

Mantas, Dolphins & Coral Reefs – A Maldives Cruise

Naturetrek Tour Report

21st – 30th January 2022



Manta Ray



Pantropical Spotted Dolphin



Hawksbill Turtle



White-tailed Tropicbird

Tour report and images by Sara Frost



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Summary

This 10-day tour in the Maldives had certainly been a long time coming for all of us, and what a lovely holiday it was! Our time spent cruising around the beautiful islands and atolls provided us with gorgeous purple-red sunsets over remote coral islands, a dazzling variety of colourful fish, and a visual daily feast of innumerable shades of turquoise. On all but one day we were joined by playful groups of dolphins (Spinner, Spotted, Striped and Risso's), many of which bounded over to our boat to greet us and play in the water around us. An undoubted highlight was the group's encounters with Manta Rays (plus Mobula Rays and stingrays) while snorkelling, with the rays appearing and disappearing alongside us as they fed upon the abundant plankton.

Every morning and evening the group enjoyed a pre-breakfast and pre-dinner snorkel on coral reefs, where the colour and variety of fish was wonderful! Vibrant parrotfish, many different types of butterflyfish, Moray Eels, triggerfish, both White- and Black-tipped Reef Sharks and Hawksbill Turtles were just a few of the underwater highlights. Birds aren't abundant in the Maldives, but we had superb views of the elegant White-tailed Tropicbird, plus some Lesser Frigatebirds, Tropical Shearwaters and Black-naped and Saunders Terns. After many of us had not travelled overseas for so long, this cruise through a tropical paradise was a wonderful way to resume wildlife travel.

Day 1 & 2

Friday 21st & Saturday 22nd January

London to Maldives

Eight members of the group met at Heathrow for our 1:40pm flight and flew to Male via Dubai. Five guests would be on a later direct flight, arriving two hours later. Once landing in Male at 8am, local time (on 22nd), we went through customs with ease and were reunited with our luggage before being transferred to Bandos on a 15-minute speedboat ride. Welcome to paradise!

Upon arrival, we were given refreshing cold towels and, amazingly, were able to check in to our rooms even though it was only 9:30am! We went and got settled and then Sara went to welcome the second batch of the group who'd arrived at 11am. Some of us met for lunch at the Sea Breeze Café and enjoyed watching young Black-tipped Reef Sharks swimming around in the safety of the calm shallows – one was only about 15 inches long – very sweet!

At 2pm, we went to the island clinic for a PCR test, a requirement for boarding our vessel the next day, which was very quick and efficient. Then the afternoon was at leisure! At 4pm Sara organised a 'group snorkel' by the Dive Centre, so that we could all get to grips with our snorkelling gear in the gentle shallow water on the beach. Those who were regular snorkellers could go off exploring further across the reef, which was teeming with surgeonfish, parrotfish, and lots of Picasso Triggerfish, the latter can be quite territorial and will swim towards you, full of confidence for such a small fish, should you get too close. We also saw several Black-tipped Reef Sharks and two octopus, which can be extremely camouflaged and nigh-on impossible to see, so this was a bonus!

We met again in the Sea Breeze Café at 6:30pm, where Sara gave a welcome briefing over cocktails and beer, followed by dinner at 7pm. We had barely begun to order our food when we abandoned the table to see enormous Black-blotched Sting Rays swimming around the harbour – the first of several meals that would be interrupted by wildlife over the next week! We stayed chatting after dinner, getting to know one another and enjoying the positively warm evening air. Then, at 10pm, we went to bed.

Day 3

Sunday 23rd January

Bandos to Thulusdhoo (North Male Atoll)

We had the morning at leisure to enjoy the tropical tranquillity of our island – Asian Koels could be heard calling and occasionally seen flitting in between palm trees. Fruit Bats could also be heard squabbling from the trees and seen flying amongst them, where they roost during the day. The group arrived at breakfast when they wished, which was held in the open air Huvan restaurant. There was an enormous selection to choose from – cereals, fresh fruits, and an ‘egg chef’ making eggs to order and many more cooked items – from sausages to curries! We enjoyed grazing for some time, before either going for another swim, a bask on the beach or lounging in a hammock.

Very sadly, two members of our group tested positive in the PCR test, and, despite best efforts, were required by regulations to now quarantine at Bandos. They were asymptomatic and in relatively good spirits, but it was of course a real disappointment. They would continue the rest of their holiday on Bandos and, once out of quarantine, would be able to make full use of all facilities, including taking a fishing trip out on a boat.

We were picked up from Bandos at 1pm by our private dhoni (a smaller boat which would be with us for the full cruise to run us to and from the main boat and the reefs) and transferred to the MV Keana, our home for the next week. Once on board we kicked off our shoes – we wouldn’t be needing them again! – and were greeted with refreshing cold towels and fruit juice.

After settling into our cabins, we then set sail, making our way to the northwest part of the atoll. It wasn’t long before we saw our first group of Spinner Dolphins – there were probably several hundred here! They bounded on over to the boat and rode on the bow wave at the front, doing a few characteristic spins before energetically bounding off again. We enjoyed a lovely first lunch on board – tuna steaks, rice, vegetables and fruits, but a particular highlight was a delicious dhal.

At 4:30pm we stopped at the island of Thulusdhoo for our first ‘proper snorkel’. After boarding the dhoni, we went over to the reef and hopped into the water where we were transported to a wonderful underwater world! The reef was full of colourful fish – with varieties of parrotfish, butterflyfish, squirrelfish, soldierfish and surgeonfish all swimming before our eyes. The highlights were two Hawksbill Turtles, a White-tipped Reef Shark and Honeycomb Moray. What a lovely start to the trip! Once back on board and showered, we met in the bar for a drink and Sara ran through the checklist of species seen during the day as well as pointed out where we had travelled on a map.

Chas then gave an interesting talk on dolphins of the Maldives, introducing us to the main species inhabiting these waters that we could see. At 8pm it was time for dinner, and we enjoyed tucking into our meal while

watching plankton and small fish whizzing about at the back of the boat which were attracted to the light we had set up.

At 9pm, Sara ran 'fish club' – an opportunity for anyone to sit and chat about the fish seen on the reef that day, and share photos and get help with their identification. It's hard not to be overwhelmed with the number species when first faced with them, so there was lots of fun chatter and questions as the group got to grips with the different types. By 10pm most of us went to bed.

Day 4

Friday 15th October

Thulusdhoo to Goidhoo (North Male Atoll to Baa Atoll)

This morning we snorkelled off the island of Asdu. The morning light dappled over the sand and coral beneath us, showing off the striking colour of the reef fish wonderfully! Several of the group saw an octopus, and towards the 'drop off' area (where the reef ends and the seabed suddenly drops to deeper water) were larger coral structures. These provide shelter for lots of fish, particularly nocturnal species, and so it's always worth hovering over these and taking the time for a good look underneath to see what might be lurking about. There were Oriental Sweetlips, and lots of squirrelfish and soldierfish (both nocturnal) some Giant Morays and plenty of surgeonfish and groupers swimming underneath and amongst it all. We also enjoyed looking at pipefish – cousins of seahorses. These 15cm long, straw-like fish are incredibly camouflaged against the sandy seabed. There was also an amazing amount of fry and shellfish larvae in the water if you looked closely; literally millions of tiny larvae swimming about before your eyes.

Once back on board we tucked into breakfast and set off northwest across the atoll and came across some Spinner Dolphins, although they didn't hang around for very long. They are nocturnal, and sometimes can be a little dozy around boats during the day. So, we continued on our way and, after lunch we found another pod of Spinner Dolphins. This pod were much more lively, however, and they couldn't seem to resist the temptation of bounding over to us and swimming alongside our boat. They jumped and spun all around us, to whoops and cheers from the group watching on the bow. One of the dolphins had a very noticeable bite from a Cookie-cutter Shark on its flank. There was a baby too, which was only about 15 inches long (they're born at 12 inches), swimming very closely to its mother, which was a joy to see.

We then stopped for a snorkel at 5:30pm in Baa Atoll, on Goidhoo reef. This wasn't the most colourful reef we would see on the trip, but nonetheless there were lots of fish. Highlights were Black-tipped Reef Sharks, Raccoon Butterflyfish and finding a juvenile Oriental Sweetlips – their 'crème caramel' colouring being very attractive.

Before dinner, Chas gave a talk on the top deck, where sun loungers, cushions and lanterns had been set out for us. We lay under the stars in the warm evening air, listening to Chas telling us a fascinating tale about François Pyrard, a French navigator remembered for his personal written account of his 'adventures' in the Maldives from 1602 to 1607, which was part of a ten-year sojourn in South Asia. Chas is certainly a captivating story-teller, and with only the faint glow from the lanterns and stars above to providing any light, it was a wonderful atmospheric evening as we gently bobbed about in a silent atoll on the top deck under the night sky.

That night, we again set up a bright light at the back of the boat, which would attract plankton, and hopefully bigger things! We kept an eye on it while having dinner, and while doing ‘Fish Club’ we frequently abandoned our checklists and drinks to see something that had turned up. An octopus appeared and stuck to the bottom of the boat before swimming off across the illuminated water and out of view, and a Snake Eel also paid us a visit – as the name suggests, this fish was incredibly snake-like, only when we saw its tiny fins at the side of its head did we realise it wasn’t one of the Maldives’ formidable marine reptiles! After much chatter and enjoyment looking over photos, we went to bed.

Day 5

Tuesday 25th January

Goidhoo to Dhaandoo (Baa Atoll)

This morning some of the group went for a snorkel, which turned out to be one of the best snorkels yet as they swam with five Manta Rays! Those who hadn’t gone snorkelling could see them clearly from the boat as they swam calmly towards us, flapping their enormous ‘wings’ and moving in a line together. Swimming with Mantas would be the highlight of the trip for many (sightings can never be guaranteed) – and what a treat it was! The water where they were swimming was quite green; full of plankton upon which they were there to feed.

We then set off north, in search of more cetaceous objects! We found a group of Spinner Dolphins ahead, swimming the same direction as us, so we went to catch up with them. They were extremely obliging and, as we neared, they eagerly came to swim with us, bow riding and doing impressive leaps and spins. We stayed with them for half an hour before deciding to head on our way. We anchored for the night at near Dhaandoo Island and went for another snorkel before dinner.

Day 6

Wednesday 26th January

Dhaandoo to Banduveri (Baa Atoll to Raa Atoll)

Another day of glorious sunshine was upon us and, after another morning’s lovely snorkel, we moved north, travelling on the east side of Baa atoll. We saw Spinner Dolphins, and then a short while later a group of Risso’s Dolphins! These dolphins are very distinctive looking, as when they get scratched (from fighting or general interactions with each other) their dark grey skin heals white. It is relatively easy to tell apart adult males (which are heavily scratched, sometimes almost all white) from the females and juveniles (grey with few or no scratches). There were at least 20 of them, and the group could appreciate the stark differences between these dolphins and Spinner Dolphins; their very blunt heads, no beak and a stocky robust body covered in white scratches, particularly the males.

After lunch we saw a school of tuna jumping and catching fish (they chase fish to the surface, where they panic and start to leap away, causing the surface to ‘boil’) and shortly after, we saw some more Spinner Dolphins which put on a fantastic show for us!

The avian highlight of the day was a White-tailed Tropicbird – a graceful and elegant bird with two white streamers for a tail. We then arrived into Raa atoll and went to another location which is particularly good for Manta Rays; we patrolled up and down the reef scanning for them, and just as we were about to leave, Martin spotted one! We all eagerly got into our gear and onto the dhoni, hoping to swim with it. There could be no

guarantee that the Manta would still be there when we hopped in – it only need swim a short distance away before it would no longer be visible to us underwater. But the plan was to snorkel along the reef and enjoy looking at the fish deep below, and hope for it to swim past again. As we bobbed about in the warm ocean, the crew from the dhoni shouted to us that they could see the Manta Ray – hooray! Several of the group saw it, and it kept coming and going in and out of view, giving us tantalising glimpses through the green water. This was quite typical ‘manta snorkelling’, the areas that they frequent are often with a current, as this is what provides them with so much plankton to feed upon, which reduces the clarity of the water.

Once back on board, showered and changed, Sara ran through the checklist in the bar, and then Chas gave a talk on the top deck under the stars. We had yet another delicious dinner at 8pm, and once we’d finished eating, watching the fish that were attracted to the light at the back of the boat proved to be extremely mesmerising! At 9pm Sara ran ‘Fish Club’ where we went through photos of fish we’d seen that day to identify them.

Day 7

Thursday 27th January

Banduveri to Muthafushi (Raa Atoll)

This morning we enjoyed an island visit to Banduveri, Raa Atoll, where the dhoni ran us onshore and we were able to have a ‘snork and a walk’ along the white sand beach. Ian and Carol were first in the water, and they’d only been in for 2 minutes before they shouted ‘MANTAAA!’. Sara encouraged the group to quickly put on their snorkel gear and, like a scene from ‘March of the Penguins’, we eagerly waddled in our fins across sand and into the water. The reef was lovely, although there was an incredible amount of plankton in the water – it was like swimming in plankton soup! This was what the Manta Ray was here to feed on, and what a feast it must be having! As we snorkelled, it paid most of the group a visit, appearing out of the thick green water in front of us, and doing several rolls, mouth open wide, and swimming off again. In between the manta viewings, the lovely corals and a huge diversity of colourful fish kept us entertained.

We then set off west, out of the atoll and into deep water, then slowly headed south. Chas and Sara saw about six fishing boats on the horizon and suspected they were catching Yellowfin Tuna. Spotted Dolphins (and sometimes Spinner Dolphins) closely associate with Yellowfin Tuna as they feed on the same fish, and so we sailed in their direction to see if anything interesting was going on! Sure enough, through our binoculars we could see dolphins jumping around the boats in the distance. The fishermen throw live bait into the water, which attracts the tuna. They come to feed on it and several men are at the back of the boat with hooks and lines. The dolphins can tell where the hooks are and avoid them, and come along to join in the feast. However, the fishermen don’t mind this – just like us, they are on the lookout for dolphins as they use them to find the schools of tuna, and so they see the fish as a sort of ‘payment’ to them. As we approached, we were treated to a show of Spotted and Spinner Dolphins, plus lots of Black-naped Terns, Lesser Noddies, some Tropical Shearwaters and a Lesser Frigatebird. We even saw men on the boats pulling in several Yellowfin Tuna.

After 45 minutes or so we decided to leave, but it hadn’t been long before we were joined by another group of dolphins. They bounded over to the bow and as they turned on their sides and leaped out of the water, we could see an elegant stripe going down their flanks; Striped Dolphins! There were Spotted Dolphins with them too, and quite a few babies in the group which made for very fun viewing. The youngsters seemed to have just

figured out their jumping muscles and were full of energy, throwing themselves ambitiously up into the air every few minutes like their parents, and looking rather pleased with themselves.

The afternoon was wonderfully calm and while sailing we were treated to a view of a Mobula Ray (well spotted Martin!). These look similar to Manta Rays, except they have two 'horns' at the front of their mouths which gives rise to their other name of 'Devil Fish'. We stopped the boat and watched it calmly swimming at the surface for 20 minutes or so before heading on. It was Chris's birthday today, so the chef had made him a birthday cake and we all sang Happy Birthday, and enjoyed tucking into it with a cup of tea – needless to say it didn't last long!

Later in the afternoon we snorkelled at Muthafushi, highlights from which included a Hawksbill Turtle, a Spotted Eagle Ray, Whiptail Stingray, a Clown Triggerfish (or a 'Crazy-paving Fish' as Jude called them) and big schools of Red-toothed Triggerfish.

Once back on board, showered and refreshed, Sara went through the checklist before Chas gave an interesting talk on Tuna fisheries. Later in the evening, after dinner, an Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphin came around the boat, hunting for fish and squid that had been attracted to us by our light. We could barely see it, just occasionally making out its dorsal fin and a splash along with hearing its blow in the dark. At one point, a squid swam into view and we'd barely watched it for two seconds before, out of nowhere, the dolphin rushed up from underneath it and snatched it up! As the evening went on another dolphin joined it, and we enjoyed standing at the back of the boat with a beer trying to spot where it was in the darkness. The end of another enjoyable day

Day 8

Friday 28th January

Muthafushi to Goidhoo (Raa Atoll to Baa Atoll)

This morning was another outstanding snorkel – the bright morning sunlight dappling the reef and fish so that we could appreciate all of their beautiful colours. We needed to start heading south today, but once back on board, we went north for a short while to give us as much 'sea time' as possible, and therefore as much time to find more cetaceans as we could. After a couple of hours we unfortunately hadn't seen anything, and so we slowly started heading south, where we came across two groups of Risso's Dolphins. This group contained some individuals which were more marked (and therefore much whiter) than the group we'd seen the previous day, and watching them swim underwater was very easy – they almost looked like Belugas! So it provided a great opportunity to take photographs of them, as we could easily see where they would surface and be ready with our cameras.

We then arrived back in Goidhoo, on Baa Atoll, and snorkelled on the of the outside reef (i.e. on the outside of the atoll, not in the sheltered waters of the inside) and so we were able to experience and appreciate a different coral habitat. Here, when the monsoon winds come later in the year, the waves crash against the exposed reef and drag boulders of coral back and forth across the seabed, creating natural uniform grooves along the reef, making it look like a ploughed field. Several new species of fish could be seen here that particularly favour this environment, such as the Surge Hawkfish and lots of shrimps which, although we couldn't see them, make crackling noises from within the crevices in which they hide, and so there was a very audible 'snap, crackle and pop!' noise. Red-toothed Triggerfish, were also here in abundance, along with another Hawksbill Turtle.

That evening Sara gave a talk on the cetaceans that we can see closer to home, the differences between the two groups of whales and dolphins, and current marine conservation issues. We then all tucked into another delicious dinner and enjoyed sitting at the back of the boat with a beer, chatting over the sightings from the day and watching Scad (a mackerel-like fish) occasionally erupting from the back of the boat and catching all the small fish which had been attracted to our light.

Day 9

Saturday 29th January

Goidoo to back to Male (Baa Atoll to North Male Atoll)

Today we set off at 6:30am and headed south-east across the stretch of water between the southern tip of Baa Atoll and came into North Male Atoll on the western side, about halfway on the atoll. It was a rather unseasonably windy crossing! And despite Sara and Chas's best efforts, we didn't see anything enroute. When we arrived at the atoll, we stopped and had a scan for Manta Rays along a reef where they are known to occur, but none were around. Not to worry – we'd already snorkelled with them three times. Clearly, they had business to attend to elsewhere!

So, we continued across the atoll to the north of Male, and stopped at a small island which was a fish processing plant – although you would never know, as the island looked idyllic! We stopped here for a snorkel... and what a last snorkel it was! The fish processing plant releases small amounts of fish discards (a few tails and bones!) into the bay, which attracts Stingrays and other fish. When we got in the water there were hundreds upon hundreds of Schooling Bannerfish, Surgeonfish and lots of Unicornfish. Beneath them were several Whiptail Stingrays – we counted seven in total! They were feeding on fish scraps on the seabed, and were extremely calm and very amicable, swimming past us back and forth. There was also the largest congregation of moray eels that we had seen on the whole holiday – at least eight within 10m (there were four just under one rock!). A huge Honeycomb Moray was particularly visible, and several members of the group saw it emerge its from its hiding spot, revealing an almost two metre-long eel, which at its widest point was about 15cm in diameter! A Napoleon Wrasse also appeared in the blue depths, this gargantuan fish was also two metres long, but slow-moving and heavyset, it looked like a true beast, and we watched mesmerised. After an hour, we got out and started heading towards Male harbour.

It was Carole's birthday and the chef had baked another cake, (yippee!), so we sang Happy Birthday and happily tucked into the welcome post-snorkel snack! with a cup of tea! We arrived back in Male harbour just after 4pm, where we filled out our Passenger Locator Forms in the bar, did some packing and enjoyed our last few hours in the tropics.

That night, Sara thanked the crew for all their hard work to help bring our cruise together, and we all sat in the bar with a drink. She also played a few of her videos from snorkelling, showing the best bits of swimming with the Mantas, the stingrays and the best reefs that we went over. With that, we had to finish packing and head to bed ready for our transfer to the airport the next morning

Day 10

Sunday 30th January

Male to London

This morning we departed in two groups, one at 6:45am, the second group at 9:30am, all flying back to London apart from Alex, who went back to Bandos for a couple of days longer in paradise! The warmth from the sun had been such a welcome relief from the grey weather in the UK at this time of year – it was with quite some reluctance that we left the boat, and entered the airport to start our journey home.

Checklists

Fish

Black-tipped Reef Shark, <i>Carcharinus melanopterus</i>	White-tipped Reef Shark, <i>Triaenodon obesus</i>
Manta Ray, <i>Manta alfredi</i> (formerly <i>birostris</i>)	Spotted Eagle Ray, <i>Aetobatus narinari</i>
Whiptail Stingray, <i>Himantura fai</i>	Giant Moray, <i>Gymnothorax javanicus</i>
Needlefish, <i>Tylosaurus crocodilus</i>	Tail-spot Lizardfish, <i>Synodus jaculum</i>
Splendid Soldierfish, <i>Myripristis botche</i>	Smooth Flutemouth, <i>Fistularia commersonii</i>
Crown Squirrelfish, <i>Sargocentron diadema</i>	Trumpetfish, <i>Aulostomus chinensis</i>
Sabre Squirrelfish, <i>Sargocentron spiniferum</i>	Blotcheye Soldierfish, <i>Myripristis murdjan</i>
Greasy Grouper, <i>Epiphenephelus tauvina</i>	Spotfin Squirrelfish, <i>Neoniphon samara</i>
Black-saddle Coral Grouper, <i>Plectropomus laevis</i>	Lyre-tail Grouper, <i>Variola louti</i>
Slender Grouper, <i>Anyperodon leucogrammicus</i>	Peacock Rock Cod, <i>Cephalopholis argus</i>
Four Saddle Grouper, <i>Epinephelus spiloticeps</i>	Lunar-tailed Grouper, <i>Variola louti</i>
Kashmir Snapper, <i>Lutjanus kasmira</i>	Rainbow Runner, <i>Elagatis bipinnulata</i>
Lunar Fusilier, <i>Caesio lunaris</i>	Variable-lined Fusilier, <i>Caesio varilineata</i>
Oriental Sweetlips, <i>Plectorhinchus orientalis</i>	Orange-finned Emperor, <i>Lethrinus erythracanthus</i>
Two-lined Monocle Bream, <i>Scolopsis bilineatus</i>	Dash-dot Goatfish, <i>Parupeneus barberinus</i>
Speckled Butterflyfish, <i>Chaetodon citrinellus</i>	Collared Butterflyfish, <i>Chaetodon collare</i>
Double-saddle Butterflyfish, <i>Chaetodon falcula</i>	Klein's Butterflyfish, <i>Chaetodon kleinii</i>
Oval butterflyfish, <i>Chaetodon trifasciatus</i>	Chevron Butterflyfish, <i>Chaetodon trifascialis</i>
Long-nose Butterflyfish, <i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	Black Pyramid Butterflyfish, <i>Hemitaenichthys zoster</i>
Blue-face Angelfish, <i>Pomacanthus xanthurus</i>	Regal Angelfish, <i>Pygoplites diacanthus</i>
Surge Hawkfish, <i>Cirrhites pinnulatus</i>	Green Damselfish, <i>Amblyglyphidodon batunai</i>
White-belly Damselfish, <i>Amblyglyphidodon leucogaster</i>	Blackfoot or Maldivian Anemonefish, <i>Amphiprion nigripes</i>
Clark's Anemonefish, <i>Amphiprion clarkii</i>	Sergeant Major, <i>Abudefduf vaigiensis</i>
Chocolate-dip Chromis, <i>Chromis dimidiata</i>	Surge Damselfish, <i>Crhrysiptera brownriggii</i>
Humbug Dascyllus, <i>Dascyllus aruanus</i>	Neon Damselfish, <i>Pomacentris caeruleus</i>
Checkerboard Wrasse, <i>Halichoerus hortulanus</i>	Bird Wrasse, <i>Gomphosus caeruleus</i>
Five-stripe Wrasse, <i>Thalassoma quinquevittatum</i>	Six-barred Wrasse, <i>Thalassoma hardwicke</i>
Crescent Wrasse, <i>Thalassoma lunare</i>	Cleaner Wrasse, <i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>
Blackeye Thicklip Wrasse, <i>Hemigymnus melapterus</i>	Barred Thicklip Wrasse, <i>Hemigymnus fasciatus</i>
Slingjaw Wrasse, <i>Epibulus insidiator</i>	Two-colour Cleaner Wrasse, <i>Labroides bicolor</i>
Roundhead Parrotfish, <i>Chlorurus strongylocephalus</i>	Bicolour Parrotfish, <i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>

Bridled Parrotfish, <i>Scarus frenatus</i>	Bullethead Parrotfish, <i>Chlorurus sordidus</i>
Dusky Parrotfish, <i>Scarus niger</i>	Red Sea Steep-head Parrotfish, <i>Scarus gibbus</i>
Yellowbar Parrotfish, <i>Scarus scaber</i>	Greencheek Parrotfish, <i>Scarus prasiognathus</i>
Coral Rabbitfish, <i>Siganus corallinus</i>	Starry Rabbitfish, <i>Siganus stellatus</i>
Powder-blue Surgeonfish, <i>Acanthurus leucosternon</i>	Moorish Idol, <i>Zanclus cornutus</i>
Convict Surgeonfish, <i>Acanthurus triostegus</i>	Lined Surgeonfish, <i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>
Humpback Unicornfish, <i>Naso brachycentron</i>	Lined Bristletooth Surgeonfish, <i>Ctenochaetus striatus</i>
Spotted Unicornfish, <i>Naso brevirostris</i>	Orange-spine Unicornfish, <i>Naso lituratus</i>
Yellowfin Tuna, <i>Thunnus albacares</i>	Brushtail Tang, <i>Zebrasoma scopas</i>
Flying Fish, <i>Exocetus spp</i>	Brushtail Tang, <i>Zebrasoma scopas</i>
Clown Triggerfish, <i>Balistapus conspicillum</i>	Scribbled Filefish, <i>Aluterus scriptus</i>
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>
Indian Triggerfish, <i>Melichthys indicus</i>	Tailsport Lizardfish, <i>Synodus Jaculum</i>
Saddled Sharpnose Pufferfish, <i>Canthigaster valentini</i>	Bigeye Trevally, <i>Caranx sexfasciatus</i>
Half or White-barred Goby, <i>Amblygobius semicinctus</i>	Clouded or Snowflake Moray, <i>Echidna nebulosa</i>
Remora, <i>Echeneis naucrates</i>	Dogtooth Tuna, <i>Gymnosarda unicolor</i>
Gold-spot Emperor, <i>Gnathodentex aurolineatus</i>	Black-blotch Emperor, <i>Lethrinus harak</i>
Phantom Bannerfish, <i>Heniochus pleurotaenia</i>	Bigeye Emperor, <i>Monotaxis grandoculis</i>
Ornate Emperor, <i>Lethrinus ornatus</i>	Long-finned Squid, <i>Sepioteuthis lessoniana</i>
Freckled Hawkfish, <i>Paracirrhites forsteri</i>	Houndfish, <i>Tylosurus crocodilus crocodilus</i>
White-tail Damsel, <i>Pomacentrus chrysurus</i> ,	

Cetaceans

Scientific name	Common name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>						✓		
Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>						✓		
Striped Dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>						✓		
Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>					✓		✓	

Birds

	Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1	Tropical Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>						✓		
2	Maldivian Little Heron	<i>Butorides striatus didi</i>				✓				
3	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	1							
4	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>					✓	✓		
5	Lesser Frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>					✓	✓	✓	
6	White-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>					✓			
7	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	✓							
8	Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>						✓		
9	Lesser Noddy	<i>Anous tenuirostris</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	
10	Swift (Great Crested) Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>					✓	✓		Poss
11	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>			✓		✓	✓		
12	Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>					✓		✓	✓
13	Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
14	Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	✓							
15	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>	✓	✓					H	H
16	Maldivian House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens maledivicus</i>	✓	✓				✓		✓

Other

Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus giganteus ssp maldivarum</i>	x	x			x	x		
Hawksbill Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>		2		x	x	x	x	
Ghost Crab species	<i>Ocyrodinae spp</i>						x		
Swimming Crab species	<i>Portunidae spp</i>					x			
Octopus	Unknown	2		1					
Carpenter Bee	<i>Xylocopinae sp.</i>					1	1		
Cushion Star	<i>Culcita schmedeliana</i>			x		x		x	

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