

Mantas, Dolphins and Coral Reefs – A Maldives Cruise

Naturetrek Tour Report

11 - 20 February 2016



Dhoored Island (Dhaalu Atoll)



Spinner Dolphin



Sperm Whale fluke



Oval Butterflyfish, Long-nosed Butterflyfish and Powderblue Surgeonfish

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Summary

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

The highlight, for most, was the group's encounter with a pod of Sperm Whales which were seen in pairs or individually around our boat. We enjoyed two hours of excitement as the whales surfaced and disappeared – only to resurface minutes later to the cheers of a delighted crowd!

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 and White-tipped Reef Sharks and Hawksbill Turtle were just a few of the highlights!

Back on board, while cruising between atolls, islands and reefs, five confirmed species of cetacean were seen: seven Sperm Whales spraying and fluking alongside our boat, groups of 40+ Spinner Dolphins, sizeable pods of Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphins (occasionally mixing with the Spinners and all taking it in turn to enjoy pole position on the bow wave), Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin, and Common Bottlenose Dolphin. Additionally, we had three species of cetacean which we were unable to positively identify: a very likely Dwarf Sperm Whale and Risso's Dolphin, and a possible 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. We enjoyed a very special experience!

Day 1

Thursday 11th February

For most of the group, the tour started with overnight flights from London Heathrow to Malé via Dubai, where we were joined by Connla and Geraldine who had flown to Dubai from Dublin.

Day 2

Friday 12th February

We landed in Malé at 9.40am and were welcomed by sunny blue skies and 30°C! After meeting Gill at the airport we had a quick transfer to Bandos, where we would spend our first night. Upon arrival we were greeted with refreshing drinks and had our first explore of the island's beautiful white beaches and turquoise waters, to the sound of calling Asian Koels and Common Mynas. Occasional Fruit Bats flew in between trees and White-faced Waterhens were seen scurrying about the undergrowth. Colourful Eclectus Parrots, an introduced species, were also seen by some. There were Coconut and Oil Palms, and some lovely shrubs including Oleander, Bougainvillea, Frangipani and Orchid Tree, and near the restaurant a huge Banyan Tree.

Once refreshed with a light lunch and cold drinks, and checked into our rooms, we had our first snorkelling session – a chance for new snorkelers to practise in sheltered waters and, for the experienced members of the group, a chance to show off! Lots of juvenile Black-tipped Reef Sharks were seen (both from the water and from the beach café) as well as our first species of butterflyfish, surgeonfish, Trumpetfish, wrasses and sea cucumbers.

After a couple of hours we returned to our lovely rooms to shower and change before meeting in the open air Sea Breeze café for a lovely evening meal. At dinner we met Pauline, Brian, Mandy and John who had flown out separately. As the sun set over the island, we could feel the tropical warmth begin to work its relaxing magic on us! Most opted for an early night in preparation for the start of our cruise the next day.

Day 3

Saturday 13th February

After a leisurely breakfast, we made the most of our last few hours on Bandos with a morning stroll and optional snorkel, before being picked up by Chas at 1pm. Once on board the Ari Queen, our home for the next week, we enjoyed our first lunch on board as we sailed south.

At 5pm we stopped and boarded the Dhoni (small craft) to snorkel the ‘Sandy Bank’ reef, where plenty of colourful fish kept us entranced! After an hour we returned to the boat and, once showered and dined, most joined Sara in the bar for ‘Fish Club’, using the opportunity to identify the fish species we had seen.

Day 4

Sunday 14th February

This morning we set sail at 6.30am. We had our first group of 40+ Spinner Dolphins straight after breakfast and they obligingly swam to the boat to bow ride with us. The delighted group enjoyed plenty of opportunities for photographs, and the front of the boat rang with laughter as the dolphins leapt out of the water to do what they do best – spinning! Throughout the day we had a group of Common Bottlenose Dolphins swim alongside the boat and two further groups of Spinner Dolphins join us for leaps and jumps in the sun. We had been spoiled on our first full day on the boat! While on watch for further cetaceans, some of the group also saw a Sailfish, and a large (unidentified) ray swam close to the port side of the boat.

At 4pm we anchored at Minimasgali in Faafu atoll. Some swam to the reef whilst others swam to shore for a combined ‘snorkel and walk’. Several of those snorkelling enjoyed good views of both Black-tipped and White-tipped Reef Sharks, with some spotting a Hawksbill Turtle, while those on the island enjoyed delicious fresh coconut picked by the crew.

Once back on board, we enjoyed an excellent talk by Chas who introduced us to the geography and history of the Maldives. After this we had a delicious dinner and all opted for an early night.

Day 5

Monday 15th February

We awoke to clear blue skies and snorkelled the Minimasgali reef once more. Now accustomed to the more common fish species, we started to search for species we hadn’t previously seen. Spotted Porcupinefish, Saddled Sharpnose Pufferfish, Moon Wrasse and Orange-lipped Emperor Grouper were some of the many new fish we photographed and recorded.

After a hearty breakfast back on board, we sailed into deeper waters, once more in search of cetaceans. Sara, Chas and several others in the group, who had anchored themselves to the front of the boat (prime spotting position!), saw three fins in the distance but sadly, as we approached closer, they disappeared from view. Judging from the tall size and shape of the dorsal fins, we concluded they were very likely Risso's Dolphins. We pushed on with continued determination to find our next sighting. Shortly afterwards, several of the group spotted the dark shape of a 'logging' cetacean from the starboard side, which Chas thought likely to be a Dwarf Sperm Whale. As we sailed on, the excitement continued as we spotted a mystery dolphin-sized cetacean 'logging' alone in the waves. With an oddly shaped dorsal fin (rounded at the end, similar to a hockey stick) it proved difficult to identify and remained elusive in the waves, only appearing at distances before sinking beneath the waves. After waiting unsuccessfully for half an hour for it to resurface, we moved on. Over lunch we quizzed Chas about its identification and he concluded that it was likely a Longman's Beaked Whale.

However, the excitement wasn't over yet! Our delicious lunch was interrupted by a mixed school of Spinner and Spotted Dolphins, which eagerly swam over to the boat to bow ride with us. Plates of food were quickly abandoned and eager faces peered down over the sides of the boat for superb views of the pod, including juveniles. The dolphins were close enough for us to be able to admire the beautiful subtle spotted pattern of the Spotted Dolphins, and hear their whistles to one another as they swam with us!

In the afternoon, most opted to read in the shade while Chas, Sara, Sue and a couple of dedicated cetacean-spotters remained on duty at the front of the boat. Two fishing vessels were spotted on the horizon. Chas directed us towards them with a plan of action. Due to a close association between Yellow-fin Tuna and (usually spotted) dolphins, fishermen frequently seek out groups of Spotted Dolphins in the hope of catching the tuna. As we drew nearer, we could see Chas's instinct was right. Fishermen, lined up at the back of both boats, were trailing baited lines in the water behind them in the boats' wake – and eagerly following them were a group of Spotted Dolphins! The fishermen were throwing live fish into the water to attract the tuna, but it appeared that most of it was being happily eaten by the dolphins. Chas explained that the fishermen didn't mind the dolphins eating their bait – they accept it as a payment to the dolphins for helping them to find the tuna. As is the nature of dolphins, within five minutes their curiosity had got the better of them and they abandoned the fishing boats to come and investigate what we were doing. After bow riding with us for a short while, they returned to their duty of 'helping' the fishermen and we continued to our anchorage for the evening.

We enjoyed a refreshing snorkel before our evening meal, and then a fascinating talk from Chas on the biology of the dolphins of the Maldives.

Day 6

Tuesday 16th February

After an early morning snorkel where a Hawksbill Turtle proved to be the highlight for several members of the group, we started sailing. David and Chris joined Sara and Chas on spotting duty at the front of the boat and it wasn't long before Chris spotted distant 'blows' on the horizon. A quick glance through the binoculars confirmed there were two Sperm Whales. The boat's bells started ringing, rapidly stirring the folk who had been leisurely dozing or reading at the back of the boat, and we immediately headed in the direction of the whales. A few minutes later we spotted them off the starboard side of the boat, about one and a half kilometres away. They gave a pronounced arching of their backs and prepared to dive, gave a quick flick of their flukes, and they were gone. Sperm Whales can hold their breath for up to 90 minutes, so we now had to play a waiting game and hope

that they decide to come back up again. Luckily, minutes later, a single Sperm Whale surfaced close to the port side of the boat and headed straight for us! The captain skilfully manoeuvred the boat into the optimum position for viewing the whale as it came alongside us and was visible for 10 minutes before fluking right in front of the bow. Our luck didn't end there as another two whales surfaced ahead of us, remaining visible for 10 – 15 minutes before diving. And so it went on for two hours with a total estimate of seven Sperm Whales surfacing within metres of our boat and providing closer encounters than any of us had hoped for! With a final fluke disappearing beneath the waves, and smiles sun-baked on to our faces, we had lunch during which we excitedly discussed our spectacular morning.

We continued sailing through the deep water but no other cetaceans were spotted during the afternoon, although we did see Tropical Shearwater, Lesser Noddy, and Saunders's, Bridled and Black-naped Terns as we made our way to anchor at Kandufushi Island. Our evening snorkel along a stunning brightly-coloured reef revealed our first Common Lionfish sighting of the trip, and a wealth of other colourful species which we were now becoming experienced at identifying.

After refreshing showers, we joined Chas with a drink on the top deck under the stars, where he gave us an insightful talk into the history of maritime navigation and Portuguese explorers in the Maldives. After that we enjoyed another hearty dinner and several members of the group joined Sara for 'Fish Club' in the bar; matching photographs taken during the day's snorkelling to the images in Chas's superb identification book, and adding them to the ever-growing species list.

Day 7

Wednesday 17th February

This morning we set off early and, after a leisurely breakfast, snorkelled at the private island of Dhoores (Dhaa Atoll) where several of the group saw a White-tipped Reef Shark and a wealth of other fish species such as Anemone Fish, of which we had superb close up views. Once back on board we had showers and lunch while sailing out into deeper water in search of cetaceans.

The weather was sunny with cloud but rather windy which made cetacean spotting very difficult. We finally stopped at a channel near Kudafalhu (in Faafu Atoll) to look for Manta Rays. The rays feed in the deeper waters of the area and often congregate in the surface waters of the channel to warm up. Unfortunately, despite all possible eyes on deck looking for large shapes in the water, none were seen, so we anchored on a reef near Biledhoo Island. The highlights of our evening snorkel included a Spotted Eagle Ray and Hawksbill Turtle.

After another talk from Chas, dinner and fish club, some of the group joined Chas, Sue and Robert at the back of the boat for a spot of night-time fish gazing. Bright lights set up to shine into the water attracted thousands of small fish, larvae and the occasional squid. Peering over the edge of the boat into the dark ink-blue depths proved an extremely mesmerising and relaxing way to end the day!

Day 8

Thursday 18th February

We awoke to a grey day with a welcome cooling breeze, and returned to the channel near Kudafalhu in the hope of seeing Manta Rays. Again, we were unlucky. Chas decided our best chance of spotting them was to visit another reef three hours away, so we headed to South Ari Atoll.

On route we saw a small group of Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins, which seemed much shyer in personality than other dolphins we had seen on the trip so far. We watched them at a distance for 20 minutes before they were joined by a group of more boisterous Spinner Dolphins. After several impressive spins and jumps, they disappeared as quickly as they had arrived, so we continued on a rather choppy crossing to the South Ari Atoll.

About 2pm we began to approach the reef and all fingers were crossed for a Manta Ray sighting. Sara even performed a Manta Ray and Whale Shark dance on deck in the hope of rousing the Manta and Shark spirits (or perhaps more so for the amusement of the group!). We changed into our snorkel gear and boarded the Dhoni. Unfortunately the weather rapidly got worse, and as we sailed out to approach the reef the wind and rain became so severe that visibility dropped to about 30 metres (perhaps Sara's Manta Ray dance had been misinterpreted?). After persevering for 15 minutes in our search of mantas, a unanimous decision was made to abandon the snorkel and head back to the ship. An extreme downpour and sudden rush of warm rainwater soaked people through in seconds, causing some hysterics amongst the group!

After drying off, we sailed on and anchored at Radhdigga, where the weather had improved. Most of the group went for a snorkel and highlights included Moray Eels, Lionfish, a Nurse Shark (only seen by Julie) and a White-tip Reef Shark. Meanwhile Sara took Gill, Connla, Geraldine and Sarah to a small island for a pleasant evening stroll along the beach, the highlight of which was watching a Feathertail Stingray patrolling the shallows.

After returning to the boat, we enjoyed a wonderful talk from Chas on the whales of the Maldives. Once again, he shared his seemingly endless knowledge with us over a refreshing drink in the bar.

Day 9

Friday 19th February

This morning we set sail at 7.30am and snorkelled at Devana Faru (South Ari Atoll). Some of the group saw a Hawksbill Turtle, and Triple-tailed Wrasse, Smith's Sabre-toothed Blenny and a squid were amongst the new species added to our now very full species list.

We then sailed across an exposed stretch of open water, looking for cetaceans. Sara spotted fins from the back of the boat and, after rapidly slowing down, we saw our final group of Spinner Dolphins which joined us for 10 minutes of impressive acrobatics. We then continued north but the choppy weather preventing any further cetacean sightings, despite the best efforts from those sitting at the front of the boat.

We reluctantly approached the more developed islands as we sailed into busier waters, and into a harbour at Malé to anchor for the evening. We listened to our final talk from Chas, which detailed his fascinating studies of dragonfly migration, before enjoying our last evening meal. We thanked the crew for their hard work throughout the week before retiring for an early night.

Day 10

Saturday 20th February

It was our final morning. After breakfast and saying goodbye to John, Mandy, Brian, Pauline, Connla and Geraldine who were departing on later flights, we took our last ride on the Dhoni. We transferred to the airport in good time for our late morning flight home. We flew back to the UK, again via Dubai, with countless memories of a wonderful trip.

Species Lists

Cetaceans (✓ = recorded but not counted; Prob = probably; Poss = possibly)

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>					✓			
2	Dwarf Sperm Whale	<i>Kogia sima</i>				Prob				
3	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>			✓	✓			✓	✓
4	Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>							✓	
5	Common Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>			✓					
6	Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>				✓				
7	Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>				Prob				
8	Longman's beaked Whale	<i>Indopacetus pacificus</i>				Poss				

Birds

1	Tropical Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>			✓	✓	✓			
2	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>					✓		✓	
3	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓							
4	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>	✓	✓						
6	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		✓		✓				
7	Lesser Noddy	<i>Anous tenuirostris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
8	Swift (Great Crested) Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
9	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>						✓	✓	✓
10	Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11	Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>					✓			
12	Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>	✓	✓						
14	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>	✓	✓		✓				
15	Maldivian House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens maledivicus</i>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
16	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓						
17	Red Lory	<i>Eos bornea</i>	✓	✓						
18	Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>					✓	✓		

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
19	Eclectus Parrot (Int)	<i>Eclectus roratus</i>	✓							

Other Taxa

1	Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus giganteus ssp maldivarum</i>	✓	✓					✓	
2	Hawksbill Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>				✓	✓			
3	Common Spiny Lizard	<i>Coelotes versicolor</i>	✓	✓						
4	Ghost Crab species	<i>Ocypodinae sp.</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
5	Swimming Crab species	<i>Portunidae sp.</i>	✓							

Fish

1	Black-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Carcharinus melanopterus</i>	✓	✓	✓					
2	White-tipped Reef Shark	<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>			✓				✓	
3	Nurse Shark	<i>Nebrius ferrugineus</i>								✓
4	Spotted Eagle Ray	<i>Aetobatus narinari</i>			✓					
5	Feathertail Stingray	<i>Pastinachus sephen</i>				✓	✓			✓
6	Whiptail Stingray	<i>Himantura fai</i>	✓							
7	Giant Moray	<i>Gymnothorax javanicus</i>								✓
8	Fringe-lip Mullet	<i>Oedalechilus labiatus</i>	✓							
9	Silver Hardyhead	<i>Hypoatherina barnesi</i>				✓				
10	Reef Lizardfish	<i>Synodus variegatus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓		
11	Needlefish	<i>Tylosaurus crocodilus</i>	✓							
12	Smooth Flutemouth	<i>Fistularia commersonii</i>	✓							
13	Trumpetfish	<i>Aulostomus chinensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Splendid Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis botche</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓	
15	Blotcheye Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis murdjan</i>		✓		✓				
16	Violet Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis violacea</i>		✓	✓					
17	Crown Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron diadema</i>		✓						
18	White-tail Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron caudimaculatum</i>			✓					
19	Spotfin Squirrelfish	<i>Neoniphon samara</i>			✓					
20	Sabre Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron spiniferum</i>			✓	✓				
21	Common Lionfish	<i>Pterois volitans</i>					✓			
22	White-line Lionfish	<i>Pterois radiata</i>								✓

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
23	Squartetail Coral Grouper	<i>Plectropomus areolatus</i>			✓				✓	
24	Black-saddle Coral Grouper	<i>Plectropomus laevis</i>				✓			✓	
25	Peacock Rock Cod	<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>		✓	✓	✓				
26	Vermilion Rock Cod	<i>Cephalopholis miniata</i>		✓						
27	Slender Grouper	<i>Anyperodon leucogrammicus</i>		✓						
28	Lunar-tailed Grouper	<i>Variola louti</i>		✓						
29	White-spotted Grouper	<i>Epinephelus caeruleopunctatus</i>		✓						
30	Camouflage Grouper	<i>Ephinephelus polyphekadion</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓
31	Four Saddle Grouper	<i>Epinephelus spilotoceps</i>	✓	✓						
32	Yellow-tailed Basslet	<i>Pseudanthias evansi</i>			✓					
33	Orange Anthias	<i>Pseudanthias squamipennis</i>			✓					
34	Narrowstripe Cardinalfish	<i>Apogon angustatus</i>			✓	✓			✓	✓
35	Bluefin Jack	<i>Caranx melampygus</i>	✓							
36	Rainbow Runner	<i>Elagatis bipinnulata</i>				✓				
37	Striped Remora (Slender Suckerfish)	<i>Echeneis naucrates</i>							✓	✓
38	Kashmir Snapper	<i>Lutjanus kasmira</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓
39	Two-spot Red Snapper	<i>Lutjanus bohar</i>				✓	✓		✓	
40	Blackspot Snapper	<i>Lutjanus fulviflamma</i>				✓		✓		
41	Humpback Red Snapper	<i>Lutjanus gibbus</i>				✓				
42	Midnight Snapper	<i>Macolor macularis</i>				✓				
43	Black-and-white Snapper	<i>Macolor niger</i>			✓				✓	
44	Lunar Fusilier	<i>Caesio lunaris</i>							✓	
45	Yellow-back Fusilier	<i>Caesio xanthonota</i>			✓	✓				
46	Neon Fusilier	<i>Pterocaesio tile</i>					✓			
47	Striped Fusilier	<i>Pterocaesio trilineata</i>				✓			✓	
48	Variable-lined Fusilier	<i>Casesio varilineata</i>	✓							
49	Oriental Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus orientalis</i>	✓		✓	✓				
50	Harlequin Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus chaetodonoides</i>				✓				
51	Blackspot Emperor	<i>Gymnocranium harak</i>	✓							
52	Gold-striped Emperor	<i>Gnathodentax aureolineatus</i>				✓				
53	Two-lined Monocle Bream	<i>Scolopsis bilineatus</i>			✓	✓				
54	Yellowstripe Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys flavolineatus</i>				✓				

	Scientific name	Common name	February								
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
55	Yellowfin Goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys vanicolensis</i>		✓						✓	
56	Barred Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus trifasciatus</i>						✓			
57	Dash-dot Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus barberinus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓				
58	Threadfin Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon auriga</i>			✓						
59	Bennett's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon bennetti</i>	✓								
60	Spotted Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon guttatissimus</i>			✓						
61	Collared Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon collare</i>		✓							
62	Double-saddle Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon falcula</i>		✓		✓					
63	Klein's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon kleinii</i>				✓					
64	Racoon Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon lunula</i>			✓						
65	Madagascar Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon madagaskariensis</i>				✓			✓		
66	Meyer's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon meyeri</i>	✓	✓							
67	Oval butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifasciatus</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
68	Triangular Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon triangulum</i>		✓	✓						
69	Chevron Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifascialis</i>			✓						
70	Yellow-head Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon xanthocephalus</i>	✓	✓		✓					
71	Long-nose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
72	Very Long-nose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger longirostris</i>	✓								
73	Black Pyramid Butterflyfish	<i>Hemitaurichthys zoster</i>	✓								
74	Indian Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus pleurotinia</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
75	Masked Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus monoceros</i>		✓							
76	Blue-face Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus xanthometopon</i>			✓			✓			
77	Emperor Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus imperator</i>				✓			✓		
78	Three-spot Angelfish	<i>Apolemichthys trimaculatus</i>				✓	✓				
79	Regal Angelfish	<i>Pygoplites diacanthus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
80	Forster's (Blackside) Hawkfish	<i>Paracirrhites forsteri</i>	✓		✓						
81	Green Damsel fish	<i>Amblyglyphidodon batunai</i>		✓							
82	Blackfoot or Maldivian Anemonefish	<i>Amphipron nigripes</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓				
83	Clark's Anemonefish	<i>Amphipron clarkii</i>		✓		✓					
84	Sergeant Major	<i>Abudefduf vaigiensis</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓		
85	Chocolate-dip Chromis	<i>Chromis dimidiata</i>		✓		✓	✓				
86	Golden Chromis	<i>Chromis ternatensis</i>			✓						

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
87	Blue-green Chromis	<i>Chromis viridis</i>			✓					
88	Surge Damselfish	<i>Crhysiptera brownriggii</i>	✓							
89	Humbug Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus aruanus</i>			✓					
90	Indian Dascyllus	<i>Pomacentrus indicus</i>				✓	✓			
91	Threespot Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus trimaculatus</i>	✓							
92	Redbreasted Maori Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus fasciatus</i>			✓					
93	Yellowtail Wrasse	<i>Anampses meleagrides</i>		✓						
94	Bird Wrasse	<i>Gomphosus caeruleus</i>		✓						
95	Adorned Wrasse	<i>Halichoerus cosmetus</i>	✓							
96	Checkerboard Wrasse	<i>Halichoerus hortulanus</i>			✓					
97	Rockmover Wrasse	<i>Novaculichthys taeniourus</i>	✓							
98	Moon Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lunare</i>				✓				
99	Blunthead Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma amblycephalum</i>	✓	✓						
100	Six-barred Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma hardwicke</i>	✓							
101	Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
102	Barred Thicklip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus fasciatus</i>			✓					
103	Blackeye Thicklip Wrasse	<i>Hemigymnus melapterus</i>	✓							
104	Slingjaw Wrasse	<i>Epibulus insidiator</i>				✓				
105	Bicolour Parrotfish	<i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>	✓							
106	Roundhead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus strongylocephalus</i>	✓							
107	Bullethead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus sordidus</i>	✓							
108	Bridled Parrotfish	<i>Scarus frenatus</i>	✓	✓						
109	Dusky Parrotfish	<i>Scarus niger</i>			✓			✓		
110	Greencheek Parrotfish	<i>Scarus prasiognathus</i>							✓	
111	Eclipse Parrotfish	<i>Scarus russelii</i>					✓			
112	Yellowbar Parrotfish	<i>Scarus scaber</i>			✓					
113	Spot-tailed Sandperch	<i>Parapercis hexopthalma</i>			✓	✓				
114	Brown-blotched Sandperch	<i>Parapercis millepunctata</i>	✓	✓						
115	Coral Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus corallinus</i>		✓						
116	Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
117	Powder-blue Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus leucosternon</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
118	Lined Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>	✓	✓						

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
			12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
119	Eye-stripe Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus nigricauda</i>	✓	✓						
120	Convict Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus triostegus</i>	✓	✓						
121	Lined Bristletooth Surgeonfish	<i>Ctenochaetus striatus</i>	✓			✓				
122	Vlaming's Unicornfish	<i>Naso vlamingii</i>			✓					✓
123	Lieutenant Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus tennentii</i>	✓							
124	Orange-spine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	✓							
125	Spotted Unicornfish	<i>Naso brevirostris</i>	✓	✓		✓				
126	Brushtail Tang	<i>Zebrasoma scopas</i>			✓					
127	Sailfin Tang	<i>Zebrasoma desjardinii</i>	✓	✓	✓					
128	Yellowfin Tuna	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>				✓	✓			
129	Scribbled Filefish	<i>Aluterus scriptus</i>	✓							
130	Long-nose Filefish	<i>Oxymonacanthus longirostris</i>		✓	✓					
131	Clown Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus conspicillum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
132	Orange-Striped Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus undulatus</i>	✓	✓						
133	Titan Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus viridescens</i>		✓	✓					
134	Picasso Triggerfish	<i>Rhinecanthus aculeatus</i>	✓	✓	✓					
135	Red-toothed Triggerfish	<i>Odonus niger</i>				✓				
136	Indian Triggerfish	<i>Melichthys indicus</i>	✓	✓						
137	Boomerang Triggerfish	<i>Sufflamen bursa</i>		✓						
138	Black or Spotted Boxfish	<i>Ostracion meleagris</i>				✓				
139	Bennett's Sharpnose Puffer	<i>Canthigaster bennetti</i>								
140	Black-spotted Pufferfish	<i>Arothron nigropunctatus</i>	✓			✓				
141	Guineafowl Pufferfish	<i>Arothron meleagris</i>	✓							
142	Saddled Sharpnose Pufferfish	<i>Canthigaster valentini</i>				✓				
143	Blotched Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon liturosus</i>	✓	✓						
144	Spotted Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon hystrix</i>				✓				
145	Broom Filefish	<i>Amanses scopas</i>		✓						
146	Bigeye Bream (Emperor)	<i>Lethrinidae sp.</i>				✓				
147	Grey-streak Lizardfish (Sand Lizardfish)	<i>Synodus Dermatogenys</i>				✓				
148	Blue-lined Wrasse	<i>Stethojulis albovittata</i>				✓				
149	Orange-lipped Grouper	<i>Lethrinus olivaceus</i>				✓				
150	Eagle Ray	<i>Aetobatus sp.</i>			✓				✓	

	Scientific name	Common name	February							
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151	Goldring Bristletooth Surgeonfish	<i>Ctenochaetus strigosus</i>								
152	White-tipped Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis vittata</i>	✓							
153	Zigzag Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres scapularis</i>	✓							
154	Goldfinger Blenny	<i>Ecsenius midas</i>	✓							
155	Bluespine Unicornfish	<i>Naso unicornis</i>	✓							
156	Bigeye Snapper	<i>Lutjanus lutjanus</i>	✓							
157	Dick's Damsel sp.	<i>Plectroglyphidodon dickii</i>	✓							
158	Vrolik's Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres chrysotaenia</i>			✓					
159	Bicolour Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides bicolor</i>			✓					
160	Six-line Soapfish	<i>Grammistes sexlineatus</i>	✓		✓					
161	Two-spot Snapper	<i>Lutjanus bohar</i>	✓			✓				
162	Indian Sandwrasse	<i>Halichoeres scapularis</i>	✓							
163	Half-barred Goby	<i>Priolepis semidoliata</i>	✓							
164	Bengal Snapper	<i>Lutjanus bengalensis</i>	✓							
165	Varicose Wartslug	<i>Phyllidia varicosa</i>			✓					

Fish seen but not recorded daily:

Pustulose Wartslug, *Phyllidiella pustulosa*

Tubelip Wrasse, *Labrichthys unilineatus*

Half-tarred Goby, *Amblygobius semicinctus*

Indian Dascyllus, *Dascyllus carneus*

Silverspot Squirrelfish, *Sargocentron caudimaculatum*

Masked Grouper, *Gracila albomarginata*

Chiseltooth Wrasse, *Pseudodax moluccanus*

Smith's Sabre-toothed Blenny, *Pisces Blenniidae*

Shadowfin Soldierfish, *Myripristis adusta*

Half-moon Triggerfish, *Sufflamen chrysopterus*

Madras Snapper, *Lutjanus madras*

Blackaxil Chromis, *Chromis atripectoralis*

White-tip Soldierfish, *Myripristis vittata*

Green-nose Parrotfish, *Bolbometopon muricatum*

Groupergiant, *Epinephelus lanceolatus*

Lined Butterflyfish, *Chaetodon lineolatus*

Yellowhead Snapper, *Macolor macularis*

Red-mouth Grouper, *Aethaloperca rogaa*

Yellow Boxfish, *Ostracion cubicus*

Wedge-tailed Triggerfish, *Rhinecanthus rectangulus*

Small-toothed Emperor, *Lethrinus microdon*

Longnosed Parrotfish, *Hipposcarus harid*

Arc-eye Hawkfish, *Paracirrhites arcatus*

Thompson's Surgeonfish, *Acanthurus thompsoni*

Honeycomb Grouper, *Epinephelus merra*

Philippine Damselfish, *Pomacentrus philippinus*

Triple-tailed Wrasse, *Cheilinus trilobatus*

Silver Sprat, *Sprattus sp.*

Bridled Triggerfish, *Sufflamen frsenatus*

Two-spot Bristletooth Surgeonfish, *Ctenochaetus binotatus*

Also recorded:

House Gecko, *Hemidactylus frenatus*

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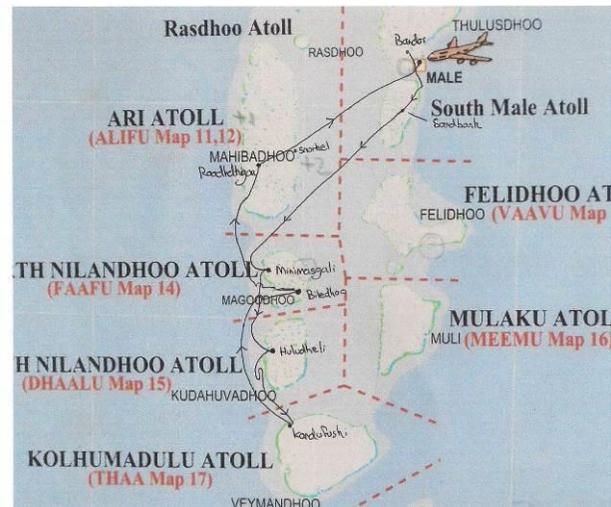
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Sperm Whale Watching



Map of cruise



Group after the last snorkel