

# Mantas, Dolphins & Coral Reefs – A Maldives Cruise

Naturetrek Tour Report

20th – 29th January 2023



Manta Ray



Risso's Dolphin



Short-finned Pilot Whales



Boxfish

Tour report and images by Alison Steel



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Tour participants: Alison Steel and Chas Anderson (tour leaders) with 14 Naturetrek clients

## Summary

This 10-day tour in the Maldives spent time cruising around the beautiful islands and atolls. Despite some unseasonably cloudy and breezy weather, there was a dazzling variety of colourful fish. On a number of days, we were joined by groups of dolphins (Spinner, Spotted, and Risso's), many of which bounded over to our boat to greet us and play in the water around us, plus encounters with several groups of Short-finned Pilot Whales. An undoubted highlight was the group's encounters with Manta Rays while snorkelling, with the rays appearing and disappearing alongside us as they fed upon the abundant plankton.

Almost 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! Showy parrotfish, a wide variety of butterflyfish, eels, triggerfish, several species of shark and Hawksbill Turtles were just a few of the underwater highlights. Birds aren't abundant in the Maldives, but we had lovely views of the elegant Black-naped Terns, plus some Lesser Noddys. It was a wonderful way to get away from it all, experiencing some wonderful wildlife in a remote and beautiful setting.

## Day 1 & 2

## Friday 20th & Saturday 21st January

### London to Maldives

Alison met 8 clients and travelled out on a direct BA, overnight flight to Male.

Waking this morning on board the plane, we could start to see the atolls spread across the ocean, with individual islands surrounded by white sand beaches and turquoise seas. Landing at Male, we disembarked and caught a bus to the terminal, where we were processed through immigration and reunited with our luggage.

It didn't take long to find our transfer desk and, after a short wait, were on our way to Bandos Resort. Once there, we found out that most rooms were not yet ready, so we explored the resort in the meantime. There were Asian Koel calling from the trees, lizards scuttling across the paths, fruit bats bickering in the treetops, Black-naped Tern on the jetty and herons around the reefs.

After lunch, some of the group met at the dive centre for a snorkel. Inside the break water it's pretty shallow, so a good place to get used to the equipment, although it was a bit cloudy in places. Outside the break, the water is clearer, as it drops off, with a good variety of fish around, and several Black-tipped Reef Sharks.

At dinner, we met the remaining members of the party, who had arrived a few days early. Off the side of the restaurant, some food had been thrown into the water, with Black-tipped Reef Sharks and sting rays coming in to feed. After a very tasty dinner, most retired to bed to catch up on sleep.

## Day 3

Sunday 22nd January

### Bandos to Hembadhoo (North Male Atoll)

Some went for an early morning snorkel near the Bandos dive centre. Again, out of the break, the water was clear, with lots of fish showing off their brilliant colours, plus another few sharks. Parrotfish, Butterflyfish, Unicornfish and many smaller damselfish and chromis populated the reef.

After breakfast there was a little time to relax prior to re-packing and checking out of our rooms, in time to meet Chas arriving with the dhoni. This shuttled us across to the main harbour, where we boarded the MV Keana, our home for the next week. Once we'd had a safety briefing and been assigned rooms, it was time for lunch. A tasty buffet was enjoyed by all, then we got underway. Heading northwest from Male, we travelled through the interior of the atoll, spotting a few terns on the way. Late in the afternoon we arrived at Hembadhoo sand bar in time for our first snorkel, tucked behind the sandbar to get out of the worst of the breeze. Lots of Surge wrasse, Lionfish, Tangs, Parrotfish and Unicornfish were seen; there was a lot to take in, but a good start to getting our eye into the different species.

Back on the boat, there was time for a shower and drink before Alison ran through the checklist for the day and Chas gave a talk on local dolphins. This was followed by dinner, then watching the water behind the boat, where the spotlight attracts in plankton, and sometimes bigger predators!

## Day 4

Monday 23rd January

### Hembadhoo to Goidhoo (North Male Atoll to Baa Atoll)

The boat got underway this morning before we'd even got up, aiming for Makundu Resort for our morning snorkel. On arrival, we transferred to the dhoni for the short journey to the reef. The water felt a little cool initially, but we soon didn't notice as we started seeing Butterflyfish, Hawksbill Turtles, sharks, Big Blue Octopus and Parrotfish.

Back on the boat, it was time for breakfast as the boat started to head further northwest, out of North Male Atoll towards Baa Atoll. It was still a little windy, so hard to see much in the waves. The roll also slid most of the chairs around the sun deck, including those with occupants. Shortly before lunch, we retreated downstairs and out of the approaching rain showers.

In the afternoon, a few of the group caught a glimpse of fins, but the associated dolphins proved elusive.

A heavy rain shower forced us under shelter, but the wind eased off as we came into the shelter of the atoll. Approaching the reef at Goidhoo, we travelled along the inside edge, before reconnecting with the dhoni. It was fairly overcast, which muted the colours underwater, but excellent views of a pair of Tawny Nurse Shark were had as we all got in. Triggerfish, turtles, Surge wrasse and Parrotfish could be seen, and a brief glimpse of a Manta being had by some under the water, and a few on the boat saw when one jumped out of the water, landing with a resounding splash.

The rain picked up again on the way back towards the boat, but we detoured when some Spinner Dolphin were spotted. A few came to bow ride briefly, but they weren't too interested in us, so we carried on to the boat for showers and hot drinks.

After this evening's checklist, we had a talk on corals, followed by dinner.

## Day 5

Tuesday 24th January

### Goidhoo to Maamunagaa Lagoon (Raa Atoll)

This morning started with tea and biscuits before the snorkel. Prior to getting in the water, we had a bit of a trip along the reef to see if anything obvious was about, but there didn't seem to be, so we got in. Looking at marine life in the surge zone, we found Damselfish, Triggerfish, Hawksbill Turtles and Spotted Boxfish. As we were preparing to get out, the dhoni crew shouted that they had seen Manta, so we got back on board as quickly as we could and went a little away further along the reef, to where a small group of other people were. Sure enough, some fins broke the surface, so we got ready to jump in again. They were moving fairly quickly, so we had to swim to find them again. All of a sudden, out of the blue, came four Manta. Large wingspans, and gaping mouths to filter the plankton, they are very impressive. One swam below a few of the group, just about close enough to touch. Despite swimming as fast as we could to keep up, they quickly disappeared again. Even those on the boats got a view of them. Feeling elated, we retired to the main boat for breakfast.

Heading mainly northwest again, we followed the dhoni round the atoll and the message came through that they'd seen Pilot Whales, so we headed in their direction. Shortly after we started to see fins, but not Pilot Whales. These were Risso's Dolphin, spread out over quite a wide area, in smaller groups. The first group were females and youngsters, trying to rest, so not interested in being around us, however one of the crew spotted a more active group, so we went in that direction and found a group of males, with their almost white heads. After watching them for a while, we started to move on when larger fins were spotted. These were the Short-finned Pilot Whales that the dhoni crew had seen. There was a group of at least 25 individuals, spread out over some distance, but we got a good view of a number of them, including some males with their larger dorsal fins.

They disappeared for a little while then we picked them up again some distance away. Eventually we had to move on as they were heading south, the opposite way to us, so we went down for lunch.

As we cruised, there were Black-napped Tern and Lesser Noddy feeding above some of the tuna schools, that could be seen by the splashes. A bit further on, we found another group of Short-finned Pilot Whales, which seemed happier to be around us, and we stayed with them for quite some time. Finally, the captain said that we needed to go, so we continued north, until we found the entrance to Raa Atoll, and carefully threaded through to buoys, into the sheltered water, to moor up for the night, in Maamunagaa Lagoon.

The evening talk from Chas was on blackfish, followed by another excellent dinner.

## Day 6

Wednesday 25th January

### Maamunagaa Lagoon to Badu Faru (Raa Atoll)

This morning began with most of the group heading out for a snorkel. We started by searching the reef edge, and sure enough there were some Manta Rays about, as well as a few Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin.

Jumping in at a suitable spot, we followed snorkel guide, Appey, out to where several Manta were filter feeding just below the water surface. These massive creatures are incredibly graceful, as they turn and glide through the water. Despite getting a few jellyfish stings, we didn't want to get out, however we just couldn't keep up when the rays move off. Back on the dhoni, more Manta were spotted some distance ahead, so we went in that direction. Jumping in again, we picked up another group of Mantas, so spent another good period of time admiring their capacity to know exactly when to turn to avoid the bumbling humans, but eventually we had to head in for breakfast.

As the boat made its way out of the channel, a group of Spinner Dolphin were picked up, with a single Indopacific Bottlenose amongst them. They seemed to be feeding in the choppy water on the eddy line, so we left them to it and carried on out into the deeper water. It was a very quiet morning, with a few Lesser Noddy and some other terns being seen.

As there was a bit of a swell, we turned into more sheltered water for lunch, around Uthurumaafalhu Reef. A few Spinner Dolphin were picked up in the area, but only showing briefly.

After lunch, it was back out into the deeper water, however it unfortunately remained quiet, prompting the decision to return to the shelter of Raa Atoll for an afternoon snorkel. This was just off small island of Giraavaru, allowing us to drift along the top of the reef looking at fish, Sea Cucumber, Cushion Stars, Nudibranch and corals.

From here we made our way to our evening mooring at Budu Faru. Tonight, we learned about beaked whales, before going downstairs to enjoy dinner. In the light behind the boat, despite the rain, a few flying fish flew through the beam, creating a slightly odd spectacle in the darkness.

## Day 7

Thursday 26th January

### Badu Faru to Muthafushi (Raa Atoll)

Our snorkel this morning was off the abandoned islands of Bandaveri and Kandholudhoo. Moira and Chas went ashore on Bandaveri, while the rest of us decided to get straight into the water. Initially the current was quite strong, so we had to go with it, floating over the top of the reef. As the reef curved round the island, the current tapered off, so we could look more closely at the reef inhabitants. There were some fish there that we hadn't previously seen, including some pipefish.

While eating breakfast, there was the shout of "Dolphins", and we quickly came across one or two individual Indopacific Bottlenoses. The captain spotted more further out, so we headed in that direction. This was a large group of Spinner Dolphins, and we were able to get a good look at them as some came in to bowride, staying with

them until they had had enough, starting to move off. On a nearby sandbar were Lesser Noddy, Lesser Crested Tern, Saunder's Tern and a single Common Tern.

Turning west, out of the atoll, we followed the west coast of Raa Atoll to the south. The morning was fairly quiet, with the main excitement being the banana milkshake at 11 o'clock, plus some noddies feeding over hunting tuna schools, picking off the small fish that were leaping out of the water. During lunch, the boat slowed. That usually means something's been spotted. This time it was a group of Spinner and Pantropical Spotted Dolphins travelling and hunting together, including some small calves. Some were keen to interact and bowride, with others also doing some impressive leaps and jumps. We stayed with them for some time before we eventually had to leave them.

The remainder of the journey had no other sightings before we reached our afternoon snorkel site at Muthafushi island reef. A little current to start with again, and some of the group jumped in directly over a turtle swimming along the reef edge. Others found eels, lots of new fish species and a couple of Black-tipped Reef Sharks.

This evening, after the checklist, the talk was held on the upper deck. A short look at some of the stars was followed by a talk on how atolls form, interspersed with the history of how this Maldivian word arrived in our language.

The end of dinner was interrupted by a group of Indopacific Bottlenose Dolphins hunting fish that had been attracted to the light at the stern. They moved in and out of the light, creating splashes in the blackness.

## Day 8

Friday 27th January

### Muthafushi to Goidhoo (Raa Atoll to Baa Atoll)

Due to the wind direction, this morning's snorkel was off Embudhoo Island, as there was some sheltered water on the downwind side. A shallow reef top, dropped off fairly steeply. At the top, the colours were pretty clear. Some Anemonefish were in various anemones and lots of Squirrelfish and Soldierfish poked their heads out from holes in the reef structure. Alison surprised a White-tailed Stingray, that shot off into the depths, Rob and Ruth found a group of squid and Appey found another octopus.

Returning to the boat for breakfast, we set course out of the atoll again. Turning north, it wasn't too long before some dolphins were spotted ahead. This was a reasonable sized group of Risso's Dolphin. They weren't too worried by our presence, so we stayed with them for some time. Some were tail and fin slapping, with one or two tailing and the odd jump.

Eventually leaving them to it, we went north for a while, before having to circle south again. We picked up the Risso's again, then more fins were spotted near the horizon. These fins were bigger, and proved to be a group of Short-finned Pilot Whales, including some youngsters. With patience, and excellent steering of the boat, we spent some time travelling alongside them, giving us some great views. After around an hour, we finally had to carry on. A little while later, we found another group, with an additional couple of groups off in the distance. We travelled alongside this second group for a while, before we needed to push on for Goidhoo Atoll.

On arrival, we went straight out for a snorkel. It was a little choppy due to the wind, and the water felt pretty cool. Swimming over the surge zone, the water seemed fairly distorted, with the colder and warmer water mingling, but we still saw a turtle and a good number of fish.

Once we anchored for the night, inside the atoll, we went through the checklist then Chas told us more stories about Maldivian natural history. Dinner this evening was a Maldivian buffet, with some traditional foods. Appey got a plankton sample to show us what's in the water, then managed to catch a tiny squid and young gar/half-beak/needlefish. As we finished dinner, two Mobula Rays swam past the back deck; they were around for a little while, but proved elusive to get a good look at.

## Day 9

Saturday 28th January

### Goidhoo to back to Male (Baa Atoll to North Male Atoll)

The boat started early this morning for the last leg of the journey south, leaving Goidhoo Atoll as the sun rose. It was still a bit windy, which increased the current through the channel, slowing us down and causing a bit of a roll for a while. Seats on the upper deck were abandoned after breakfast in favour of standing up, holding on to prevent sliding around the deck. The wind and haze made it tricky to see, so unfortunately we didn't see any more cetaceans on the crossing.

Arriving into North Male Atoll, we headed for Makundu again, for a late morning snorkel along the outer reef. There was a mix of sandy bottom and shallow reef slope, with plenty of fish to keep us occupied. Appey found a Tawny Nurse Shark below a rock, a large school of hundreds of Convict Surgeonfish swarmed over a section of reef and a turtle popped up near those still in the water at the end, swam alongside Chas for a while, then carried on its way.

Following another superb lunch, we carried on south, towards Male. Passing Bandos, we could see the slightly incongruous site of the high rises of Male appearing. A few Black-naped Tern flew past, before we arrived into the marina area, where we started to see crows again. Once anchored, the crew began to resupply for the next Naturetrek group. We had a group photo taken, a checklist completed and a talk on other trips that Chas leads.

After dinner we officially thanked the crew for all their hard work, and there were handshakes all round.

## Day 10

Sunday 29th January

### Male to London

This morning we had to say goodbye to the boat team and Chas, and make our way to Male Airport. Most were heading back to the UK, however a few transferred from here to a resort for an additional few days.

For those departing, we made our way through all the check in procedures, passed by the mass-produced souvenirs and boarded our flight between rain showers. After over 10 hours flying, we arrived back into Heathrow, where we said our farewells and went off in separate directions, with some wonderful memories to look back on.



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## Species lists

### Fish

Common name	Scientific name	Jan 2023							
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Black-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Carcharinus melanopterus</i>	✓	✓	✓			2		
White-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>			1					
Nurse Shark	<i>Nebrius ferrugineus</i>			2					1
Shovelnose Guitar Shark	<i>Rynchobatus Djiddensis</i>								
Black-blotched Stingray	<i>Taeniura meyeni</i>	✓							
Manta Ray	<i>Manta alfredi (formerly birostris)</i>			✓	4	10+			
White-tailed Stingray	<i>Pastinachus sephen</i>							1	
Whiptail Stingray	<i>Himantura fai</i>					✓			
Mobula Ray	<i>Mobula thurstoni</i>							2	

Common name	Scientific name
Giant Moray	<i>Gymnothorax javanicus</i>
Yellow-margin Moray?	<i>Siderea flavimarginatus</i>
Zebra Moray	<i>Gymnomuraena zebra</i>
Fringe-lip Mullet	<i>Oedalechilus labiosus</i>
Needlefish	<i>Tylosaurus crocodilus</i>
Halfbeak sp	<i>Hyporhamphus spp</i>
Smooth Flutemouth	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>
Trumpetfish	<i>Aulostomus chinensis</i>
Blotcheye Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis murdjan</i>
Violet Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis violacea</i>
Crown Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron diadema</i>
White-tail Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron caudimaculatum</i>
Spotfin Squirrelfish	<i>Neoniphon samara</i>
Sabre Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron spiniferum</i>
Reeftop Pipefish	<i>Corythoichthys haematopterus</i>
White-line Lionfish	<i>Pterois radiata</i>
Squaretail Coral Grouper	<i>Plectropomus areolatus</i>
Black-saddle Coral Grouper	<i>Plectropomus laevis</i>
Peacock Rock Cod	<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>
White-spotted Grouper	<i>Epinephelus caeruleopunctatus</i>
Four Saddle Grouper	<i>Epinephelus spiloticeps</i>
Orange Anthias	<i>Pseudanthius squamipennis</i>
Yellowtail Anthias	<i>Pseudanthius evansi</i>
Bluefin Jack	<i>Caranx melampygus</i>
Big-eyed Jack	<i>Caranx sexfasciatus</i>
Striped Remora (Slender Suckerfish)	<i>Echeneis naucrates</i>
Two-spot Red Snapper	<i>Lutjanus bohar</i>
Blackspot Snapper	<i>Lutjanus fulviflamma</i>
Black-and-white Snapper	<i>Macolor niger</i>
Lunar Fusilier	<i>Caesio lunaris</i>
Neon Fusilier	<i>Pterocaesio tile</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Striped Fusilier	<i>Pterocaesio trilineata</i>
Variable-lined Fusilier	<i>Casesio varilineata</i>
Oriental Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus orientalis</i>
Harlequin Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus chaetodonoides</i>
Gold-striped Emperor	<i>Gnathodentax aureolineatus</i>
Orange-striped Emperor	<i>Lethrinus obsoletus</i>
Two-lined Monocle Bream	<i>Scolopsis bilineatus</i>
Bigeye Bream	<i>Monotaxis grandoculis</i>
Yellowstripe Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys flavolineatus</i>
Yellowfin Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys vanicolensis</i>
Yellow-saddle Goatfish	<i>Parupensis cyclostomus</i>
Barred Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus trifasciatus</i>
Dash-dot Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus barberinus</i>
Longbarbel Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus macronemus</i>
Threadfin Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon auriga</i>
Spotted Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon guttatisissimus</i>
Citron 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>
Raccoon Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon lunula</i>
Madagascar Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon madagaskariensis</i>
Blackback Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon merlannotus</i>
Meyer's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon meyeri</i>
Oval butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifasciatus</i>
Triangular Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon triangulum</i>
Chevron Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifascialis</i>
Yellow-head Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon xanthocephalus</i>
Brokenbar Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon oxycephalus</i>
Long-nose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>
Very Long-nose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger longirostris</i>
Black Pyramid Butterflyfish	<i>Hemitaenichthys zoster</i>
Reef Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus acuminatus</i>
Indian Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus pleurotinia</i>
Schooling Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus diphreutus</i>
Emperor Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus imperator</i>
Regal Angelfish	<i>Pygoplites diacanthus</i>
Forster's (Blackside) Hawkfish	<i>Paracirrhites forsteri</i>
Surge Hawkfish	<i>Cirrhitus pinnulatus</i>
Green Damselfish	<i>Amblyglyphidodon batunai</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>
Golden Chromis	<i>Chromis ternatensis</i>
Blue-green Chromis	<i>Chromis viridis</i>
Surge Damselfish	<i>Crhysiptera brownriggii</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Humbbug Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus aruanus</i>
Indian Dascyllus	<i>Pomacentrus indicus</i>
Threespot Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus trimaculatus</i>
Neon Damselfish	<i>Pomacentris caeruleus</i>
Redbreasted Maori Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus fasciatus</i>
Snooty Maori Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus oxycephalus</i>
Cheeklined Maori Wrasse	<i>Oxycheilinus digrammus</i>
Tripletail Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus trilobatus</i>
Yellowtail Wrasse	<i>Anampses meleagrides</i>
Bird Wrasse	<i>Gomphosus caeruleus</i>
Adorned Wrasse	<i>Halichoerus cosmetus</i>
Checkerboard Wrasse	<i>Halichoerus hortulanus</i>
Rockmover Wrasse	<i>Novaculichthys taeniourus</i>
Moon Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lunare</i>
Blunthead Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma amblycephalum</i>
Six-barred Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma hardwicke</i>
Fivestripe Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma quinquevittatum</i>
Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>
Barred Thicklip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus fasciatus</i>
Blackeye Thicklip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus melapterus</i>
Queen Coris	<i>Coris formosa</i>
Slingjaw Wrasse	<i>Epibulus insidiator</i>
Sixstripe Wrasse	<i>Pseudocheilinus hexataenia</i>
Jansen's Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma janseni</i>
Bicolour Parrotfish	<i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>
Roundhead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus strongylocephalus</i>
Bullethead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus sordidus</i>
Bridled Parrotfish	<i>Scarus frenatus</i>
Dusky Parrotfish	<i>Scarus niger</i>
Greencheek Parrotfish	<i>Scarus prasiognathus</i>
Eclipse Parrotfish	<i>Scarus russelii</i>
Yellowbar Parrotfish	<i>Scarus scaber</i>
Ember Parrotfish	<i>Scarus rubroviolaceus</i>
Brown-blotched Sandperch	<i>Parapercis millepunctata</i>
Two-tone Dartfish	<i>Ptereleotris evides</i>
Circular Batfish	<i>Platax orbicularis</i>
Bicolour Blenny	<i>Ecsenius bicolor</i>
Coral Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus corallinus</i>
Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>
Powder-blue Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus leucosternon</i>
Lined Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>
Elongate Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus mata</i>
Eye-stripe Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus nigricauda</i>
Convict Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus triostegus</i>
Yellowfin Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus xanthopterus</i>
Lined Bristletooth Surgeonfish	<i>Ctenochaetus striatus</i>
Humpback Unicornfish	<i>Naso brachycentron</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Lieutenant Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus tennenti</i>
Orange-spine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>
Spotted Unicornfish	<i>Naso brevirostris</i>
Bluespine Unicornfish	<i>Naso unicornis</i>
Palette Surgeonfish	<i>Paracanthurus hepatus</i>
Brushtail Tang	<i>Zebrasoma scopas</i>
Sailfin Tang	<i>Zebrasoma desjardini</i>
Yellowfin Tuna	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>
Bigeye Barracuda	<i>Sphyraena fosteri</i>
Flying Fish	<i>Exocetus spp</i>
Clown Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus conspicillum</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>
Boomerang Triggerfish	<i>Sufflamen bursa</i>
Wedge-tailed Triggerfish	<i>Rhinecanthus rectangulus</i>
Yellow Boxfish	<i>Ostracion cubicus</i>
Black or Spotted Boxfish	<i>Ostracion meleagris</i>
Bennett's Sharpnose Puffer	<i>Canthigaster bennetti</i>
Black-spotted Pufferfish	<i>Arothron nigropunctatus</i>
Saddled Sharpnose Pufferfish	<i>Canthigaster valentini</i>
Blotched Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon liturosus</i>
Spotted Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon hystrix</i>

## Cetaceans

Scientific name	Common name	Jan 23						
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>			~8		~25	150 +	✓
Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>					✓	✓	✓
Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>						✓	
Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>				40+			✓
Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>				50+			✓

## Birds (H = Heard only)

Common name	Scientific name	Jan 23								
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Tropical Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>					1				
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata didii</i>		✓		✓		✓			
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	poss								
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauromis phoenicurus</i>	✓	✓							
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓			

Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>							1		
Lesser Noddy	<i>Anous tenuirostris</i>				✓	✓	✓			
Swift (Great Crested) Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>				✓	✓	✓			
Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>						✓			
Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>			✓	✓		✓			
Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>						1			
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>								✓	✓
Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	✓	✓							
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>	✓	✓	H						
Maldivian House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens maledivicus</i>	✓	✓						✓	✓
Drongo spp							1			

## Others

		Jan 23							
Common name	Scientific name	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus giganteus ssp maldivarum</i>	✓	✓						✓
Hawksbill Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>			✓	2	✓	4	1	1
Common Spiny Lizard	<i>Coletes versicolor</i>	✓	✓						
Ghost Crab species	<i>Ocypodinae spp</i>		✓						

Plus – Globe Skimmer Dragonfly, Big Blue Octopus, Squid p, Mantis Shrimp sp, Coral Crab sp, Cushion Star, Granulated Starfish

