Whale between 1315 and 1345!

1915 6 Common Dolphins, a long way to starboard (*Phil, Nigel*)

1917 40+ Common Dolphins, 2 miles to starboard, fast swimming and "porpoising"

1957 6 Common Dolphins, 400yds from port bow, swimming away

2008 Possible Sei Whale to starboard (*Nigel*)

2009 Probable Fin Whale (or Sei?) initially possibly "logging" near the surface to port with only fin visible then blowing twice before diving

2038 Probable Beaked Whale, close to port side, seen by Kris from Brigadoon (Deck 6)



18th May 2019 At Sea, North Atlantic

Early this morning, a lady spotted a whale blowing then diving and showing its tail.
Probably a Sperm Whale!

- 0730 Blow, starboard side (*Nigel*)
- 0753 Large bulbous blow and one short blow, watched 5-10 minutes before disappearing (*passenger report*), blow also reported by Nigel (starboard side)
- 0800+ 3 Fin Whales, starboard side (*Nigel*)
- 0803 3-4 Whales blowing, close to port side (*passenger report*)
- 0826 Blow, port side (*Nigel*)
- 0835 2 Fin Whales blowing and surfacing, port side (*Nigel*)
- 0850 Dolphins seen to port by walkers on Deck 7
- 0853 Whale, "quite high bulbous blow" to port (*passenger report*)
- 0855 3 Fin Whales, starboard side (*Nigel*)
- 0858 Whale, high straight blow, starboard side (*passenger report*)
- 0904 2 Whales blowing far on the horizon, starboard aft. Tall straight blows so probably Fin Whales
- 0905 Fin Whale, port side (*Nigel*)
- 0910 3 Whales, strong bushy blows, 2 miles to port, possibly Sei or Humpback? Nigel also saw whales but thought Fin?
- 0922 2 Fin Whales, port side
- 0934 2-3 Fin Whales initially quite low but strong blows, 500yds to starboard. Also logged by Nigel. Flying Fish also seen, to port! (*Photograph by Bill Ryder*)
- 0935 1 Common Dolphin quickly to starboard bow, riding alongside then gone
- 0937 Whale blowing hard, 5 miles off starboard bow
- 0947-52 Whale blowing, and surfacing, 5 miles ahead and fine on port bow
- 0955 2 Fin Whales, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to port, Nigel reported 3 at this time
- 1015 Big blow, 5 miles to port, possible Fin Whale (and another Flying Fish)
- 1040 2 Whales blowing, starboard side (*Nigel*)
- 1050 4 Whales reported by passengers, port aft, 3 blowing hard and high, one noticeably lower. Possibly Fin Whales with a calf
- 1052 Nigel reported 2 Fin Whales to port, with a further 2 a long way off, probably those above
- 1054 Whale blowing far aft (probably one of the above)
- 1119 2 Fin Whales, mother and calf, seen ahead then close to port side, (*right*). Nigel reported an additional whale a short distance further off
- 1120 2 Fin Whales ahead, fine on the port bow then 1 closer



- 1128 Fin Whale “logging” 400yds to port, also reported by Nigel
Fin Whale surfacing 1 mile to port
- 1138 Low blow seen 2 miles from starboard bow, unidentified whale
- 1152 Whale blowing 2 miles off port bow, unidentified. Blows also seen astern, 1 to port, 2 to starboard
- 1200 3 Whales blowing starboard side
- 1210-13 Fin Whale ahead, 200yds off starboard bow, then 100yds off starboard side (*right*), surfacing and blowing normally
- 1315 Whale blowing 3 miles ahead, slightly to port but then not seen again
- 1443-45 8 Common Dolphins (*right*) racing in from ahead to port bow, bow riding and surfing then dropping back down the port side
- 1448 3 Common Dolphins off starboard bow
- 1536 2 Cory’s Shearwaters away to port (one having been seen earlier today too)
We’ve logged at least 36 Whales today, mostly identified as Fin Whales, as well as a few Common Dolphins. Some of these animals were quite close to the ship!
Nigel’s early shift and additional sightings adds another 8-10 Whales to the list!



19th May 2019 At Sea, North Atlantic

- 1017 Whale, only blow seen, far away to starboard
- 1530 Raptor, possibly a Peregrine, flying alongside to starboard then crossing under the bow
- 1540 Dark coloured Dolphin or small Whale close to starboard wake “black with thorn-shaped fin” (*David K.*)
- 1800 Possible sighting of 2 Common Dolphins, port side, by passengers
- 1810 3+ Dolphins seen by passengers in the Observatory, leaping to the starboard side and then 2 Whales crossing left to right ahead shortly afterwards

20th May 2019 Lisbon, Portugal

- 1855 Nigel reported a number of young Gannets, later more joined and were fishing both sides of the ship
- 1953-56 Dolphins leaping to the bow with 14 Gannets (*right*) in association
- 1955 27 Common Dolphins active in the wake (*Nigel*)



21st May 2019 Leixoes, Portugal

- 0600 Gannets early on the sail-in (*Nigel*)
0624 6+ Common Dolphins, starboard side (*Nigel*)
1710 Egyptian Goose in the port (*Nigel*)
Hundreds of Yellow-legged Gulls (*right*),
including juvenile and immature birds, around
the harbour and early in the sail-away as well
as around 20 (unidentified) Terns
1900-55 Up to 12 Gannets riding air currents over the bow and sometimes fishing
2050 5-6 Dolphins swimming to the bow, seen by passengers in the Observatory



22nd May 2019 At Sea, Bay of Biscay

- 0630 2 Common Dolphins, starboard side and Collared Dove flying around the ship (*Nigel*)
0635 12 Common Dolphins astern of the ship both sides of the wake (*Nigel*)
0645 8 Dolphins, leaping a long way to starboard (*Nigel*)
0649 6 Common Dolphins in the wake, 4 close to starboard and 9 more much further off (*Nigel*)
0700 1 Dolphin, starboard side (*Nigel*)
1142 2 Whales, possible Sperm Whale 2 miles off port bow and probable Fin Whale 3 miles off port bow
1150 Whales seen blowing 2 miles off starboard bow, small blows, then 2 Sowerby's Beaked Whales breaching 1 mile to starboard and then aft (*photographed by Nigel, above right*)
1229 5, then 4 more, Striped Dolphins (*right*) leaping alongside, to starboard
1645 3 immature Great Black-backed Gulls (*below right*) circling the ship and landing on the foremast
1650 Whale blowing 5 miles off starboard bow then Fin Whale surfacing 100yds off starboard bow!
1651 Common Dolphins both sides and active in the wake (*Nigel*)
1725 Splashing 3 miles ahead, Dolphins fine on the port bow
1730 12+ Striped Dolphins feeding off port bow, and briefly alongside, probably as above
1730-1825 15 Common Dolphins alongside starboard aft and active in wake (*Nigel*)
1756 4 Dolphins, 2 miles off starboard bow
1811 5 Common Dolphins leaping to port bow,



- many others 3-4 miles ahead
- 1828 6 Common Dolphins, 500yds to starboard, parallel course
20+ Common Dolphins, 1 mile to port then across the bow
5 Striped Dolphins surging away from the starboard side
- 1835 2 Sperm Whales, blowing 3 miles to starboard (between 2 and 4 o'clock)
- 1835 Dolphin seen from 5023, riding the bow waves to starboard
- 1837 3 groups, each of 10+ Common Dolphins, 2 miles to starboard
- 1847 15+ Common Dolphins surging and leaping to the bow, and then surfing aft
- 1850 5 Common Dolphins crossing the bow at speed, port to starboard
- 1853 5 Common Dolphins quickly to starboard bow, then surfing
- 1853-1915 200+ Common Dolphins around the aft of the ship and in the wake (*Nigel*)
- 1905 40+ Common Dolphins ahead and then 2 miles off starboard bow
- 1910 6 Common Dolphins leaping and surfing off port bow (*right*)
Probable feeding activity was observed throughout, mainly with those more distant and those approaching the ship quickly joined them. Gannets were seen frequently, sometimes quite close but mainly with the more distant dolphins
- 1935 5 Common Dolphins, starboard side (*Nigel*)
- 1940 Collared Dove landed on the ship, settling for the night? (*Nigel*)
- 2025 8+ large Whales, with no fin, reported floating at the surface by passengers. These were possibly logging Sperm Whales
- 2120 Possible Kestrel landed aft



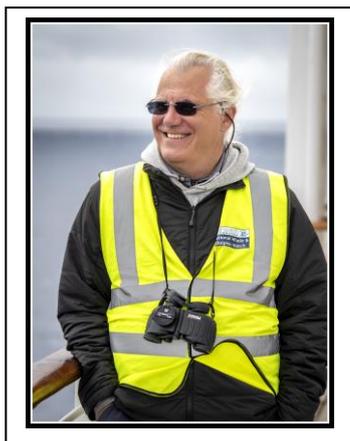
23rd May 2019 At Sea, Celtic Sea

- 0515-1915 Seabirds logged by Nigel include 3 Gannets, 2 Fulmars, 3 Puffins, 10 Guillemots
- 0745 Swallow flying around the ship (*Nigel*)
- 0805-0915 6 Guillemots, 2 Puffins, 1 Gannet and 1 Collared Dove as well as 1 Dolphin (*Nigel*)
- 0910 2 Seals, probably Grey, ¾ mile to starboard
- 0925 Seal swimming
- 1013 15+ Dolphins, probably Common, apparently feeding 2 miles to starboard
- 1025 40+ Common Dolphins from ahead to the bow and down both sides. Then 25+ seen in the wake by Nigel, probably some of the same ones. Plenty of Manx Shearwaters, Guillemots and a few Gannets and Fulmar
- 1040 100+ Common Dolphins, 2 miles to starboard, travelling fast south
1 (or 2?) Whales blowing far to starboard
50+ Common Dolphins, 2-3 miles ahead (probably some of those seen at 1050)
- 1045 100+ Common Dolphins and rafts of Shearwaters to port (*Nigel*)

- 1050 40+ Common Dolphins on each side of the ship, some bow-riding and surfing alongside (*right*), others foraging and feeding within 1 mile
40+ Common Dolphins, 1-2 miles away to port, foraging and feeding
- 1053 16+ Common Dolphins close to starboard, surfing
- c.1100 Basking Shark reported close to port aft
- 1117 Seal, starboard side (*Nigel*)
- 1130 Whale reported quite close to the ship
- 1203 Raft of 75+ Manx Shearwaters to port (*right*)
- 1208 25+ Common Dolphins <500yds from port side
- 1220 2 Fin Whales surfaced 100yds from port bow and swam away quickly (*below right*)
- 1312 20 Dolphins and 1 Whale blowing to starboard (*Nigel*)
- 1330 6 or 7 Common Dolphins reported leaping alongside, from a Deck 7 balcony
- 1355 4 Common Dolphins, port side (*Nigel*)
- 1425 Blow, then tail, far off to starboard, possibly a Sperm Whale (*Nigel*)
- 1525 8 Common Dolphins port side and then in the wake (*Nigel*)
- 1545 1 Seal, starboard side (*Nigel*)



What an amazing day, and a great end to this wonderful cruise. Hundreds of Dolphins and a few Whales too, all in British waters! Of course, the presence of so many of these incredible creatures should not be a surprise as 29 species have been recorded by Sea Watch Foundation in our waters. Nevertheless, this was a fabulous finale for this incredible cruise and a big thank you again to Nigel Woodley and other passengers including Bill Ryder and Colin Hampson for their contributions to the sightings record and/or the photograph collection.



If you like the photographs, they and others can be purchased as prints on request in 7x5" or larger formats.

In addition, Photopacks (6x4" & 7x5") and DVD slide shows are also available to support my work and that of the charity.

Alternatively, please consider making a donation to www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk on their website or via mine at www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk

I hope we meet again on a future cruise, Best Wishes, *Robin*