



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

Arctic Norway

Black Watch Sightings Record

Robin Petch - www.TheWhaleandDolphinMan.co.uk



Thank you for joining us on Deck 7&8, and sometimes 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 Arctic Norway and back, along with a few of the photographs I have taken. The Hebrides proved to be the richest area for sightings but there were some nice encounters throughout the trip.

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

7th June 2019 Leaving Liverpool

As we left Liverpool, many Herring Gulls feeding in the wake as well as Great and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. From 1745, Gannets and Kittiwakes joined in and we passed a few Guillemots too. What would tomorrow bring?

8th June 2019 At Sea, Hebrides

c.0630 Minke Whale reported by a lady out walking the deck
0750 c.80 Dolphins seen around the ship by a number of passengers, probably Common
By 0915 we had already seen Grey Seals, Gannets, Great Skua and a possible Minke Whale

0939-44 35+ Common Dolphins leaping and surging to the port bow (*below*)



1015 Minke Whale photographed off starboard bow (*right*) then another at 1019
And then, between 1030 and 1125, while I prepared for and delivered my lecture...
2 distant pods of Dolphins, 2 or 3 miles to starboard
2 large fins, probably Orca, 2 miles to starboard
Minke Whale, ½ mile to starboard

1125 3 Harbour Porpoise, close to starboard

1130-45 25, probably Common, Dolphins – 2 closing to within ¼ mile, most at 1mile+

1335 Harbour Porpoise surfaced 3x, 100yds off port bow

1416 2 Minke Whales, ¾ mile to port

1420 Minke Whale, 400yds to starboard

1438 Minke Whale ½ mile off starboard bow, then starboard aft

1450 Minke Whale reported to port

1455 Minke Whale 1 mile to starboard
That's 10 Minke Whales today, perhaps 150 Common Dolphins, 4 Harbour Porpoises and probably a couple of Orca as well as a few Grey Seals, lots of Gannets (including some flying with the ship for half an hour or more), Kittiwakes, Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills and a couple of Great Skua! (*right above*) Not a bad tally for the day!



9th June 2019 At Sea, Norwegian Sea

A grey day and choppy seas made spotting difficult but we were escorted by Gannets (*right*) for much of the



morning with many more seen further away. Fulmars were frequent visitors too and occasionally Kittiwakes. A dozen or more Great Skua (aka "Bonxie") were seen during the morning and early afternoon.

- 1330/45 A number of passengers reported seeing a large fin, splashing then the arch of a whale's back as it dived
- 1445 25 Gannets flying with the ship, occasionally peeling off to feed

10th June 2019 Trondheim, Norway

- 1045 1, perhaps 2, Harbour Porpoise ½ mile to port
Otherwise, just a few Common Gulls in the fjord and around the harbour, as well as a couple of Cormorants.
- 2220 A passenger reported seeing what was possibly an Orca, to starboard

11th June 2019 Scenic Cruising, Torghatten, Seven Sisters and Arctic Circle

- 1003 Harbour Porpoise seen by passengers, to starboard
Bird sightings were mainly Lesser, with some Great Black-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, a few Cormorants and 4 Geese (possibly Greylag). At least 2 Sea Eagles were seen on perches along the fjord side (*see right!*)
- 1128 2 possible Harbour Porpoises
Birds in the afternoon included the above as well as Kittiwakes, Common and possibly Arctic Terns as well as an Oystercatcher close alongside.



12th June 2019 Leknes, Lofoten Islands, Norway

The highlight was an Eagle soaring over the harbour but Common, Herring (*left, below*) and Great Black-backed (*right, below*) Gulls, Kittiwakes and a solitary Black-headed Gull were seen as well as an Oystercatcher, Cormorants, a couple of Ravens, Hooded Crows and distant Ducks.



It was interesting to see a “wild” boar (*left, below*), and sow with her piglets (*right, below*), at the recreated Viking longhouse near Leknes.



13th June 2019 Tromso, Norway

Common (*right*) and Great Black-backed Gulls around the harbour area and occasional Kittiwakes, Eider Ducks and Oystercatchers. Many more on sail-away, sometimes huge feeding frenzies of Gulls and Kittiwakes, Terns often being seen and heard!

2120 6 Puffins, 1 being photographed by cabin 9001



14th June 2019 Honningsvag and North Cape, Norway

1720 3 Orca seen near Honningsvag by folks on a bus tour – thanks for the report! A couple of Eagles were spotted above the mountain behind the town During the sail-away, and around North Cape, Herring, Common and Great Black-backed Gulls were seen, as well as a few Kittiwakes (*immature, right*)



15th June 2019 Alta, Norway

The usual seabirds around the harbour, Common and Herring Gulls as well as Great Black-backed Gulls. Large flocks of birds feeding out in the fjord and seen more closely as we sailed away and down the fjord, including the above as well as Kittiwakes and “Commic” Terns. A few Eider Ducks were also seen, a Black Guillemot, a few Puffins and an Eagle or Osprey over the hills.

1743 2 Arctic Skua seen by Cabin 9001

Today's most exciting news though was the sighting of the famous Hvaladimir, the ex-Russian Navy Beluga, in the fjord at Hammerfest by passengers on the tour!

16th June 2019 At Sea, Norwegian Coast

Seabirds during the first half of the day included "Commic" Terns, Kittiwakes (including a lot of juveniles), Great Black-backed Gulls, Great Skua, Cormorants, a few Razorbills and a Puffin.

1445 A large Whale, possibly a Sei or Fin, seen by passengers while I was giving my talk.

1554 A Whale's back and fin seen briefly from Deck 9 by Kris, port side, possibly a Minke

1609 Fin Whale photographed 400yds to port (right), strong blows and then surfaced again aft where a second was also seen blowing.

During the afternoon, more birds were seen from time to time, particularly Kittiwakes (adults and juveniles)



17th June 2019 At Sea, approaching Kristiansund

A quiet morning with perhaps 80 Gulls, including some Great Black-backed, feeding behind a fishing boat but little else. Many Kittiwakes around the harbour and nesting on ledges and window-sills as well as a few Cormorants on shore and on buoys in the channel. Quite a few Jellyfish too (*right*)



18th June 2019 At Sea, Norwegian Sea, approaching Shetland

Lots of birds today, especially Gannets and Fulmars (*right*), sometimes with Great Skuas in the vicinity. Two Oystercatchers flew 2 circuits of the ship, a long way (30 miles+) from land!



19th June 2019 At Sea, Sea of the Hebrides

Many birds of various species: Gannets, Great Black-backed Gulls, Kittiwakes, Manx Shearwaters (*left, below*), Guillemots and Razorbills (*right, below*), one or two Great Skuas and lots of feeding activity, often in large groups.



One Whale, probably a Minke, was seen surfacing amongst a flock of birds from a Deck 7 balcony, to starboard.



Thank you for your interest in marine life and my work
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*