

Mantas, Dolphins and Coral Reefs – A Maldives Cruise

Naturetrek Tour Report

16 - 25 February 2017



Blunt-headed Parrotfish



Clark's Anenomefish and Maldivian Anenomefish



Clown Triggerfish



Oriental Sweetlips

Report and images compiled by Sara Frost



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Summary

Our time spent cruising around the beautiful Maldivian islands and atolls resulted in some superb marine wildlife encounters, as well as memorable purple-red sunsets over remote coral islands, a dazzling variety of colourful fish, and a visual daily feast of innumerable shades of turquoise!

The highlight, for most, was the group's encounter with a group of Manta Rays. We enjoyed a morning's excitement as the Mantas appeared and disappeared, with most of the group getting fantastic close-up views!

On most mornings and evenings, the group enjoyed a pre-breakfast and pre-dinner snorkel on pristine reefs, where the colour and variety of fish and other marine-life was staggering. Regal Angelfish, parrotfish, sea cucumbers, pufferfish, many different types of butterflyfish, Maldivian Anemonefish, reef squid, triggerfish, Moorish Idols, both White- and Black-tipped Reef Sharks and Hawksbill Turtle were just a few of the highlights!

Back on board, while cruising between atolls, islands and reefs, six confirmed species of cetacean were seen: large groups of Spinner Dolphins, small pods of Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphins (occasionally mixing with the Spinners and all taking it in turn to enjoy pole position on the bow wave), Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins, Common Bottlenose Dolphins, Risso's Dolphins and Pilot Whales.

Our host, Chas, is the world expert on the marine-life of the Maldives, and we all enjoyed and benefitted from his seemingly endless knowledge of this delightful archipelago - knowledge which ranges from sea cucumbers to the constellations. We enjoyed a very special experience!

Day 1

Thursday 16th February

Most of the group flew out to the Maldives today on an overnight flight, either from London or Manchester (the exception being two couples who had flown out a few days early to optimise the length of time in paradise!).

Day 2

Friday 17th February

Once landed at Malé (the Heathrow group being several hours late due to a delayed flight) we made our way to the resort island of Bandos, a 20-minute boat ride from the airport. We were welcomed with delightfully refreshing fruit-juice drinks and, after checking into our rooms, had enough time to have a relaxed explore of the island for a couple of hours before meeting Sara in the Sea Breeze Café at 6.30pm for a welcome briefing, where she provided an overview of what we could expect over the next week. We then had an evening meal together at 7pm, where most of the group were able to meet one another and relax over a glass of wine and admire a wonderful Maldivian sunset.

Day 3

Saturday 18th February

Half of the group met Sara for a delicious breakfast at 8am, while others opted for a lie in. At 9.15am Clare, Darren, Eileen and Yvonne joined Sara for a relaxed morning walk around Bandos (the sea being a little too choppy to snorkel, due to wind). Occasional Fruit Bats flew in between trees and White-breasted Waterhens were seen scurrying about the undergrowth. There were Coconut and Oil Palms, and some lovely shrubs including Oleander, Bougainvillea, Frangipani and Orchid Tree and, near the restaurant, a huge Banyan Tree. Others enjoyed a relaxed morning on the beach, before meeting at reception at 12.15pm where our dhoni picked us up and took us for the short ride to the Ari Queen – our home for the next week!

Once everybody was on board and settled into cabins, we set off south, due to the prevailing winds in the north which would greatly affect sightings of cetaceans were we to head in that direction. Despite our efforts to avoid the bad weather, it was still fairly breezy with bright, but cloudy, skies and the presence of white horses making the sea difficult for finding dolphins. Fortunately, it calmed down the further south we went! After an hour we saw our first dolphins – Indo-Pacific Bottlenose. There were only three of them, and they were interacting very closely with one another, making occasional splashes. At first, it wasn't clear what behaviour was happening, but upon closer inspection it became apparent that they were mating, with two males in pursuit of a single female. We observed them for 20 minutes (before deciding to give them some privacy!) and then carried on south, seeing another eight Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins while crossing the South Malé Atoll. We arrived at Gulhi island at 4.30pm for our first snorkel. Due to the (unusually) slightly windy weather, the water was slightly unsettled and not as clear as normal, which meant that the less-confident snorkelers in the group were able to focus on practising their technique without worrying that they were missing huge numbers of fish! After an hour, we got back on board, showered, and met in the bar for a drink where Chas gave us an introductory talk on the dolphins of the Maldives. Afterwards, we had dinner and several members of the group joined Sara in the bar to go through the species checklist (coined 'Fish Club'), using the opportunity to identify the fish species we had seen that afternoon.

Day 4

Sunday 19th February

After a morning snorkel we continued south-west from Gulhi, crossing the channel between the atolls. The weather was still fairly breezy, with white horses making it difficult to spot cetaceans; however, we did see 15+ Spinner Dolphins, although they showed no interest in coming over to the boat, so we slowed to admire them from a distance of 50 metres or so as they swam past us and went on their way. We continued to the north of Faafu Atoll, and snorkelled for an hour (this time in sparkly clear water!) and, once back on board, Chas gave an interesting talk continuing from the previous night about the dolphins of the Maldives, which deepened our scientific understanding of the species we had seen that day. After dinner, Sara ran through the checklist in the bar with some of the group, while others relaxed with a drink and looked through their photos from that day.

Day 5

Monday 20th February

The weather this morning continued to be warm but cloudy, and we set off sailing at 6.30am, arriving for a snorkel at the island of Minimassgali for 7.30am. Hopping onto the smaller dinghy, we were run ashore to explore the island at leisure. Along the faint jungle paths through the palm trees, two small derelict houses could be seen. Abandoned for over 10 years, these were built as a business for processing fish – not surprisingly, on such a

remote island (which could be walked around in 20 minutes) the business didn't take off! Chas took most of the group for a stroll, while Yvonne did some watercolour painting of the local scenery, and Sara and Jonathan snorkelled amongst thousands of shoaling sprat that were being chased by larger fish (mainly jacks) and were creating quite a display at the surface as they leaped clear of the water in their hundreds, in repeated attempts to escape hungry mouths. Once the rest of the group had returned from their walk (having seen an Eagle Ray en route) they all came in for a snorkel too – with countless new species to add to our list, this turned into our best snorkel so far. The health of the reef was reflected by the sheer diversity of fish – whose colours could be appreciated due to the excellent water clarity. What a treat! The highlight for most on this snorkel was a large Clown Triggerfish that was patrolling the reef and (for a lucky few) a Black-tipped Reef Shark.

Once back on board, we had a hearty breakfast and sailed south along the west coast of Faaflu Atoll, where we saw a group of about 30 Common Bottlenose Dolphins who came over to our boat to investigate us! After 15 minutes of watching the pod, we were about to leave just as Clare pointed out some larger dolphins 150 metres off the starboard side of the boat – Pilot Whales! A member of the Blackfish family (the same family as Orcas), this large group were sleepy and so moving very slowly, enabling us to manoeuvre quietly alongside them without disturbing them. Most showed no interest in us, but two of them woke up and, curious about the boat alongside them, spynapped several times – their heads rising high out of the water to have a good look at us – before dozing joining the rest of the sleeping group. Exhilarated by this prolonged, intimate encounter we carried on south.

As we continued into the afternoon, a small bird suddenly appeared alongside the boat, spotted by Sara and Chas who were up on the roof of the boat looking for cetaceans. Chas identified it as a female Watercock – a wading bird from the rail and crane family, so 40 miles out to sea it was rather lost! It circled the boat several times, looking exhausted. We cleared the back deck to encourage it to land, and, after touching down in the sea for a moment to rest (which it seemed to regret!), it landed on our boat where we were able to put it in a box with some fresh water. Once back near land again we would release it.

As we approached Dhaalu Atoll we saw another group of Spinner Dolphins. These are nocturnal dolphins, and spend the day time near safety of atolls before swimming into deeper water at night. Similarly to the Pilot Whales, the group were in a slumber as we approached them, but upon our arrival they quickly proceeded to bow ride with the boat, and, when leaning over the front of the bow, we could hear their whistles as they communicated to one another. They performed repeated leaps and spins for us, living up to their name and receiving rounds of applause from the group on board!

At 4pm we enjoyed a surprise birthday cake and tea for both Phillip and Ruth before anchoring in the north of Dhaalu Atoll at 5pm for a snorkel (and to release the Watercock!). The abundance of plankton in this area meant that the clarity of water wasn't very good during the snorkel; however, it did mean that there was plenty of food in the water to support the surrounding ecosystem! Once back on board, Chas gave a knowledgeable talk on the beaked whales of the Maldives – providing a fascinating insight into these mysterious deep-diving creatures.

Day 6

Tuesday 21st February

We set off this morning at 6.30am and boarded the dhoni at 7am to go to the inhabited island of Rinbudhu. The weather was much calmer now, with the wind dropping, although it was still overcast with bright but cloudy

skies. Strolling around Rinbudhu was a wonderful opportunity to immerse ourselves into remote island life. Ladies used homemade brushes to sweep the streets clear of fallen leaves and children could be heard playing at a nearby school. Asian Koels shrieked from the trees while Common Mynas could be seen hopping about amongst leaf litter. Occasional fishermen could be seen fixing their nets by their boats. Traditionally, men would have taken their sons out to sea with them to teach them the necessary skills to become fishermen. However, due to the spread of education (although a good thing) many children from remote islands now leave school with higher aspirations and do not want to follow in their parents' footsteps. Rather, they leave for work on the larger, less remote, islands - although there aren't always enough jobs to support the number of children leaving school, creating socio-economic issues and unemployment. As a consequence, we saw none of the young-adult generation on the island, only children and adults.

After exploring for over an hour, we departed for deeper water, intending to travel north to Faafu Atoll. However, while we had been moored at Rinbudhu, the islanders had told our crew of a Whale Shark that had been coming to the island frequently at night time, drawn by the fishermen's lights on their boats. So we spent the day in open water, and decided to return to the same island that night in the hope of seeing the Whale Shark. During the day we spotted several boats fishing for Yellowfin Tuna. Upon approaching them we found a group of (50+) Spinner Dolphins which were following behind the boat, hoovering up most of the bait being thrown overboard to attract the tuna. Due to a close association between Yellowfin Tuna and (usually Spotted) dolphins, fishermen frequently seek out groups of dolphins in hope of catching the tuna. We could see the fishermen, lined up at the back of the boat, trailing baited lines in the water behind them in the boat's wake – and eagerly following them were the group of Spinner Dolphins! The fishermen were throwing live fish into the water to attract the tuna, but it appeared that most of it was being happily gobbled up by the dolphins. Chas and Sara explained that the fishermen didn't mind the dolphins eating their bait – they accept it as a payment to the dolphins for helping them to find the tuna. An hour later, Sara found another boat with dolphins behind it, which seemed to be a mixed group of 200+ Spotted and Spinner Dolphins.

We continued in a circle, started to head back towards again to slowly return to the island and after an hour of seeing the last group of dolphins Chas spotted some distant fins - Risso's Dolphins! A new species for the trip. Typically shy, Risso's Dolphins don't tend to like being near boats, but these ones did a lot of breaching, tailslaps and even spyhopped a several times to get a better look at us.

We returned to the island and snorkelled on a reef a 5-minute dhoni ride away from the boat, leaving a large flood light switched on at the back of the boat to start attracting the plankton (and hopefully a Whale Shark!) Once back on board and showered, Sara did a talk about marine conservation, touching on UK issues as well as the global issues of whaling and shark finning.

After dinner, we eagerly sat at the back of the boat, peering down to watch the hundreds of fish that had started to shoal in the small area of illuminated water. A huge amount of splashing was going on as scad and jacks had appeared to eat the smaller fish (what started out as a group of several hundred sprat on their own had swiftly been reduced to only one or two rather nervous-looking individuals, surrounded by a hundred or more hungry scad!). Watching the water, waiting for a shark, was very exciting as there were so many interesting species to be seen (such as juvenile parrotfish, squid, and even a dolphin!) and the rear of our boat had turned into a hive of activity. By 11.30pm most had decided to retire to bed, with the crew keeping watch for the shark through the night with the strict instruction to wake us all up should one appear!

Day 7

Wednesday 22nd February

We set off at 6am this morning to make good time heading north – quickly gathering that the Whale Shark hadn't made an appearance during the night. We had planned to arrive at a reef to snorkel at around 10.30am, but while en route Sara spotted blows a couple of kilometres away – which we changed course to follow. On approach we discovered it was a pod of 10 sleepy Pilot Whales! They barely paid any attention to us, logging at the surface and hardly moving. They were accompanied by six Common Bottlenose Dolphins who came around our boat for a brief investigation before re-joining the Pilot Whales. We then arrived at a picnic island at around midday, and Sara took Eileen, Shirley and Anette on shore, whilst Chas took the rest of the group for a snorkel. Sara and Eileen snorkelled from the beach while Shirley and Anette wandered around the island. We returned back to the boat for 1.40pm and had lunch at 2pm, where we eagerly discussed our morning - some members of the snorkelling group had seen a White-tipped Reef Shark!

After lunch, we continued our course north to South-west Ari Atoll, a known spot for Manta Rays to come and feed on the abundant plankton. We arrived there at 3.30pm, after receiving a call from the dhoni (who had gone ahead and were 10 minutes away) that they had four Manta Rays next to them! A sudden burst of energy erupted on the boat (abruptly stirring those dozing at the back) and folk frantically got into snorkelling gear and scrambled onto dhoni. We went out alongside the reef where the Mantas had been seen only minutes earlier but, despite looking for half an hour, we couldn't see any. With only 40 minutes of daylight left, we decided it would be better to go for a quiet snorkel on nearby reef and try our luck again tomorrow. The reef looked healthy, with plenty of fish to keep us entertained and the highlights included an octopus, Giant Moray Eel and Hawksbill Turtle. After refreshing showers we joined Chas with a drink up on the top deck under the stars, where we lay on our sun loungers looking to the night sky as Chas pointed out constellations. He went on to give an insightful talk into the history of maritime navigation and Portuguese explorers in the Maldives. After that, we enjoyed another hearty dinner and several members of the group joined Sara for "Fish Club" up in the bar, matching photographs (taken during the day's snorkelling) to the images in Chas's superb identification book and adding them to the ever-growing species list.

Day 8

Thursday 23rd February

Waking up refreshed and with renewed determination, we tried our luck with the Mantas again before breakfast. After a quick biscuit and cup of tea, we got into our gear and onto the dhoni, making our way over to the same reef as yesterday. Sara and Chas stood on the dhoni roof – and within 10 minutes Chas had spotted a Manta Ray only metres from the boat. Ecstatic, there was a frantic scramble to get snorkels on and ourselves into the water. Pairing up with snorkel "buddies" we jumped in, Chas leading the way and Sara taking up the rear. Although one or two members of the group got brief close-up views of the elegant Manta, it effortlessly glided into the distance and disappeared from view as soon as it had arrived. So we got back into the dhoni to try again. Within 20 minutes we had found another one and (better rehearsed this time round!) we repeated the drill of getting into the water and were fortunate to have a Manta close to the group (although we needed a good deal of energy to keep up with them!) Everybody got a glimpse of it, with most getting wonderful close up views – a real memory to treasure! By the time we got back on board after the "Miraculous Manta Morning" it was 10am, so we had a late breakfast and travelled north for an hour. All was unusually quiet on the cetacean front, despite Sara, Chas and others being anchored at the front of the boat with binoculars. However, only an hour later we received a call from the dhoni which had, again, gone ahead and reported at least six Mantas around them on another reef!

Even though most of us had only just got dry (and were still digesting breakfast!), for those who wished to, it was time to get back into our gear and back out again for a final snorkel with them.

As we approached the reef, a Manta came right past the dhoni as we jumped in, so the first of the snorkelers enjoyed a brief “swim-past”, but within seconds it had quickly moved out of sight and it wasn’t seen again. We stayed in the water scanning around, with the assistance from the dhoni crew keeping watch, but got out after 20 minutes as none were seen. We moved further around the reef and the majority of the group opted for a snorkel in hope a Manta might show up, while a couple of people stayed back on the dhoni to admire the beautiful tranquil waters from above. The water didn’t have great visibility (it was full of plankton, hence the Mantas being present!) and there was a slight swell which made the snorkelling slightly more bouncy than usual. Despite this, there were still thousands of fish to enjoy – and by far the largest numbers of Sergeant Majors that we had seen so far. We then got back on the boat, had a relaxed lunch (eagerly comparing Manta sightings of the morning) and made our way east. During the afternoon Sara spotted a group of Spinner Dolphins – one of them had a new-born baby swimming closely alongside it, no longer that 12 inches long! By late afternoon we arrived on a sand bank near Bathala Island, where we strolled along the beach and (for those that wanted a third snorkel of the day) swam in the luxuriously warm evening waters of the coral reef during a spectacular sunset.

Once back on board, we sat and enjoyed a refreshing beer and listened to another brilliant talk from Chas on the formation of the Maldivian atolls, and afterwards we all compared snorkelling notes over dinner.

Day 9

Friday 24th February

This morning we woke to bright blue skies and dazzling sunshine and went for a final snorkel on a house reef (called Bathala). As if the Maldives had been saving the best until last, we had the most brilliant snorkel yet. The bright sunlight brought out a symphony of breath-taking colours from both the fish and the pristine coral – this was the best of the Maldives! The sheer abundance and density of fish all in one spot left most people speechless. Several of the group saw White-tipped Reef Sharks, octopus, triggerfish and were able to enjoy a mesmerisingly large group of small squid which swam past us with great elegance.

Elated, we got back on board and set off east into deeper water, where, after a couple of hours, we found a hugely widespread pod of Bottlenose Dolphins. Some of the pod came to investigate the boat, but they weren’t particularly interested in us. We didn’t mind, and simply enjoyed standing on deck in the sunshine watching the dolphins surround us, both near and far. Continuing our way, an hour later we found Spinner Dolphins. Again, it was the middle of the night for this nocturnal species, so initially they were quite sleepy and not very active, but still, curiosity got the better of them and a couple came to investigate our boat, swimming alongside us for a couple of minutes before re-joining their pod and heading north.

After lunch, it was with great reluctance that we approached the more developed islands as we sailed into busier waters (with a group of 20 Spinner Dolphins joining us for a short while!) and into a harbour to anchor for the evening at Malé. Before dinner Chas showed a lovely video of Naturetrek’s cruise in Indonesia ‘Bali to Komodo’, for which he is also the leader. After dinner, half of the group opted to retire to cabins to finish packing, whilst others decided to sit in the bar for a final gossip about the week’s sightings over several cold beers!

Day 10

Saturday 25th February

This morning, most of us rose at 6am for an early breakfast and to say good bye to the first half of our group who were departing on a 9.15am flight to Manchester. Once departed, Sara took the second group to the airport (spotting a final group of Spinner Dolphins en route!) where they said goodbye to Jonathon, Shirley, Kieran and Kerensa who were staying on in the Maldives a little while longer (lucky them!) and we boarded our flight home, via Dubai, with countless memories of a wonderful trip

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Coming back from the sandy bank snorkel

Species Lists

Cetaceans (✓=recorded but not counted)

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>		x	x	x		x	x	x
2	Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>	x							
3	Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>			x		x			
4	Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>				x				
5	Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>				x				
6	Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>			x		x			

Fish

1	Black-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Carcharinus melanopterus</i>		x						
2	White-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>					x		x	
3	Manta Ray	<i>Manta alfredi</i> (formerly <i>birostris</i>)						x		
4	Feathertail Stingray	<i>Pastinachus sephen</i>			x					
5	Giant Moray	<i>Gymnothorax javanicus</i>			Prob		x			
6	Fringe-lip Mullet	<i>Oedalechilus labiosus</i>							x	
7	Slender Lizardfish	<i>Saurida gracilis</i>						Prob		
8	Reef Lizardfish	<i>Synodus variegatus</i>			x		x			
9	Tail-spot Lizardfish	<i>Synodus jaculum</i>					x			
10	Smooth Flutemouth	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>			x			x		
11	Trumpetfish	<i>Aulostomus chinensis</i>					x		x	
12	Splendid Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis botche</i>		x	x		x	x		
13	Blotcheye Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis murdjan</i>				x	x		x	
14	Violet Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis violacea</i>							x	
15	Crown Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron diadema</i>				x		x		
16	White-tail (Silverspot) Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron caudimaculatum</i>			x			x		
17	Peacock Rock Cod	<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>						x		
18	Slender Grouper	<i>Anyperodon leucogrammicus</i>						x		
19	Four Saddle Grouper	<i>Epinephelus spiloticeps</i>		x		x	x	x	x	
20	Yellow-tailed Basslet (Anthias)	<i>Pseudanthias evansi</i>					x	x		
21	Orange Anthias	<i>Pseudanthias squamipennis</i>				x		x		
22	Crescent-tail Bigeye	<i>Priacanthus hamrur</i>							x	
23	Narrowstripe Cardinalfish	<i>Apogon angustatus</i>					x			
24	Singlestripe Cardinalfish	<i>Apogon fraenatus</i>							x	
25	Giant Trevally	<i>Caranx ignobilis</i>				x		x	x	
26	Bluefin Jack	<i>Caranx melampygus</i>					x		x	
27	Mackerel Scad	<i>Decapterus macarellus</i>				x				
28	Small-spotted Dart	<i>Trachinotus bailloni</i>							x	
29	Longtail Silverbiddy	<i>Gerres longirostris</i>				x		x		
30	Kashmir Snapper	<i>Lutjanus kasmira</i>			x		x		x	
31	Lunar Fusilier	<i>Caesio lunaris</i>					Prob			
32	Yellow-back Fusilier	<i>Caesio xanthonota</i>		x	x	x				
33	Oriental Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus orientalis</i>				x	x		x	
34	Two-lined Monocle Bream	<i>Scolopsis bilineatus</i>						x	x	
35	Yellowstripe Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys flavolineatus</i>				Prob				
36	Barred Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus trifasciatus</i>			x	x				
37	Dash-dot Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus barberinus</i>		x	x			x		
38	Threadfin Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon auriga</i>					x	x	x	
39	Bennett's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon bennetti</i>			x					

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
40	Double-saddle Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon falcula</i>		X	X		X	X	X	
41	Klein's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon kleinii</i>			X			X	X	
42	Meyer's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon meyeri</i>		X	X				X	
43	Oval butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifasciatus</i>		X	X		X			
44	Chevron Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifascialis</i>				X				
45	Yellow-head Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon xanthocephalus</i>					X	X	X	
46	Long-nose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>		X			X	X	X	
47	Black Pyramid Butterflyfish	<i>Hemitaurichthys zoster</i>		X						
48	Reef Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus acuminatus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X		
49	Indian Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus pleurotinia</i>		X		X		X	X	
50	Regal Angelfish	<i>Pygoplites diacanthus</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	
51	Forster's (Blackside) Hawkfish	<i>Paracirrhites forsteri</i>		X	X	X				
52	Blackfoot or Maldivian Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion nigripes</i>				X	X		X	
53	Clark's Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion clarkii</i>			X	X	X		X	
54	Sergeant Major	<i>Abudefduf vaigiensis</i>			X		X	X	X	
55	Indian Dascyllus	<i>Pomacentrus indicus</i>					X	X	X	
56	Napoleon Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus undulatus</i>	X							
57	Bird Wrasse	<i>Gomphosus caeruleus</i>		X					X	
58	Checkerboard Wrasse	<i>Halichoerus hortulanus</i>	X	X		X		X		
59	Lemon Meringue Wrasse	<i>Halichoerus leucoxanthus</i>					X			
60	Moon Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lunare</i>		X	X		X			
61	Six-barred Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma hardwicke</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	
62	Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X		
63	Blackeye Thicklip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus melapterus</i>		X						
64	Queen Coris	<i>Coris formosa</i>							X	
65	Slingjaw Wrasse	<i>Epibulus insidiator</i>		X				X		
66	Bicolour Parrotfish	<i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>			X			X	X	
67	Roundhead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus strongylocephalus</i>					X		X	
68	Greencheek Parrotfish	<i>Scarus prasiognathus</i>	Prob		X	X				
69	Yellowbar Parrotfish	<i>Scarus scaber</i>	X			X	X	X		
70	Spot-tailed Sandperch	<i>Parapercis hexopthalma</i>					X			
71	Brown-blotched Sandperch	<i>Parapercis millepunctata</i>		X	X	X	X	X		
72	Maldivian Sandperch	<i>Parapercis signata</i>		X	X	X	X	X		
73	Circular Batfish	<i>Platax orbicularis</i>							X	
74	Coral Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus corallinus</i>							X	
75	Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>						X	X	
76	Powder-blue Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus leucosternon</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
77	Lined Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	
78	Humpback Unicornfish	<i>Naso brachycentron</i>		X	X			X	X	
79	Spotted Unicornfish	<i>Naso brevirostris</i>		X	X	X	X	X		
80	Yellowfin Tuna	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>				X				
81	Flying Fish	<i>Exocetus spp</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
82	Clown Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus conspicillum</i>			X			X	X	
83	Orange-Striped Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus undulatus</i>			X				X	
84	Titan Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus viridescens</i>							X	
85	Red-toothed Triggerfish	<i>Odonus niger</i>							X	
86	Yellow Boxfish	<i>Ostracion cubicus</i>							X	
87	Black or Spotted Boxfish	<i>Ostracion meleagris</i>		X				X		
88	Bennett's Sharpnose Puffer	<i>Canthigaster bennetti</i>			X					
89	Black-spotted Pufferfish	<i>Arothron nigropunctatus</i>						X		
90	Saddled Sharpnose Pufferfish	<i>Canthigaster valentini</i>					X	X		

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
91	Blotched Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon liturosus</i>						x		
92	Orange Filefish	<i>Pervagor aspricaudus</i>	prob							
93	Orange-socket Surgeon fish	<i>Acanthurus auranticavus</i>	prob							
94	Kawakawa	<i>Euthynnus affinis</i>						x		
95	Peacock Grouper	<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>					x	x		
96	Indian Smoke Angelfish	<i>Apolemichthys xanthurus</i>				x				
97	Squid sp							x		
98	Singapore Parrotfish	<i>Scarus prasiognathos</i>						x		

Birds

1	Tropical Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>				x		x		
2	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		x		x	x	x		
3	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>				Prob				
4	Little Heron (Maldivian subsp.)	<i>Butorides striatus didii</i>			x	x				
5	Watercock	<i>Gallicrex Cinerea</i>			x					
6	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>	x							
7	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>			x		x			
8	Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>		x		x				
9	Lesser Noddy	<i>Anous tenuirostris</i>						x		
10	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>		x						
11	Swift (Great Crested) Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>			x	x				
12	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>						x		
13	Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>		x	x			x		
14	Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>			x			x		
15	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>				x				
16	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>		H		x	H	H		
17	Maldivian House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens maledivicus</i>	x		x	x		x		x
18	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	H		H	x				

Other Taxa

1	Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus giganteus ssp maldivarum</i>	x	x	x	x		x		
2	Hawksbill Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>					x	x		
3	Common Spiny Lizard	<i>Coletes versicolor</i>	x							
4	Ghost Crab species	<i>Ocypodinae spp</i>				x		x		
5	Octopus Sp				x	x			x	
6	Stinging Anemone				x					
7	Crown-of-thorns Starfish	<i>Acanthaster planci</i>		x		x				
8	Unidentified turtle					x				
9	Sea Cucumber sp.		x		x			x		

Map of Cruise

