

Mantas, Dolphins and Coral Reefs – A Maldives Cruise

Naturetrek Tour Report

12 - 21 March 2017



Risso's Dolphin by Andrea Poole



Collared Butterflyfish by Jenny Willsher



Spotted or Guineafowl Boxfish by Andrea Poole



Green Sea Turtle by Andrea Poole

Report compiled by Jenny Willsher
Images courtesy of Andrea Poole & Jenny Willsher



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With 15 Naturetrek clients

Summary

The Maldives is an amazing chain of atolls and tiny islands stretching 868 kilometres (539 miles) on a north/south axis in the Indian Ocean, off the south-west tip of India. Our week cruising in and around this stunning marine paradise gave us a wonderful insight into the diversity of life both above and below the waves. After a brief stay in the lovely Bandos Island Resort, which gave us time for some snorkel practice, we boarded the Ari Queen, our base for the next week. We soon settled into the daily routine of early morning and evening snorkels, daytimes searching for cetaceans or relaxing, and the evening talks by Chas Anderson, our local Maldives expert. His 30+ years of experience here made for some fascinating and enlightening presentations. Daily dolphin sightings were almost guaranteed: Striped, Common, Indo-pacific Bottlenose, Risso's and acrobatic Spinner Dolphins were seen regularly. A pod of 30-40 Short-finned Pilot Whales played around the boat one day, and small groups of Dwarf Sperm Whales floated tantalisingly on the horizon. We swam with graceful Mantas and marvelled at the diversity of colour, shape and size of the reef fish and other marine life below us. All this was complimented by the unobtrusive efficiency and care of the crew on both the Ari Queen and its accompanying dhoni. The good humour and enthusiasm of the group contributed enormously to the enjoyment of the trip.

Day 1

Sunday 12th March

Depart the UK

The tour started with overnight flights from the UK, via Dubai, to Male

Day 2

Monday 13th March

Arrive Bandos Island Resort, North Male Atoll

Following overnight flights, most of the group arrived in Male mid-morning and were soon aboard a water taxi to Bandos Island. A very helpful Ibrahim welcomed us to the resort and made every effort to get us to our rooms quickly, and arranged a table in the Sea Breeze Restaurant for the whole group to eat together later. Unfortunately the Manchester contingent were delayed and arrived late afternoon after a very trying 24 hours. Some chose to catch up on sleep while others relaxed or had a practise snorkel.

Some met at the Sundowner Bar pre-dinner where a variety of fish could be seen in the shallow water below including Black-tipped Reef Shark, Parrotfish, Powderblue Surgeonfish, Raccoon Butterflyfish, dumpy little Humbug Dascyllus and the strange slim Trumpetfish: a taste of the amazing underwater world we were about to be immersed in.

Later the whole group met for dinner at a candlelit table on the open deck of the restaurant and enjoyed a delicious meal. Large Fruit Bats from the island roost regularly flapped overhead.

Day 3

Tuesday 14th March

Bandos Resort, North Male Atoll

We woke to a typical bright sunny day with a few clouds in the sky. Some had an early snorkel and then enjoyed breakfast from the excellent buffet. The omelette chef was quite an entertainer as he juggled the cooking of at least three omelettes at once, and the pancake maker could design shark, fish or flower-shaped pancakes to suit!

We then had the morning to swim or explore the island with its lovely exotic trees of Frangipani, Bougainvillea, Oleander, and the huge Banyan tree near the restaurant which was still decorated with Valentine's Day decorations! The few birds on the island included the vocal Asian Koel, Maldivian House Crow, Common Myna, White-faced Water Hen (with chicks) and Common Sandpiper. In the large trees behind the restaurant was a small colony of huge noisy Fruit Bats.

We all gathered in reception late morning to await the arrival of Chas on the dhoni. This local type of boat, with its distinctive curved prow, would be ferrying us about over the next week into the shallow water over the reefs. Once our luggage was stowed on board we headed away from Bandos Island to where the Ari Queen was moored.

Chas welcomed us on board and went through the house rules - the first being that we shed our shoes! After lunch the boat moved north to the western edge of North Male Atoll. Three Common Bottlenose Dolphins and a flock of Lesser Noddies were seen on the way. Then we had our first of many snorkels from the boat. Chas warned us that it was not the best of reefs, but it was a chance to practice getting on and off the dhoni. Many reefs in the Maldives were affected by the El Nino event last year and were still recovering. We were accompanied by Saara who tested the current and visibility before we jumped in. It was a bit choppy but we enjoyed the snorkel around some huge brain corals, and sightings included three Hawksbill Turtles, Powderblue, Eyestripe and Lined Surgefishes, Royal Diacanthus, Raccoon, Longnose and Black-wedged Butterflyfishes, Emperor Angelfish, Moorish Idol and dumpy little Humbug Dascyllus. Butterflyfish are symbolic of the reef and display an endless variation of yellow/black/white livery. Blue/Yellow and Black/White seemed to be the popular colours amongst the fish! Chas, sensibly, does not offer to do a fish checklist as it would be an interminable evening of trying to identify 'the blue fish with the yellow tail' or 'the little green one with the red fins' etc, etc! There are over 1,000 species of reef fish, some yet to be identified, and juveniles and adults of the same species can look entirely different! Chas is official recorder of the reef fish and admitted it has taken him many years to learn what he knows now.

Suitably inspired and excited about the week ahead, we later met on the lounge deck where Chas gave us a brief overview of the Maldives and a talk on Dolphins. The Spinner Dolphin is the commonest of the eight species seen in the Maldives and it is not entirely clear why they spin – perhaps to rid themselves of sucker fish (remoras) or to communicate with others. Remoras are a parasitic fish which attach themselves to their host with the large adhesive disc on their heads. The local name is *attamas* which also means a clingy person. The dolphins hunt at night using sonar to locate deepwater fish that come up to the surface at night. They are normally light and dark grey in colour but when very active their bellies look pink, because blood vessels near the surface helps them cool down. To sleep, they are able to close one half of the brain at a time.

After a delicious dinner, efficiently supervised by Salam, we relaxed for a while in the tropical breeze on deck as the boat rocked gently, some witnessing a dramatic electric storm before retiring to bed. It rained in the night.

Day 4

Wednesday 15th March

North Male Atoll to Gaafaru Atoll

Tea, coffee and biscuits were available before our early morning snorkel. The weather was overcast and the water still choppy. Good varieties of fish were seen including rays and a Nurse Shark. Also many Oriental Sweetlips, which became a favourite for many of us. This large fish with its startling bold black and white stripes and yellow trim is a good example of how different the adults can be from the juveniles. The young are slimmer and blotched in brown and cream. This was one of the bigger fish we saw, along with various Parrotfish with their amazing, mostly blue/green, patterns, the lovely shoals of indigo blue Redtooth Triggerfish that seemed to flutter in the water, the bright yellow Longnose Butterflyfish and strange shaped Unicornfish.

After breakfast Chas explained our plan for the day. We were to have crossed the main channel to Goidhoo Atoll on the west side of the Maldives, but the prevailing wind was from the south-west which would have made for a bumpy traverse. So we moved out of North Male Atoll, around the top of the atoll and then south for the afternoon. We anchored overnight in Gaafaru Atoll, hoping that we could make our planned crossing tomorrow. The whole day had been unusually cool and it rained frequently. Chas was keen to reassure us that this was unusual March weather for the Maldives!

Many of us dug out some extra layers of clothing and the cook provided us with hot soup! We had good views of some Spinner Dolphins but even they seemed subdued by the weather. We had a short evening snorkel and saw different fish again. Tiny iridescent blue or red dots in the water were planktonic Copepods. Sea Cucumbers and deep blue-lipped Clams were seen, and a favourite for many was the Clown Triggerfish with huge white spots on its black belly.

Our talk that evening was on Blackfish - a group of small whales including the two species of Pilot Whale, Orca, False and Pygmy Killer Whales and Melon-headed Whale. Firstly Chas showed our location on the map and explained that we were heading to the western edge of the Maldives as the weather was still influenced by the north-east monsoon, which means the concentration of plankton in the water will be greatest there; the plankton being food for Mantas and Whale Sharks and the start of the food chain for the bigger cetaceans.

Marilyn and Pat surprised us with a seafarer's ritual of pouring alcohol into the sea, to ask Neptune/Poseidon for good luck and to keep us safe – a whole bottle of white wine in this case! We retired to bed hoping that the sacrifice would work. If the engines started at 6.30am we would be on the move, signalling better weather!

Day 5

Thursday 16th March

Gaafaru to Baa Atoll

We awoke to the sound of the engines starting and, despite sacrificing our early morning snorkel, we were pleased to be moving. Some of the group had early tea and coffee on deck, appreciating the almost cloudless blue sky. What a different day! Pat and Marilyn were forgiven if they were feeling a bit smug!

The Ari Queen headed out across the deep water of the main channel between the islands and we headed north-east to Baa Atoll. We were soon watching a pod of about 300 Spinner Dolphins, distinguishable by their long thin beak, and often very acrobatic in the water, leaping and spinning. Later we saw smaller groups of Risso's Dolphins; a more languid species in their behaviour, though three were seen leaping in sequence and some tail-slapping. Just before lunch Chas spotted a Dwarf Sperm Whale and we enjoyed distant views of a pair. Their typical behaviour is to lie near the surface like an upturned surfboard. We also added a few birds to our list, seeing a raft of Lesser Noddies, Lesser and Greater Crested Terns, Black-naped Tern, Lesser Frigatebird and a graceful White-tailed Tropicbird.

We anchored near a small island and a few chose to go ashore and swim from there, or explore the island. The snorkelers were very keen to get in the water (but not so keen to get out again!) and we had a very productive time, with many more colourful fish to ponder over including Clown Triggerfish, Palette Surgeonfish (Dory from Finding Nemo/Dory!), orange-red Sabre Squirrelfish, Yellow Tangs, Checkerboard Snapper, majestic Parrotfish, small shoals of slim Yellowback Fusiliers, jewel-like Anthias and the strange sight of the Sea Cucumbers spawning!

For our evening talk we climbed up to the top deck. Chas talked briefly about the stars and then explained how the atolls were formed. Atoll is the only Maldivian word in the entire Oxford English Dictionary! A theory about their formation postulated by Darwin was proved over a century later by geological surveys which found that the coral of the atolls was over two kilometres deep, showing that it had built up as the sea levels changed.

Supper included a tray of Red Snapper and other fish that the crew had caught while we were snorkelling.

Day 6

Friday 17th March

Baa Atoll to Raa Atoll

We started the day with our usual snorkel. The water was clear and warm and we were getting familiar with many species of fish. Powderblue Surgeonfish, Oriental Sweetlips, Moorish Idol, Clown Triggerfish and many of the Butterflyfish were common sightings, but we were always on the lookout for rays, turtles and sharks.

After breakfast we had close views of Common Bottlenose Dolphins and later in the morning we encountered more Risso's Dolphins. Their distinctive cylindrical shape and pale scarred heads were becoming familiar. We continued to move north on the outer edge of Raa Atoll, seeing four or five Dwarf Sperm Whales being uncharacteristically active, and then a lively group of Spinner Dolphins.

Our evening snorkel was in rather cloudy water but there were masses of fish ranging from flocks of tiny blue-green Chromis to powerful Parrotfish, which we could hear as they rasped at the coral.

That evening Chas talked about Dwarf Sperm Whales. They are notoriously shy so we were lucky with our sightings today. He then moved on to the beaked whales: of the 90 species of cetaceans, 23 are beaked. They are by nature elusive, deep ocean beasts, feeding at night on squid, with inconspicuous surfacing behaviour and are capable of diving for up to two hours. They are poorly understood and Chas told a complex story of almost serendipitous discoveries of skulls and carcasses and, as always, was modest about his role in this story –

following up reports and sending bone samples to Australian colleagues for confirmation. He passed around a tooth from a Longman's Beaked Whale. His talk demonstrated that there could be so much more to discover.

Day 7

Saturday 18th March

Raa Atoll to Goidhoo Atoll

We woke to another clear sunny day. It was to be a busy day! Noisy Maldivian House Crows flew over us from the nearby island. Chas explained that we were looking for Mantas! The dhoni took us 20 minutes up the coast and the boat was to follow. We soon saw some splashing in the water. Chas briefed us on Manta etiquette – no flash photography and no chasing or touching - and then as gracefully as we could, we slipped into the water. The water was cloudy in places with plankton (Manta food) and some experienced a few tiny stings, but it was a small price to pay for the privilege of being in the presence of these amazing beasts as they gracefully and nonchalantly glided underneath and around us. We were in the water for almost an hour. Chas and Saara urged us to keep looking down, and then had difficulty getting us back on the dhoni. As we regrouped, the superlatives flew and our smiles were broad!

We excitedly got back on the Ari Queen for breakfast, and the non-snorkelers were thrilled to report that the captain had eased the boat near to the mantas and they had had great views from above. As we were finishing breakfast the boat changed course. We headed for some distant splashes which were Spotted and Common Bottlenose Dolphins. Later in the morning, we enjoyed watching 40-50 Short-finned Pilot Whales. These warm water Pilot Whales, with their typical broad curved dorsal fin, are very sociable and allowed us some great views and photographic opportunities.

After lunch it was hot and a quiet afternoon till about 3.30pm when we encountered more Risso's Dolphins, followed by a feeding frenzy of Spinner and Common Bottlenose Dolphins. The water was boiling with jumping tuna and diving terns amongst the dolphins. We added more birds to the list including Sooty Tern and a handsome Masked Booby. We ended the day with another lovely snorkel.

Our evening talk from Chas was about tuna fishing, which is an important economic activity in the Maldives, and much is exported. Spotted Dolphins often follow tuna shoals and are a useful marker. Tuna are line caught with special unbarbed hooks which facilitate an easy release of the fish when they are flicked on board the boat. The Skipjack Tuna is a revered fish; its real name is not spoken because of local myths about its origins. It is associated with its following of Lesser Noddies. Tuna fishing in other oceans is not well regulated and where gill nets are used, probably 100,000 small cetaceans perish every year. A sobering thought and Chas urged us to always purchase rod and line caught tuna.

Day 8

Sunday 19th March

Goidhoo Atoll to Thoddoo Atoll

Our usual early morning snorkel included Green Turtles, Black-tipped Reef Shark, Spotted Eagle and Black Blotched Rays. Octopus and huge Lobsters were also seen, together with many of our familiar and favourite fish.

We headed south out of Goidhoo Atoll. Before lunch we encounter two groups of Risso's Dolphins and, as often happened, a few minutes before lunch was due we were with Pilot Whales again. They seemed reluctant to move off so we enjoyed some very close views after lunch.

A taste of reality came as we moored near a busy resort where we felt comparatively crowded by the presence of other boats! But this was soon forgotten when we were back in the water. The reef was a fascinating landscape of coral trees and stacks, providing shelter for many interesting but shy fish including Orange Sabre Squirrelfish, various groupers and rock cod, swarms of Anthias, Painted Sweetlips, more variations of butterflyfish and angelfish, Maldivian Anemonefish (Nemo but with only one stripe!) and his blue-black cousin Clark's Anemonefish. There were also two Stingrays, White-tipped Reef Shark and Green Turtle. We had to be ordered out of the water as the light was fading!

Day 9

Monday 20th March

Thoddoo Atoll to Male

Our last snorkel but perhaps the best! We were on the outer edge of the atoll where the reef was broad, but with a dramatic drop-off. It was an amazing experience to be slowly drifting with the fish in beautiful clear water. One Manta Ray was seen plus Black-tipped and Grey Reef Sharks, Green Turtles, Octopus and Spotted Eagle Rays. The smaller fish included drifts of yellow Kashmir Snappers, flotillas of Collared and Raccoon Butterflyfishes, many variations on the black/white/yellow/blue colour combinations of other Butterflyfish and Angelfish, Boxfish, small groups of slim Pipefish, graceful Moorish Idols, lurking Groupers, powerful looking Jacks, electric blue Neon Damselfish and, sprawled on the seabed, various starfish including the pink Thick-armed Starfish. As we reluctantly clambered back onto the dhoni, a small group of Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphins cavorted nearby.

Back on board we enjoyed our late breakfast and headed further south, conscious that this was our last full day on the Ari Queen. We were now heading back to North Male Atoll for our last night. We had a few dolphin sightings during the day and as we neared Male, we met a small pod of Pilot Whales. Continuing on between North and South Male Atoll, we had the incongruous sight of many more Pilot Whales languishing in the water against the backdrop of the crowded Male Island with its bustling port and noisy airport. Then we had to move on to our mooring near Male and the reality of other boats and the occasional plane overhead.

Later we settled on deck for our last talk from Chas, wondering what the subject might be. He tempted us with a short film of his Indonesian trip; a new tour for Naturetrek and a similar formula to the Maldives tour with snorkelling and cetacean watching, but with the added fascination (not for everyone) of Komodo Dragons. We were pleased to recognise a few of the fish!

Day 10

Tuesday 21st March

Male – Dubai - UK

So time to say goodbye! We all loaded into the dhoni for the last time. Those returning to the UK were envious of Roger and Gillian who were extending their stay, as they set off for their water taxis still in shorts and T-shirts, which had been *de rigueur* for all for our wonderful week on the Ari Queen.

Once aboard our flight back to the UK, we left the magic of the Maldives and sadly watched the atolls disappear below us as we climbed into the clouds.

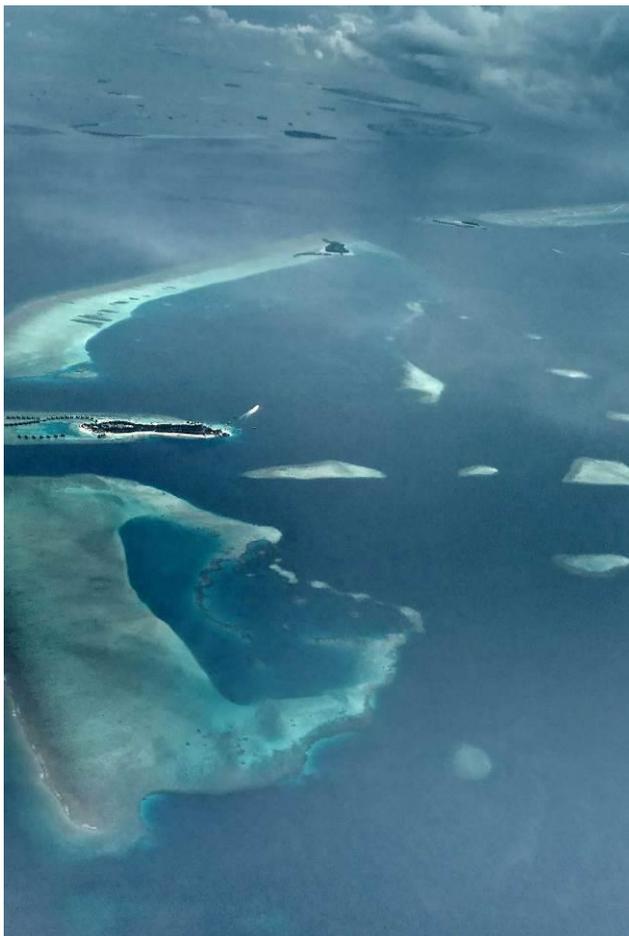
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Arriving in Maldives by Jenny Willsher



White-tailed Tropicbird by Andrea Poole

Species Lists

Cetaceans (✓=recorded but not counted)

	Scientific name	Common name	March							
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	Dwarf Sperm Whale	<i>Kogia sima</i>				2	5+4			✓
2	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3	Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>		✓		✓	✓			✓
4	Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	✓				✓	✓		✓
5	Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>						✓		
6	Striped Dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>					✓			
7	Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>				✓	✓	✓	28	
8	Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>						40	50	40

Birds

1	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>				✓		2		
2	Tropical Shearwater	<i>Puffinus pacificus</i>					✓	✓		
3	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓							
4	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>				✓				
6	Lesser Frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>			✓		✓	10	✓	
7	Greater Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>						✓		
8	Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>						✓		
9	Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>						✓		
10	White-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>				✓	✓	3	✓	
11	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	✓							
12	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓			✓				
13	Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
14	Lesser Noddy	<i>Anous tenuirostris</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
15	Swift (Great Crested) Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
16	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
17	Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
18	Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>					✓	20-30		
19	Sooty Tern	<i>Onychoprion fuscatus</i>					✓	10-20		
20	Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>					✓			
22	Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	✓							
23	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>	✓							
24	Maldivian House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens maledivicus</i>	✓				✓	8	✓	

Fish

Common name

Black-tipped Reef Shark

White-tipped Reef Shark

Nurse Shark

Black-blotched Stingray

White-tailed Ray

Manta Ray

Spotted Eagle Ray

Scientific name

*Carcharinus melanopterus**Triaenodon obesus**Nebrius ferrugineus**Taeniura meyeni**Himantura granulata**Manta alfredi (formerly birostris)**Aetobatus narinari*

Seen regularly

Seen occasionally

Seen once

Seen regularly

Seen by Jude

Swam with one day and seen on two other days

Seen regularly

Common name	Scientific name	
Feathertail Stingray	<i>Pastinachus sephen</i>	Seen by Chas
Smooth Flutemouth	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>	Seen occasionally
Trumpetfish	<i>Aulostomus chinensis</i>	Seen regularly
Whitetip Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis vittata</i>	Seen regularly – orange with white-tipped fins, large eye
Sabre Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron spiniferum</i>	Seen regularly – orange with white on face
Black-saddle Coral Grouper	<i>Plectropomus laevis</i>	Seen occasionally
Peacock Rock Cod	<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>	Seen by Andrea
Four Saddle Grouper	<i>Epinephelus spilotoceps</i>	
Orange Anthias	<i>Pseudanthius squamipennis</i>	Also called Fairy Basslets – small orange, in small groups, seen regularly
Giant Trevally	<i>Caranx ignobilis</i>	Large silvery fish, seen on last snorkel
Striped Remora (Slender Suckerfish)	<i>Echeneis naucrates</i>	Seen attached to sharks and other big fish
Kashmir Snapper	<i>Lutjanus kasmira</i>	Yellow and grey striped, masses seen on last snorkel
Yellow-back Fusilier	<i>Caesio xanthonota</i>	Seen regularly – yellow back, blue belly
Oriental Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus orientalis</i>	Seen regularly – large fish, black/white stripes, yellow/black fins
Painted Sweetlips	<i>Diagramma pictum</i>	Seen occasionally
Yellowstripe Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys flavolineatus</i>	“
Yellowfin Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys vanicolensis</i>	Seen around Bandos
Dash-dot Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus barberinus</i>	
Threadfin Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon auriga</i>	Seen occasionally
Collared Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon collare</i>	Black/white face, orange tail, seen regularly
Double-saddle Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon falcula</i>	Seen occasionally
Raccoon Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon lunula</i>	Seen regularly, black/white face
Chevron Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifascialis</i>	Seen occasionally
Teardrop Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon unimaculatus</i>	“
Yellow-head Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon xanthocephalus</i>	“
Long-nose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	Seen regularly
Reef Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus acuminatus</i>	“
Indian Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus pleurotinia</i>	“
Schooling Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus diphreutus</i>	“
Masked Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus monoceros</i>	“
Regal Angelfish	<i>Pygoplites diacanthus</i>	Seen occasionally, yellow/blue/white stripes
Blackfoot or Maldivian Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion nigripes</i>	Seen occasionally, orange with single white strip (almost Nemo!)
Clark's Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion clarkii</i>	Black with white stripes
Sergeant Major	<i>Abudefduf vaigiensis</i>	Seen occasionally
Golden Chromis	<i>Chromis ternatensis</i>	“
Blue-green Chromis	<i>Chromis viridis</i>	Seen regularly in small shoals
Surge Damselfish	<i>Crhysiptera brownriggii</i>	
Humbug Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus aruanus</i>	Black and white, seen regularly
Indian Dascyllus	<i>Pomacentrus indicus</i>	
Threespot Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus trimaculatus</i>	

Common name	Scientific name	
Neon Damselfish	<i>Pomacentris caeruleus</i>	Electric blue
White-saddled Damselfish	<i>Chrysiptera biocellata</i>	
Napoleon Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus undulatus</i>	Seen occasionally
Bird Wrasse	<i>Gomphosus caeruleus</i>	
Six-barred Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma hardwicke</i>	
Fivestripe Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma quinquevittatum</i>	
Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>	
Bicolour Parrotfish	<i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>	Many parrotfish seen, mostly green/blue
Roundhead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus strongylocephalus</i>	
Yellowbar Parrotfish	<i>Scarus scaber</i>	
Brown-blotched Sandperch	<i>Parapercis millepunctata</i>	Seen occasionally
Maldivian Sandperch	<i>Parapercis signata</i>	
Circular Batfish	<i>Platax orbicularis</i>	Seen occasionally
Longfin Batfish	<i>Platax teira</i>	"
Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	Seen regularly
Powder-blue Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus leucosternon</i>	Seen very regularly, blue body, yellow fin
Lined Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>	Seen regularly
Convict Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus triostegus</i>	Seen regularly, pale yellow with vertical black stripes
Palette Surgeonfish	<i>Paracanthurus hepatus</i>	Dory from the cartoon film Finding Nemo!
Orange-spine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	Seen occasionally
Big-nose Unicornfish	<i>Naso vlamingii</i>	"
Spotted Unicornfish	<i>Naso brevirostris</i>	"
Yellowfin Tuna	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>	Seen being caught
Skipjack Tuna	<i>Katsuonus palamis</i>	
Bigeye Barracuda	<i>Sphyræna forsteri</i>	
Flying Fish	<i>Exocetus spp</i>	Seen most days
Mimic Filefish	<i>Palaluteres prionurus</i>	
Clown Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus conspicillum</i>	seen regularly – black and white spotted belly
Orange-Striped Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus undulatus</i>	
Titan Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus viridescens</i>	
Picasso Triggerfish	<i>Rhinecanthus aculeatus</i>	
Red-toothed Triggerfish	<i>Odonus niger</i>	Seen in large shoals, deep blue,
Indian Triggerfish	<i>Melichthys indicus</i>	
Black or Spotted Boxfish	<i>Ostracion meleagris</i>	Seen occasionally
Black-spotted Pufferfish	<i>Arothron nigropunctatus</i>	"
Guinea fowl Pufferfish	<i>Arothron meleagris</i>	"
Blotched Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon liturosus</i>	"