

Mantas, Dolphins & Coral Reefs – A Maldives Cruise

Naturetrek Tour Report

14 – 23 Feb 2014



Collared Butterflyfish by Brian Jones



Bandos Island by Graham Smart



Manta Ray by Brian Jones



Risso's Dolphin by Robert Anderson

Report compiled by Catherine Strong

Images courtesy of Brian Jones, Graham Smart & Robert Anderson



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Summary

Our week cruising around the beautiful Maldives 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, on the holiday was the group's second encounter with Manta Rays - about 12 animals feeding on the outer side of one of the reefs near Minimasgali Island, Faaflu Atoll. Tour participants enjoyed over an hour (some stayed with the Mantas for an hour and a half!) in the water watching up to 7 feeding Manta Rays at a time as they barrel-rolled, swam in tandem and in groups, circling and diving around and underneath everyone. Everyone in the water got superb views, at times within touching distance, of these most elegant of fish - their individual markings, the cephalic fins, and their eyes as they swam past.

On another morning many of the group were able to swim with a Whale Shark off South Ari Atoll - the beautiful counter-shaded skin patterns were easily visible in the clear, shallow water. 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, Trumpetfish, parrotfish, sea cucumbers, Power-blue Surgeonfish, many different types of butterflyfish, Maldivian Anemonefish, reef squid, triggerfish, Moorish Idols, Black-tipped Reef Shark and Hawksbill Turtle were just a few of the highlights!

Back on board, while cruising between atolls, islands and reefs, 7 species of cetacean were seen: groups of 100+ Spinner Dolphins, sizeable pods of Risso's Dolphins some of which were seen breaching, revealing their pink bellies, Short-finned Pilot Whale, Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin, Pantropical Spotted Dolphins taking it in turns to enjoy pole position on the bow-wave, Common Bottlenose Dolphin; some of the group also saw - arguably the world's least-known cetacean - Longman's Beaked Whale! 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. A very special experience!

Day 1 - 2

Friday 14th – Saturday 15th February

Following an overnight flight from the UK, via Dubai, we arrived in Male on Saturday afternoon. Before long we had boarded a boat and were making our way north towards Bandos Island Resort. After a long night of travelling some of the group were keen to relax and enjoy a first swim or snorkel, once rooms were sorted. Those who snorkelled on the house reef had their first taste of some of the amazing variety of fish we were to attempt to identify over the next week. We met up at dinner and enjoyed a meal in the open air Sea Breeze Restaurant, watching crabs scuttle along the sand below us, and feeling the tropical warmth begin to work its relaxing magic on us!

Day 3

Sunday 16th February

After a good night's sleep, some of the group were up early making the most of the chance to snorkel on Bandos Island's excellent house reef or swim off one of the island's white sand beaches. Others amongst us opted for a long lie-in catching up on sleep and a leisurely breakfast. Fruit bats flew between trees, and White-faced Waterhens were seen, with chicks, as well as noisy Indian Koel, Common Mynas and Maldivian House Crows. Colourful Eclectus Parakeets, an introduced species, were also seen by some. Apart from Coconut and Oil Palms there were some lovely shrubs including Oleander, Bougainvillea, Frangipani and Orchid Tree, and near the restaurant a huge Banyan Tree.

We gathered at reception and met up with John and Brian who had arrived two days earlier, and waited for Chas to arrive. We set off to Male for last minute supplies and then headed south. As we left Malé, we had our first cetacean sighting – a large school of Spinner Dolphins, which gave us wonderful views as they bow-rode in the exceptionally clear water. A bit later we had a glimpse of a Longman's Beaked Whale, which surfaced several times in front of the boat, before disappearing into the depths. This was long considered to be the rarest whale in the world, but it is now known to occur regularly in the Maldives. In the evening, after mooring near the small island of Gulhi, many of us had a swim off the back of the boat before dinner.

Day 4

Monday 17th February

The boat departed first thing this morning, making the short crossing from Gulhi Island to a tiny sandbank perched atop a coral reef. Here we went ashore for a snorkel. The warm clear water, and the ease of access from the sandy beach made this an ideal introduction. And there were plenty of colourful reef fishes to keep us entranced.

Back on board for a splendid breakfast (which included some delicious 'pink pancakes' - the chef had excelled himself!) and we were soon off, out of the atoll, into the ocean, and continuing our journey southwards. We had three separate encounters with big schools of Spinner Dolphins, which put on fabulous displays of bow-riding and spinning. There was also a good showing of seabirds today, with Brown Noddies, Lesser Noddies, Black-naped Terns, Lesser Crested Terns and Saunder's Terns, all recorded offshore.

Finally it was time to turn in to Felidhu Atoll, where we moored at Fulidhoo Island. We all enjoyed the visual feast of colour around us (picture-perfect turquoise and azure blues around the island) and there was also time for a wonderful reef snorkel nearby. We transferred to the MV Carina after dinner. Everyone was happy to move into their cabins and get settled in. We then had a drink up on deck and most opted for an early night. It was Peter and Sue's wedding anniversary.

Day 5

Tuesday 18th February

Most of us were up by 7am and we assembled up on deck for coffees and teas before our morning snorkel at 7.30pm. We boarded the dhoni and set off to a reef fringing a tiny sandy island, called Vashugiri, which had one bush on it! We got into the water from the dhoni and snorkelled on the reef for about an hour. The diversity of the corals and reef fishes was quite overwhelming. On our way back a shout went up 'Manta Ray' and we saw the characteristic 'wing' tips just breaking the surface. Everyone quickly put their snorkelling gear back on and got ready to slip back into the water. At first we couldn't see the ray but the boat crew were looking too and soon spotted it in front of us, so we swam towards where they were pointing. Suddenly, there it was in front of us, looking as if it was going to disappear into the open water ... but then it made a turn towards us and came right past, giving everyone very good views. Fantastic! We got back into the dhoni, but then managed to find the Manta again, and a few other members of the group got in with the Manta and got another view of it, and also a passing Eagle Ray

We had a late breakfast and then set off again at midday for another snorkel. This time we went to a tiny island in the atoll with a few palm trees and sandy beach. Some jumped into the water directly from boat and others could get on shore and go in from there. The snorkelling was superb, with some spotting a Hawksbill Turtle

There was also an option today to see the traditional fishing village of Fulidhoo, which has a few shops, a mosque and local school (we could hear the call to prayer from the boat). Fruit bats flew from tree to tree, and villagers opened up shops selling T-shirts, handmade jewellery and other gifts.

Some had opted to stay behind for a snorkel on a nearby reef. The corals here were superb. But the best came once we were back on the dhoni. Dolphins had been spotted passing by, and we trailed after them. They were a small group of about nine Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins. They were busy amongst themselves socialising and perhaps also feeding, but in any case completely unconcerned by our presence. As a result we had some extraordinary views of them as they cavorted alongside.

Chas gave a talk at 7.15pm about fisheries and Maldives and then we had dinner. Most people then retired to their cabins, but a few of us stayed up a while to look at the stars with a special app Graham had brought with him - you point at a star and it tells you what it is! Orion was right above us and we identified Bellatrix, Sirius and several others before turning in.

Day 6

Wednesday 19th February

Carina left our anchorage at 5.30am, and we crossed over the channel towards Ari Atoll. At 7am we caught sight of Spinner Dolphins - before breakfast. Chas had told us that the species most likely to be seen crossing in the relatively shallow water between the atolls were spinners. They are nocturnal feeders, so they shelter in the atolls during the day then head out in the late afternoon to feed.

After breakfast, Chas told us we were going to get into the dhoni to 'patrol' along the south side of Ari Atoll and search for Whale Sharks. We got our swimming and snorkelling gear ready in case we found one and there was a chance to get into the water with it. We saw Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins as we left the MV Carina and then a few dolphins as we were searching, and Barbara spotted a turtle. We caught sight of a boat up ahead that had people in the water nearby and got our gear on. It proved to be a false alarm - they were divers. We continued and saw another group of snorkellers in the water; clearly there was a Whale Shark somewhere below the people but we went on in search of 'our own' Whale Shark.

After another hour or more of patrolling, looking for a 'large dark shape in the water' we found one, and this time we did get in! The Whale Shark was about 5 metres long and swimming quite fast for us, though it appeared to be just ambling along and hardly moving its tail fin at all. Some of the group managed to catch it up and then keep pace. Some didn't, so rejoined the dhoni which picked them up and dropped them into the water again nearer the shark to have another attempt at swimming with it. Many of the group did manage to see it, those who did marvelled at its spots and patterns, and the grace and stately way it swam. A fantastic experience! John had wanted to swim with one for 25 years and so finally achieved his quest! Of the Whale Sharks seen in these waters each year, about 95% are juvenile males. They come here annually, between November and May. They feed at depth and the theory is that they come to the shallows to warm up. It was Chas who started the shark research here, which is now continued by other groups. This is one of the best places in the world to see them.

Back on board we had lunch and then headed off in search of whales and dolphins. We came across a group of Spinners, and then spent an hour with Short-finned Pilot Whales at about 4.15pm. We all enjoyed very good, close views of them, and the group was also joined at one point by Common Bottlenose Dolphins. Chas pointed out a Great-crested Tern, and we moored for the evening by the very scenic and photogenic Minimasgali Island.

During drinks up on deck before dinner we watched our combined footage of the Whale Shark encounter from earlier today, and also the Manta Ray video taken yesterday. Chas gave a talk before dinner on Black-naped Terns, and on the seasons of the Maldives. A delicious veggie curry was among the food on offer for dinner, and as it was Shaun's birthday, the chef had made him a cake, which we all enjoyed! We went up onto the top deck to do some star-gazing after dinner with Chas. Using a laser pointer he gave us a quick guide to the equatorial sky, pointing out Taurus, Orion, and the Southern Cross as well as some other major stars and constellations.

Day 7

Thursday 20th February

After a quick cup of tea before 7am up on deck, the launch started taking groups out to the small uninhabited island we'd moored by last night for a snorkel. There are nesting Black-naped Terns here and we could see them and hear their calls. There is also a small species of blue butterfly (they have no English name, but in Sri Lanka they call them Little Grass Blue).

We walked into the sea, where it was very shallow, maybe 2 metres in depth and navigated between little outcrops of coral - it was just like a garden. It was fun planning your route through the coral heads, to avoid scraping on the coral near the surface. There were lots of different kinds of corals and fish - Blue-green Chromis going in and out of the coral, Humbug Dascylus, Regal Angelfish, goatfish, parrotfish ... a dazzling variety. It was a treat just to float on the surface and watch small stands of coral with their attendant fish guarding territories and to see blue-lipped clams and enjoy the sun's rays as they gleamed and glittered through the water surface. We watched unicorn fish and other larger fish chasing the small sprats. After an hour we made our way back to the launch (and on the way saw the water surface rippling as sub-surface tuna chased small fish) in small groups for a breakfast of chocolate puffs, toast and omelettes.

During breakfast the captain headed out into the open ocean which is more than 2,000 metres deep here, to look for whales and dolphins. A call came up at about 11am that Risso's Dolphins had been seen - a large dispersed group of 100+, with animals travelling in small subgroups of up to 6 or 7. We spent about an hour with the group which was relaxed and travelling slowly north. We clearly saw the species' distinctive white-scratched heads and scratched sides. We also saw them breaching and jumping; one leapt three times in a row, showing its pink belly! At 12.30pm a group of Pantropical Spotted Dolphins was seen with a few Spinners amongst them. The Spotted Dolphins had distinctive whale marking on snout tip, and a few spots were visible. The sightings continued at 1.10pm with two cetaceans seen in the distance. Chas thought they were beaked whales; they surfaced again at 1.40pm and Sue and Chas saw them. We waited for over an hour for them to re-surface, but didn't see them again.

In the late afternoon we headed back to Minimasgali Island, Faafu Atoll, to moor for the evening. Those who wanted to, went out to a different reef from this morning's to snorkel - this time on a reef edge. We thought we saw a Manta Ray, but it turned out to be a large Stingray. We had about 30-40 minutes of snorkelling. The coral was fantastic, and everyone enjoyed the reef and fish. It was after 5pm and some nocturnal species were beginning to emerge on the reef such as chocolate-coloured sea cucumbers moving slowly along the bottom of the reef. There were large shoals of tiny fish, young adult Regal Angelfish, Trumpetfish, Boxfish, Picasso Triggerfish, Powder-blue Surgeonfish, Convict Surgeonfish, squirrelfish and reef squid. On the edge of the reef many of us experienced stinging plankton - small sharpish fizzes on our skin. Sue was pleased as this is one the favourite foods of Manta Rays!

Back on board we had an hour to shower and for a drink up on deck before the launch started taking people across to the island for a beach barbecue. The crew had excelled themselves and worked a miracle of sand sculpture while we'd all been snorkelling - they'd constructed a whale shark (life-sized, like the juvenile male we saw yesterday) out of sand, using soil for the darker colouration and coral sand for its spots! They'd scooped sand out around it and banked it up to form a seat around the whale shark sculpture. Everyone was amazed at how life-like it was, and that they'd managed to do all that in such a short time ... as well as making the barbecue! They'd put lanterns around in a circle on the beach to light the way from the launch to the table. They lit some palm fronds and the blaze was lovely - all very atmospheric.

Robert looked for crabs, John showed people phosphorescent worms in the sand and we chatted, drank and ate till it was time to go back to the Carina.

Day 8

Friday 21st February

We got an amazing start to the day! We woke at 6.45am and had our morning tea as usual. Chas had told us that on the outer side of one of the nearby reefs there might be Mantas, so we got our kit and climbed into the dhoni ready to look for Manta Rays. Within a short time (15 mins) the crew had spotted the tell-tale 'wings' flapping on the water surface, so they positioned the dhoni for us to drop into the water. The dive master and other crew got in first to assess the currents, and then we all got in. The mantas are here at this time of year to feed on the plankton, visible as a sort of 'soup' in the water, which is only about 10 metres deep. We didn't have to wait long - within a few minutes we'd caught sight of the Mantas - about a dozen in total, of which we saw a maximum of about seven at any one time, gracefully swimming along with their huge mouths open, engulfing plankton and water as they travelled. They circled, sometimes coming along close to each other in twos, threes and fours etc past us, under us, right towards us, and then they elegantly manoeuvred around and under us while we floated on the surface of the water. You could see every detail on them from the colouration and patterns on the skin, to the body parts, gills inside their huge mouths and the cephalic fins either side of the mouth. The largest was approaching 4 to 5 metres in width, 'wing tip to wing tip', while some of the others were a little smaller. Chas only saw females in the group. They turned somersaults, sometimes in tandem, and repeatedly. We had about an hour and a half in the water with them. Everyone was very excited and the dive masters were superb at helping everyone to see them and maximise their time in the water safely!

The wildlife feast continued thick and fast with sightings of two groups of Spotted Dolphins then Risso's, and then more Spotted Dolphins after lunch! At 3.30pm our dhoni joined us again to take us back to the Whale Shark location for another go at finding a Whale Shark. We did catch up with one, and Lynn managed to get in and catch a glimpse of it underwater before it vanished. We moored in Ari Atoll and enjoyed another of Chas' excellent lectures followed by dinner in the evening.

Day 9

Saturday 22nd February

We left our mooring at 6.30am and headed out for the crossing back towards Malé Atoll. Once across the channel, we stopped near the tiny island of Vaagali for a snorkel. We snorkelled on the reef drop-off, and marvelled at the Picasso Triggerfish, beautiful clams and sea cucumbers, as well as a Boxfish which looked like a grey potato with fins! For those who preferred to keep dry, the launch offered a quick run ashore to the island. Leaving Vaagali for our final approach to Malé, we passed a whole string of Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphins, perhaps 50 in all, engaged in some energetic socialising along the reef edge.

In the late afternoon we reached our mooring near Male and the airport. This gave us time to pack, relax and reflect on what had been an amazing week. We watched footage from the week - especially enjoying the Manta Ray encounters, a slide show of images - especially Brian's excellent fish photos, and the Whale Shark footage again. We then ate a tasty last dinner.

Day 10

Sunday 23rd February

Early in the morning most of the group transferred to Male airport at the start of the journey back to the UK.

As always the enthusiasm and good humour of the group contributed to the success of the trip, along with the hard work and care of the crew of the MV Carina, and Chas' endless and fascinating knowledge about all things Maldivian.

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Whale Shark by Brian Jones

Species Lists

Cetaceans (✓ = recorded but not counted)

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
2	Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓
3	Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>					✓	✓		
4	Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>						✓	✓	
5	Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>						✓	✓	
6	Short-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>					✓			
7	Longman's beaked Whale	<i>Indopacetus pacificus</i>		✓						
8	Beaked whale sp.							✓		

Fish

1	Giant Moray	<i>Gymnothorax javanicus</i>				✓		✓		
2	Peppered Moray	<i>Siderea picta</i>		✓						
3	Slender Lizardfish	<i>Saurida gracilis</i>						✓		
4	White-tail Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron caudimaculatum</i>						✓		
5	Spotfin Squirrelfish	<i>Neoniphon samara</i>				✓				
6	Sabre Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron spiniferum</i>		✓		✓		✓		
7	Trumpetfish	<i>Aulostomus chinensis</i>		✓						
8	Common Lionfish	<i>Pterois volitans</i>				✓				
9	White-line Lionfish	<i>Pterois radiata</i>	✓							
10	Black-saddle Coral Grouper	<i>Plectropomus laevis</i>						✓		
11	Peacock Rock Cod	<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
12	Yellow-tailed Basslet	<i>Pseudanthias evansi</i>			✓	✓		✓	✓	
13	Orange Anthias	<i>Pseudanthias squamipennis</i>			✓	✓		✓		
14	Crescent-tail Bigeye	<i>Priacanthus hamrur</i>						✓		
15	Tapered-line Cardinalfish	<i>Apogon exostigma</i>								✓
16	Slender Suckerfish	<i>Echeneis naucrates</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
17	Oriental Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus orientalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
18	Kashmir Snapper	<i>Lutjanus kasmira</i>						✓		
19	Two-spot Red Snapper	<i>Lutjanus bohar</i>			✓	✓				
20	Yellow-back Fusilier	<i>Caesio xanthonota</i>			✓	✓		✓	✓	
21	Yellow-saddle Goatfish	<i>Parupensis cyclostomus</i>				✓				
22	Dash-dot Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus barberinus</i>	✓	✓	✓					
23	Black Pyramid Butterflyfish	<i>Hemitaenichthys zoster</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
24	Raccoon Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon lunula</i>		✓		✓		✓		
25	Citron Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon citrinellus</i>						✓		
26	Yellow-head Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon xanthocephalus</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓		
27	Long-nose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓		
28	Very Long-nose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger longirostris</i>			✓					
29	Threadfin Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon auriga</i>				✓				
30	Collared Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon collare</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
31	Double-saddle Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon falcula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
32	Madagascar Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon madagaskariensis</i>				✓				
33	Meyer's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon meyeri</i>		✓	✓	✓				
34	Oval butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifasciatus</i>				✓				
35	Indian Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus pleurotinia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
36	Schooling Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus diphreutes</i>		✓				✓		
37	Masked Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus monoceros</i>						✓		

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
38	Regal Angelfish	<i>Pygoplites diacanthus</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓		
39	Three-spot Angelfish	<i>Apolemichthys trimaculatus</i>								
40	Blue-face Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus xanthurus</i>				✓				
41	Emperor Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus imperator</i>	✓							
42	Multispine Angelfish	<i>Centropyge multispinis</i>						✓		
43	Forster's Hawkfish	<i>Paracirrhites forsteri</i>		✓				✓		
44	Blackfoot or Maldivian Anemonefish	<i>Amphipron nigripes</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
45	Clark's Anemonefish	<i>Amphipron clarkii</i>		✓				✓	✓	
46	Humbug damsel	<i>Dascyllus aruanus</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
47	Threespot Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus trimaculatus</i>						✓		
48	Blue-green Chromis	<i>Chromis viridis</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓		
49	Neon Damselfish	<i>Pomacentris caeruleus</i>				✓				
50	Sergeant Major	<i>Abudefduf vaigiensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
51	Bird Wrasse	<i>Gomphosus caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
52	Adorned Wrasse	<i>Halichoerus cosmetus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
53	Checkerboard Wrasse	<i>Halichoerus hortulanus</i>	✓	✓				✓		
54	Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
55	Napoleon Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus undulatus</i>			✓					
56	Slingjaw Wrasse	<i>Epibulus insidiator</i>						✓		
57	Rockmover Wrasse	<i>Novaculichthys taeniourus</i>						✓		
58	Roundhead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus strongylocephalus</i>		✓						
59	Bullethead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus sordidus</i>						✓		
60	Maldivian Sandperch	<i>Parapercis signata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
61	Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
62	Powder-blue Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus leucosternon</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
63	Lined Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>	✓					✓		
64	Convict Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus triostegus</i>	✓			✓				
65	Sailfin Tang	<i>Zebрасoma desjardini</i>	✓	✓				✓		
66	Orange-spine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	✓	✓				✓		
67	Big-nose Unicornfish	<i>Naso vlamingii</i>						✓		
68	Spotted Unicornfish	<i>Naso brevirostris</i>						✓		
69	Starry Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus stellatus</i>		✓						
70	Coral Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus corallinus</i>		✓	✓	✓				
71	Dogtooth Tuna	<i>Gymnocarda unicolor</i>				✓				
72	Orange-Striped Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus undulatus</i>		✓		✓				
73	Clown Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus conspicillum</i>	✓						✓	
74	Titan Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus viridescens</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
75	Red-toothed Triggerfish	<i>Odonus niger</i>		✓					✓	
76	Indian Triggerfish	<i>Melichthys indicus</i>		✓						
77	Black or Spotted Boxfish	<i>Ostracion meleagris</i>		✓						
78	Saddled Sharpnose Pufferfish	<i>Canthigaster valentini</i>				✓				
79	Black-spotted Pufferfish	<i>Arothron nigropunctatus</i>		✓	✓					
80	Spotted Eagle Ray	<i>Aetobatus narinari</i>				✓				
81	Manta Ray	<i>Manta alfredi</i> (formerly <i>birostris</i>)				✓			✓	
82	Mobula Ray	<i>Mobula thurstoni</i>							✓	
83	White-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>	✓	✓					✓	
84	Black-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>	✓	✓						
85	Yellow-tailed Anthia			✓						
86	Flying Fish	<i>Exocoetetes spp</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
87	Reef Squid	<i>Sepioteuthis lessoniana</i>		✓		✓			✓	
88	Wahoo	<i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>		✓						

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
89	Rudderfish	<i>Centrolophus niger</i>			✓	✓				
90	Half Beak	<i>Hyporhamphus affinis</i>				✓				
91	Reef Scorpionfish				✓					
92	Whale Shark	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>				✓				
93	Garfish				✓					
94	Blue-fin Jack	<i>Caranx melampygus</i>					✓	✓	✓	
95	Barred Thick-lip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus fasciatus</i>		✓						
96	Black-eye Thick-lip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus melapterus</i>		✓						
97	Yellow-tail Wrasse	<i>Anampses-meleagrides</i>		✓						
98	Black-side Hawkfish	<i>Paracirrhites forsteri</i>			✓	✓				
99	Serge Damsel fish					✓	✓	✓		
100	Cuttlefish	<i>Sepiida sp</i>						✓		
101	Chevron Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifascialis</i>				✓				
102	Violet Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis violacea</i>				✓				

Birds

1	Tropical Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>							✓	✓
2	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
3	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	✓	✓						
4	Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>						✓	✓	
5	Swift Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>						✓	✓	
6	Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>		✓				✓	✓	
7	Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>					✓	✓	✓	
8	Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	✓							
9	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>	✓	✓		✓		H		
10	Maldivian House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens maledivicus</i>			✓	✓	✓			
11	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓						
12	Maldivian Little Heron	<i>Butorides striatus didii</i>						✓		

Other Taxa

1	Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus giganteus aerial</i>	✓	✓		✓				
2	Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>								
3	Hawksbill turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	
4	Common Spiny Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>	✓	✓						
5	Hermit crab	<i>Paguroidea sp</i>				✓				
6	Ghost Crabs	<i>Ocypod sp</i>						✓	✓	
7	Nautilus	<i>Nautilidae sp</i>				✓				