Birds of the Maldives Islands, Indian Ocean

J. S. ASH and AFI SHAFFEER

An annotated checklist of the birds of the Maldives Islands, Indian Ocean, includes 147 species, of which details of 35 additions are included. New information has resulted principally from field observations in 1984 and 1993, and from an examination of a collection of bird photographs formed by Mr. Ahmed Shaheen. The White-eyed Gull Larus isabellinus is new for the Oriental Region.

The main purposes of this paper are threefold: first, to present an updated annotated checklist for the birds of the Maldives; second, to report the occurrence of many new species to the Maldives resulting from an examination of a large series of photographs collected by Mr. Ahmed Shaheen (father of A. S.) of birds captured in the Maldives and brought alive to Mahe; and third, to record observations made on two visits by J. S. A. in 1984 and 1993.

The background to the ornithology of the Maldives has been given by Phillips (1963), together with a detailed description of the geography and ecology of the archipelago, so that it is unnecessary to repeat it here. One point emphasized by Phillips was that relatively few observations had been made on the Maldives prior to his visit, and after 1963 there was no improvement. A temporary flush of observations resulted from personnel working at the British base on Gamu (Seenu Atoll), and the recent upsurge in tourism will inevitably result in an increase in observers.

A number of factors have changed in the Maldives, mostly to the detriment of both resident and visiting birds. Perhaps the most important of these is the development of tourism resulting in a major ecological impact on an increasing number of islands; an increase in the amount of boat traffic and movement of people within the archipelago, resulting in increased disturbance to previously little visited islands; and an increase in affluence, with its concomitant increase in leisure time, resulting in yet more persecution of birds and the means to obtain them. Unfortunately, persecution of birds has always been intense in the Maldives, but this is apparently now made worse by the rapidly increasing human population, currently with an annual growth rate of 3.4%, combined with a major reduction in infantile mortality.

In the past the harvesting of eggs and chicks as food presumably took place to supplement the otherwise unvarying diet of fish as animal protein. Keeping a wide range of species of captured birds as pets and toys has long been, and still is, a very popular pastime in the Maldives. Presumably there has been severe deforestation of the Maldives in the past, as on the Chagos Archipelago (Bourne 1971), but it is regrettable to see that it still continues where trees remain.
The government’s earlier policy to eliminate the endemic subspecies of the House Crow *Corvus splendens macleayicus*, which is very often a pest, would, if successful, inevitably have resulted in the elimination of its avian parasite, the Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*. However, the crow’s absence could have had a beneficial effect in permitting many other species to spread and breed successfully (e.g. the Common White-Tern *Gygis alba*), and also on allowing visiting raptors to remain and exert some measure of control over other troublesome pests such as House Rats *Rattus rattus* and Indian Flying-foxes *Pteropus giganteus*. The Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture’s policy now is to contain the crow’s population within acceptable numbers. No doubt a large measure of crow control could be obtained by reducing the amount of food made available to them in terms of human food remains and fish garbage, together with an improvement in sanitary conditions. A certain amount of nest destruction might also be carried out at critical periods in the breeding cycle.

Under the present system, where tourism is being encouraged (e.g. the number of islands set aside as tourist resorts has increased from four in 1974 to 70 in 1994), the development of wildlife as an added attraction could be of great importance - as has been demonstrated in so many other countries. Following the visit in 1993 recommendations were made to the government (Appendix 3) suggesting that a conservation-oriented policy of habitat and wildlife protection could be developed, with one object being the increase of large colonies of seabirds. Persecution of these has become so great that it seems doubtful if many young birds of any species now survive. At the same time a very large trade seems to have developed in recent years in the marketing of wild birds as ‘pets’. This is based on the capture of young colonial seabirds, and the trapping and netting of any other available birds, of which waders are probably at greatest risk. Flightless flocks of waders and terns are a common sight in the house compounds of most villages in the Maldives. It would seem that considerable colonies of breeding seabirds such as terns, boobies, shearwaters, frigatebirds and tropicbirds could be built up very quickly if the persecution of both adults and young ceased, and breeding colonies were given close protection. Similarly, the conservation of turtles could provide a further important attraction.

Much of the trade in birds passes through the resort islands, possibly because of the frequent contacts they maintain with the capital Malé. The possibility that birds are being exported from the Maldives was not established on the 1993 visit, but birds are certainly imported, particularly from Sri Lanka. Apparently the crews of many merchant vessels visiting Maldivian waters carry birds with them, and the significance of this custom may not be appreciated in the assessment of records of unusual vagrants in this region.

The photographs by Ahamed Shafeeq were of birds provided by islanders, mostly fishermen, and were captured within the Maldives, where fishermen remain within territorial waters. Bird-catching parties also travel to uninhabited islands for the express purpose of netting birds. Some information was obtained on the market values of birds and these are included in Table 1. The exchange rate in 1994 was 17 Maldivian rupees (Rs) to £1 sterling (approximately Rs 11 = US$1.00).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catchers’ value</th>
<th>Retail value</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NORTHERN PINTAIL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>GARLUGEY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FEATHERCROWN POUCHARD</strong></td>
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<td><strong>COMMON MURENA</strong></td>
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Table 1. Market value of certain birds
Following the name of each species, the local Maldivian name, where known, is included in parentheses. However, names sometimes vary between atolls, and spelling is often highly variable. Subspecies are given where they are established from collected specimens. Next, also given in parentheses are the observations by J.S.A. for visits from 21 April to 14 May 1984 to the northern atolls (Ash 1984b), and from 4-18 November 1993 to the southern atolls; the latter with Richard Howard and Alick Moore with the Bat Conservation Trust Expedition (Ash et al. prep.), as also are the notes on the photographs by Mr. Ahamed Shafeeg. Then follows a brief summary of the species' status in the Maldives, together with a list of the islands and/or atolls from which they are recorded - the latter are italicized if the species is known to have bred there (months of the year are given in lower-case Roman numerals); and lastly a list of the relevant references to the published and unpublished literature. Many of the earlier records are imprecise as to dates, and often localities. In order to avoid much repetition the references under each species are mentioned by numbers only. Much difficulty was experienced with atoll names in the Maldives, and it is hoped that the map and the list of names in Appendices 1 and 2 will help to identify the various old and new names, bearing in mind the absence of an agreed consensus of opinion on the spelling of names.

The first list of the birds of the Maldives by Gadow and Gardiner (1903) included 24 species; Phillips' visit in 1956-1957 increased this total to 63 (Phillips and Sims 1958) and, following a further visit and more observations, the total reached 112 (Phillips 1963). Additions since then result in a total of 147 species. The outstanding collection of photographs formed by Mr. Ahamed Shafeeg of the Council for Research on Maldivian History and Culture deserves special mention. There are 12 species represented in these photographs for which there are no other Maldivian records. Part of this collection remains unexamined, so that more additions can be expected.

ANNOTATED LIST

**DOMESTIC FOWL** *Gallus gallus* (male: Ha; female: Kukulhu). Feral populations appeared to be established on *K. Viligili* in 1984, and there were several birds and a pair with a brood on uninhabited M. Boahuraa on 7 November 1993. They are said to occur in a feral and domesticated state throughout the Maldives. Refs 6, 13.

**COTTON PYGMY-Goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus* (no local name). *N. c. coromandelianus*. One in xii and several in x on S. Gamu. Said also to be imported from Sri Lanka and India. Refs 25, 53.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata* (Reyru; no specific name). (In 1993: L. Maandhoor, one on 11 November and L. Maabadhoo, one caged on 14 November.) Reported to be a regular winter visitor with up to seven together, xi-i. Also recorded Senee Atoll. Refs 6, 25, 32, 33.

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** *Anas acuta* (Jifachi reyru). (A bird captured in 1982 on Baa Atoll was photographed [Shafeeg].) Rare visitor recorded three or more times in x, xii, i. Also recorded Senee Atoll. Refs 25, 32, 33.

**GARGaney** *Anas querquedula* (Kururu reyru). (A bird captured in 1982 on Baa Atoll was photographed [Shafeeg]. In 1993: M. Milli, a caged bird on 7 November had been brought from K. Malé eight years previously. L. Maandhoor, one on 10 November and four on 11 November.) Reported as being a regular winter visitor in flocks of up to 25 birds, ix-ix. Also reported B. Hirhaadhoo; Senee Atoll. Refs 6, 25, 27, 32, 33.

**COMMON TEAL** *Anas crecca* (no local name). *A. c. crecca*. An occasional winter visitor in flocks of up to 10 birds. Recorded K. Malé; Baa Atoll; Shaviyani Atoll; Senee Atoll in x, and others unspecified. Other dates are unavailable. Refs 2, 14, 25, 27, 33.

**FERRUGINOUS POCHARD** *Aythya nyroca* (Rathu reyru). (1993: two on 10 November on L. Maandhoor. Vagrant, with only one previous record in x on S. Gamu, although Ahamed Shafeeg refers to it as a common migrant xi-i. Also recorded: K. Malé. Refs 6, 25, 32, 33.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula* (Ran rathu reyru). (A captured bird, for which there are no details of date or locality, was photographed [Shafeeg].) Reported to be a fairly frequent winter visitor xi-i. Also recorded: K. Malé. Refs 2, 25, 27, 32.

**EURASIAN HOOPOE** *Upupa epops* (Funaagandu dhooon). *U. e. epops*. (A bird captured at K. Malé in 1981 was photographed [Shafeeg].) A previous record in autumn on S. Gamu and a captured bird on R. Kadholhudhoo in October 1990 (R. C. Anderson). Refs 3, 4, 32, 33.

**INDIAN ROLLER** *Coracias benghalensis* (no local name). Rare winter visitor with two records in xi on Senee Atoll. Ref 33.

[**COMMON KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis* (no local name). An unidentified kingfisher, possibly this species, was seen at K. Lhosfushi in ix. Ref 21, 22.]

**BLUE-TAILED BEE-EATER** *Merops philippinus* (no local name). (1993: two on 16 November on A. Hurasadhoor clearly identified as this species and not Blue-checked Bee-eater *M. perigrinus*. The first record for the Maldives. Ref 6.

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER** *Merops apiaster* (no local name). Recorded once overwintering on S. Gamu, i–iii. This is apparently a unique winter record outside Africa. Refs 2, 25, 33.

**INDIAN CUCKOO** *Cuculus microtarsus* (Fuggahu gunu). A record of one on K. Vililgili in xi is the only published record. Ahamed Shafeeg states that it occurs in most years either singly or in groups of two or three, arriving in easterly winds. Ref 13.
COMMON CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus* (Fuggahu guraa). A regular winter visitor recorded from S. Gamu in ix-i. Ahamed Shafeeg states that formerly it came with easterly winds, but that there have been very few in recent years. Refs 2, 25, 32, 33.

[BANDED BAY CUCKOO *Cacomantis sonneratii* (Fuggahu guraa). A bird fitting the description of this species was seen and photographed one autumn in the late 1960s on S. Gamu, but little detail is available and the record is best treated as unconfirmed. Ref 33.]

GREY-BELLIED CUCKOO *Cacomantis passerinus* (Fuggahu guraa). Rare winter visitor with two records in xi and 1, on S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 33.

ASIAN KOEL *Eudynamys scolopacea* (male Kaalhukooeli; female Dindin koeli). *E. s. scolopacea*. (Common and widespread in April and May 1984, and in November 1993, even on islands where there are no House Crows, so that they must wander a great deal. Noted on: K. Male, K. Vilingili, K. Biyadhoo and K. Guraadhoo; H. A. Mahafih; H. A. Maanandhoo and H. A. Vashafaru, where there was still a juvenile with basic feather sheaths on 6 May 1984 [Ash]; M. Mulah, L. Maamadhoo, L. Maanadhoo, L. Hithadhoo, L. Mendhoo, L. South Athaheedha, L. Fares, L. Vadinolhu, L. North Athaheedha, L. Iddoo (where also a juvenile and two pull on 14 November 1993), L. Maabaidhoo; Dh. Dhoores; A. Feridhoo.) Also recorded: Bau/Has, Noonu/Shaviyani and Lhaviyani Atolls; K. Hulhule, K. Male (but no longer breeds); S. Gamu in xi-i. Ahamed Shafeeg states that they are resident and widespread in moderate numbers throughout the archipelago, parasitising the House Crow. Refs 2, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 25, 27, 33.

ROSS-SINGED PARAKEET *Pittacula krameri* (Bodu guraa). (A captured male on Kaafu Atoll in 1981 had been imported and was photographed [Shafeeg].) Ahamed Shafeeg states that the above and the following are imported by man and later escape or are released; recently some resort islands have been introducing free-flying birds. Refs 4, 6, 32.

[PARAKEET *Pittacus atlida* and/or HANGING-PARROT *Loriculus*. (Two seen briefly at K. Male on 21 April 1984 [Ash], and another on L. Maamadhoo on 12 November 1993.) There are many reports over the years from various islands of unidentified parakeets, which suggest that there is a small resident population or that immigrants occur. Only one of those seen has been identified satisfactorily, and the circumstances of its occurrence verified (see *P. krameri* above). Refs 2, 4, 6, 14, 25, 27, 32.]


WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL *Hirundapus caudacutus* (Forkey). One record in x on Seenu Atoll. Ref 33.


SWINHOE’S SNIPER Gallinago megala (Dhushin ilolhi). A winter visitor recorded once only on S. Meedhoo in XII. Refs 25, 33.

COMMON SNIPER Gallinago gallinago (Dhushin ilolhi). G. g. gallinago. Apparently a regular winter visitor recorded in x-i, from Seenu Atoll only. Refs 2, 12, 14, 25, 33.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT Limosa limosa (Bishuma ilolhi). (One captured in K. Malé in 1980 was photographed [Shaefeg]). This would appear to be the only record for the Maldives; although Ali and Ripley (1984) refer to it as a vagrant there, the original record cannot be traced. Refs 2, 4, 32.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT Limosa lapponica (Bulhi thunbi ilolhi). L. l. lapponica. (A bird captured on K. Malé in 1983 was photographed [Shaefeg]. In 1993: L. Hithadhoo, one caged on 12 November; L. Kunanhodho, two on 12 November; L. Fares, one on 13 November; L. Kalaidhoo, one on 15 November.) Apparently an annual visitor in small numbers, vi-i. Refs 2, 4, 6, 25, 27, 32, 33.

WILKESR’S NUMENIUS NUMENIUS (Bulhi thubhi). N. p. phaseopus. (Captured birds on K. Malé in 1981 and 1983 were photographed [Shaefeg]. In 1984: singly on K. Hulhule on 21 April and on K. Vilingili on 13 May 1984; one on H. A. Dhihdhoo, 3 May 1984 [Ash]. In 1993, M. Malé, one caged on 7 November; M. Muluh, one caged on 8 November; L. Maanadhoo, two on 11 November, and one on 12 November; L. Hithadhoo, two caged on 12 November; L. Kunanhodho, 10 and four caged on 12 November; L. South Attehaedha, three on 12 November; L. North Attehaedha, two on 13 November; L. Fares, two on 13 November; L. Maasidhoo, two caged on 14 November, and one on 15 November.) Regular winter visitor, vii-iii, and many oversummer. Also recorded: Seenu, Raa/Baa and Noonoo/Shaviyani Atolls. Refs 2, 4, 6, 12, 13, 14, 22, 25, 27, 32, 33.

Eurasian Curlier Numenius arquata (Bulhi thubhi). N. a. orientalis. (A bird captured on 25 March 1982 on Lh. Naifaru was photographed [Shaefeg]. In 1993 on L. Hithadhoo, four caged on 12 November; L. Kunanhodho, two on 12 November; L. Fares, one on 13 November; L. Maasidhoo, one on 15 November; Dh. Dhoore, one on 16 November.) A regular winter visitor in small numbers; some oversummer. Also recorded on K. Lankanfushi; S. Gamu and S. Hithadhoo. Refs 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 20, 25, 27, 32, 33.


1994

MAGSI SANDPIPER Tringa stagnatilis (Purredhde ilolhi). An irreg. visitor, ix and x recorded from Seenu Atoll. Ref 33.

COMMON GREENSHANK Tringa nebularia (Chon chon ilolhi). (One on Maafah on 1 May 1984 [Ash]. In 1993 on M. Mulu, one caged on November; L. Hithadhoo, one caged on 12 November; L. Kunanhodho, one seen, and two caged, on 12 November.) A northern visitor in moderate numbers, up to nine together; some oversummer. Also recorded: K. Malé and G. A. Vilingili (one captured individual seen on 7 February 1994 by R. C. Anderson); Noonoo/Shaviyani Atolls. Refs 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 22, 25, 27, 33.


Terik Sandpiper Tringa cinerea (a local name). (In 1993, L. Fares, three on 13 November; L. Hithadhoo, two caged on 12 November.) An irregular winter visitor with several records on S. Gamu in xi and xii. Refs 6, 25, 33.

Common Sandpiper Tringa hyperborea (Findhana). (Two, K. Kan’doonaafushi on 27 April and single birds on H. A. Maafah and H. A. Maaranndhoo on 1 and 5 May 1984, respectively [Ash]. 1993 summary: 36 birds on nine days, 4–16 November, on K. Malé; M. Mulu; L. Maanadhoo; L. Kunanhodho, L. South and North Athahedha, L. Fares, L. Vadinbloo, L. Bodufinolhu, L. Ihsdu and one caged on L. Kunanhodho; Dh. Dhoore.) Regular winter visitor in moderate numbers vii-v to all atolls. Also recorded: K. Hulhule, K. Malé and K. Vilingili; Seenu Atoll. Refs 2, 4, 6, 12, 13, 14, 25, 27, 33.

Ruddy Turnstone Arenaria interpres (Rathafai). A. i. interpres. (Seven captured birds on K. Malé were photographed together in 1983 [Shaefeg]; three and one on H. A. Dhihdhoo on 1 and 6 May respectively, and one on H. A. Maaranndhoo on 4–5 May 1984 [Ash]. In 1993, M. Boahurana, one on 6 November, L. Maanadhoo, two on 10 November; L. Foonandho, one on 10 November; L. Maanadhoo, two on 11 November; L. South Athahedha, six on 13 November; L. North Athahedha, three on 13 November; L. Fares, four on 13 November. Also a total of 26 caged: one M. Mulu, one M. Muluh, 10 L. Hithadhoo, 21 L. Kunanhodho, and one L. Fares, two A. Feridhoo.) Winter visitor in flocks of up to 200; some oversummer. Also recorded: K. Malé; Alifu Atoll; Shaviyani Atoll; S. Gamu. Refs 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 22, 25, 27, 32, 33.

Sand Terna Calidris alba (Kirru bondun). Rather uncommon winter visitor to S. Gamu only, x-iii. Refs 2, 12, 25, 33.

TEMMINCK’S STINT Calidris temminckii (Kirru bondun). A few apparently on passage on S. Gamu, x and xi. Refs 2, 25, 27, 33.

LONG-TOED STINT Calidris subminuta (Kirru bondun). Apparently a winter visitor in small numbers to S. Gamu, x. Refs 2, 25, 33.


CURLEW SANDPIPER Calidris ferruginea (Bondana ilolhi). In 1993 on L. Maamendhoo, one caged on 10 November; L. Kunahandhoo, two on 12 November.) Winter visitor in large numbers, in flocks of up to 500 birds, and some oversummer, viii. Recorded also: S. Gamu. Refs 2, 6, 12, 25, 27, 33.

SPOONBILL SANDPIPER Eurybrachyus pygmeus (Samu dhoonii). Ahmed Shafeeg states that it was observed three times on S. Gamu in 1964, and on Aali and Haa Dhaalu Atolls in the same year. No photographs or further details are available, so the records are unacceptable. Unfortunately. Ref. 32.

RUPE Philomachus pugnax (no local name). Rare winter visitor, with three records x-xi on S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 33.

EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER Haematopus ostralegus (no local name). (1993: Lari li Atoll, one caged on 12 November had been caught locally.) The first record for the Maldives. Ref. 6.

BLACK-WINGED STILT Himantopus himantopus (Thiyraa ilolhi). (A bird captured on K. Malé in 1982 was photographed [Shafeeg].) Uncommon visitor with five records, of which one in xi. Also recorded: S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 32, 33.

PACIFIC GOLDEN-POINTER Pluvialis fulva (Bilema dhushin). (A bird trapped on Raat Atoll in 1981 was photographed [Shafeeg].) In 1993, L. Kunahandhoo, one on 12 November; L. Hithadhoo, one caged on 12 November.) A common winter visitor, in flocks of up to 50 birds. Also recorded: K. Malé; S. Gamu; N. Bodulhaimendhoo. Refs 2, 4, 6, 12, 14, 25, 27, 32, 33.

GREY PLOVER Pluvialis squatarola (Alaka). (One, H A. Dinhidhoo on 1 May 1984 [Ash].) In 1993, K. Muli, one caged on 7 November. L. Hithadhoo, three caged, and a further two caged on L. Kunahandhoo, 12 November; singly on L. Fares, L. South Atoll. Also recorded: L. Maabai, two, and one, on 14 November; Dh. Dhoores, one, on 15 November.) A common winter visitor, and some overwinter. Also recorded from K. Malé; S. Gamu; H A. Dinhidhoo. Refs 2, 6, 12, 21, 25, 27, 33.


1994

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER Charadrius dubius (Findon). C. d. jordani. Probably an annual winter visitor in small numbers, although only known from S. Gamu, xi-xii. Refs 25, 33.

KINSHIP PLOVER Charadrius alexandrinus (Kirru bon’dana). Occasional in winter, x-xi on S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 33.

MONGOLIAN PLOVER Charadrius mongolus (Findon). C. m. atrifrons. (One on H. A. Dinhidhoo on 6 May 1984 [Ash].) In 1993, L. Kunahandhoo, one caged on 12 November.) Common regular winter visitor, vii-v. Also recorded: K. Malé; S. Gamu; Lhaviyani Atoll. Refs 2, 4, 6, 25, 27, 33.

GREATER SAND PLOVER Charadrius leschenaultii (‘Valu bon’dana’). In 1993, L. Hithadhoo, one caged and L. Kunahandhoo, one caged, on 12 November; L. Fares, seven on 13 November; L. Bodufinolhu, one on 13 November.) Regular winter visitor in small numbers, viii-vii; also and vi. Also recorded from K. Dhoonidhoo; S. Gamu. Refs 2, 6, 25, 27, 33.

CASPIAN PLOVER Charadrius asiaticus (no local name). Only recorded once: S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 33.

SOCIABLE LAPWING Vanellus gregarius (no local name). One certain record only, on Seenu Atoll, ix. Refs 25, 27, 33.

CRAB PLOVER Dromas ardeola (Shungu on Seenu, Thayravi on Male, Moolo lumba a juvenile on Malé). (A bird captured on K. Malé in 1981 was photographed [Shafeeg].) In 1984: two on H. A. Dinhidhoo on 2 May and two on H. A. Bibe’ on 6 May [Ash].) In 1993, M. Muli, two on 7 November, two caged on 8 November. L. Kunahandhoo, nine and one caged on 12 November; L. Hithadhoo, one caged on 12 November; L. Ziyaarilfush, six on 13 November.) Common and widespread and possibly resident, recorded xi-i and vi-vi, viii. Also recorded: Sh. Funadhoo; Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll; Gaafu Alifu; and on Th. Omadhoo. Refs 2, 3, 4, 6, 14, 22, 25, 27, 32, 33.


ANTARCTIC/Brown/SOUTH POLAR SKUA Catharacta antarctica longbenneg/ maccormicki (Kukulhummaadhoo). At least 11 birds reported. (Five birds captured on K. Malé consisted of two adult longbenneg and an unidentified bird in 1983 which were photographed [Shafeeg]. Two maccormicki without details were also photographed [Shafeeg]. A pinioned bird on 27 April 1984 on K. Muli’ damaaafushi was stated to have been captured five years earlier, and was identified at the time as antarctica [Ash].) Three unidentified to species, of which one was on S. Gamu in 1961, and two single birds were seen by J. Beilen in 1983 and 1984 (localities unknown). Two specifically unidentified pinioned birds were on K. Malé in January 1994 (R. C. Anderson). Refs 2, 3, 4, 25, 31, 32, 33.
WHITE-EYED GULL Larus leucophthalmus (Boyauguirey dhooni). One collected in June 1879 was the first record for the Maldives and the Oriental Region. (A second example, an adult captured in 1983 at an unknown locality, was photographed [Shafeeg].) Ahamed Shafeeg states that one or two birds are captured almost every year by fishermen, and sometimes sailors of merchant vessels bring them in. Refs 29, 32.

SOOTY GULL Larus hemprichii (Boyauguirey dhooni). (An immature captured at an unknown locality and on an unknown date was photographed [Shafeeg].) Ahamed Shafeeg states that in some years one or two birds come to the Maldives, and also that sometimes sailors bring them in. Refs 4, 32.

YELLOW-LegGED GULL Larus cachinians (Boyauguirey dhooni). (Two adults captured on K. Malé in 1981 and 1982 had pale grey mantles and yellow legs, and there was a third without data from Läänau Atoll; all were photographed [Shafeeg] and are assumed to relate to this species. An immature on S. Gamu on 29 September 1970 was either this species or fuscus (ref 33), and a similar bird but without details was photographed [Shafeeg].) Refs 4, 32, 33.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL Larus fuscus (no local name). (An adult captured on Läänau Atoll in 1981 was photographed [Shafeeg].) This is the only record from the Maldives. Refs 4, 31, 32.

HERRING/LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL Larus argentatus/fuscus. (An adult which was either L. f. fuscus or L. a. heuglini without details, was photographed [Shafeeg].) Refs 4, 32.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL Larus ichthyæus (Booakulu gholoruky). (A near-adult captured in 1983 on Läänau Atoll was photographed [Shafeeg].) This is the only record from the Maldives. Refs 4, 31, 32.

BROWN-BACKED GULL Larus brunnicephalus (Boyauguirey dhooni). (One captured on K. Malé in 1981 and another on G. Pua Mulaku in 1983 were photographed [Shafeeg].) These are the only records from the Maldives. Refs 4, 31, 32.

COMMON BLACK-BACKED GULL Larus ridibundus (Boyauguirey dhooni). (The following birds captured on K. Malé were photographed [Shafeeg]; a) adult in 1981; b) one in 1982 - identification uncertain but probably this species rather than L. brunnicephalus; c) one immature in 1983; d) an undated adult from an unrecorded locality.) There is only one previous record of this occasional visitor, from S. Gamu. Refs 2, 4, 25, 32, 33.

GULL-BILLED TERN Sterna nilotica (Kanifulu dhooni). S. n. nilotica. Only seen singly, or in small numbers, occasionally; i, iii, iv, ix, xii, but reported to breed iii-iv. Also recorded: K. Malé; Seenu Atoll. Refs 2, 25, 27, 31, 33.

CASPIAN TERN Sterna caspia (Miyaremu dhooni). Uncommon visitor, iv, ix, xi and i, up to four together, recorded K. Kassanfaru and Seenu Atoll. Refs 2, 25, 27, 31, 33.

LESSER CRESTED TERN Sterna bengalensis (Aminathee gaa dhooi). S. b. bengalensis. (In 1993, K. Ebooohoo, one on 4 November; M. Mulah, 1-5 on 9 November; L. Ziyaraafushi, 25 on 13 November and atoll reef, 10 on 14 November; Dhaalu Atoll one on 15 November, Dhooore, one on 16 November, and off Dhooore, two on 16 November.) Apparently resident in moderate numbers, but only reported x-v. Also recorded: K. Thulhagiri and K. Vihamanaafushi (Kaafu Atoll); Seenu and Alifu Atolls. Refs 2, 4, 6, 25, 27, 31, 33.

GREAT CRESTED TERN Sterna bergii (Bodu gaa dhooi). S. b. veleus. (One on H. A. Dhirahdo on 2 May 1984 [Ash]. In 1993: K. Malé, one on 4 November; K. Giraavaru, two on 17 November, K. Ebooohoo, 11 on 4 November; K. Dhigufinolhu, one on 4 November. Off Kaafu Atoll: 15 on 4 November, K. Mul, 10 on 7 November; M. Mulah, 50+ on 9 November, and off M. Mulah, 13 on 9 November; L. Fares, two on 13 November and K. Ziyaraafushi, two plus on 13 November; Dhooore Atoll: three on 15 November; A. Huradhdhoo, one on 16 November.) Apparently resident and widespread in small numbers; Maldivians state that they breed on K. Foojaadi in iv. Also recorded: K. Hulhule, K. Vihamanaafushi and K. Dhooonidhoo; Seenu, Alifu, and Lhaviyani Atolls. Refs 2, 4, 6, 22, 25, 27, 31, 33.


COMMON TERN Sterna hirundo (Kirra dhooi). S. h. tibetana. (Fifteen adults and one immature on H. A. Biber on 6 May 1984 [Ash]. In 1993, an immature photographed on L. Maandhoo on 10 November. The identification of a number of caged birds, possibly of this species, was not established.) Previously the only other substantiated records were from
Seenu Atoll, where it is an irregular winter visitor x-ii. Dr. R. C. Anderson has found many in January and February 1994 in the 1st Channel, and probably some of the other reports of flocks of terns at sea belong here. Refs 3, 6, 25, 32, 33.

**Little Tern Sterna albifrons** (Bodu dhooni). *S. a. albifrons*. One record only from Seenu Atoll in xi. Refs 2, 6, 32.

**Saunders’s Tern Sterna sandvicensis** (Bon’dhoo dhooni). (In 1993, all small terns were regarded as this species rather than *albifrons*, K. Biyaadhoone, one on 5 November; M. Mulii, five on 6 November, 10 on 7 November, and 9 on 8 November; L. Kusahandhoo, one caged on 12 November.) Numerous resident throughout the Maldives, reported breeding in iii and iv. Recorded from K. Foggaidhi; Seenu Atoll. Refs 2, 6, 25, 27, 31, 33.

**White-cheeked Tern Sterna repressa** (no local name). (One captured on Meem Atoll in 1983, and another without details, were photographed [Shaafeg]. In 1993: a first winter bird on 11 November on L. Maandhoone.) Possibly an overlooked species owing to confusion in non-breeding plumages with *S. hirundo* and *S. douglasi*. Refs 6, 32.

**Bridled Tern Sterna anaethetus** (Vaali). (In 1993, M. Mulii, two probables on 6 November; L. Kunsahandhoo, one caged on 12 November.) Reported to visit the Maldives in iii and iv to breed on K. Foggaidhi, although there was a captured juvenile on K. Vilingili in ii; recorded S. Gamu in iii and vi. Refs 2, 3, 6, 25, 27, 31, 33.

**Sooty Tern Sterna fuscata** (Vaali; Baidhu in the north). (In 1993, Vattaru Channel, 200+ on 5 November; Meem Atoll, four on 9 November; Kudahuvadhu Channel, 40 on 9 November; Veimandu Channel, 42 on 15 November; Dhaalu Atoll: one on 15 November, three on 16 November.) Previously only recorded from Seenu Atoll, where reported to breed in iii and iv. Refs 2, 6, 14, 25, 27, 31, 33.

**White-winged Tern Chlidonias leucopterus** (Kiri dhooni). (In 1993, L. Maandhoone, one on 12 November.) One near L. Maavan on 2 October 1992 (R. C. Anderson). The above are the only records away from Seenu Atoll, where it is a fairly regular winter visitor in small numbers, up to six together. Refs 2, 3, 6, 25, 33.

**Brown Noddy Anous stolidus** (Maaraga). *A. s. pileatus*. (A captured bird on K. Male in 1980 was photographed [Shaafeg]; four off K. Male on 27 April, and three at K. Gaafaru, 29 April 1984 [Asli].) In 1993, M. Mulii, one caged on 7 November; L. Maabaidhoo, two on 15 November; Veimanda Channel, six on 15 November; Dhaalu Atoll: 40 on 15 November; off Alifu Atoll, 11 on 16 November; Alifu/Male Channel, 24 on 17 November.) Common in large numbers throughout the year; Maldives report breeding but only one definite record known, vi-vii. Also recorded K. Thulhaagiri, K. Medhufinolhu; Alifu/Gaafu Dhaalu Atolls: Seenu Atoll; Gamu and Bushy Islet. Refs 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 20, 22, 25, 27, 31, 32, 33.
**AMUR FALCON Falco amurensis** (Surumuthi). Winter visitor in small numbers xi-iii, with four or more records from S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 33.

**EURASIAN HOOBY Falco subbuteo** (no local name). (In 1993, L. Isdhoo, one on 14 November (A. M. Hutson).) Regular visitor, xi-v. Ref 6, 36.

**PEREGRINE FALCON Falco peregrinus** (Baaawu). Infrequent winter visitor, recorded five times ix-xii on S. Gamu. Two in xii were identified as Eleonoras’s Falcon *F. eleonorae* in Duncan (1973) but are listed as *peregrinus* in Strickland and Jenner (1978). Refs 2, 12, 25, 33.

**WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD Phaethon lepturus** (Dhanifulhudhoon). *P. l. lepturus*. (Two over K. Kaashidhoo and two on sea nearby, 8 May 1984 [Ash]; 18 captured birds (16 adults, two juveniles) photographed together on Baa Atoll on 20 November 1983 [Shafig]. In 1993, L. Maandhoo, three plus on 10 November, four plus on 11 November, including two birds entering presumed nesting holes high in *Barringtonia* trees, and two on 12 November; L. North Ashaheedha, one on 13 November.) Formerly plentiful resident apparently throughout the Maldives, now decreasing. Breeds xii, and probably later (iii, vii). Also recorded: K. Malé and K. Thaburanhoo; B. Thulhaadho and B. Hulhahdhoo, Gaafu Alifu/Gaafu Dhaalu, Lhaviyani and Seeu Atolls. Dr R. C. Anderson noted eggs and chicks on G. A. Hithaadho on 20 August 1994. Refs 2, 3, 4, 6, 14, 25, 27, 31, 32, 33.

**MASKED BOOBY Sula dactylatra** (Hudhu maadhoon). (A captured adult on Gaafu Alifu/Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll in 1982 was photographed [Shafig].) Rare visitor, i-2 recorded on four occasions, vii and xi; K. Kassanfaru Reef; S. Gamu; one in K. Malé market on 30 August 1993 (R. C. Anderson). Locally reported breeding (young observed) on Gaafu Alifu Atoll unconfirmed. Refs 2, 3, 25, 27, 31, 32, 33.

**RED-FOOTED BOOBY Sula sula** (Kadu heda maadhoon). (One subsadult captured in 1983 at K. Malé was photographed [Shafig].) Dr R. C. Anderson photographed captured individuals at A. Ukuvelhas on 15 September 1992 and on Gnyaaviyani Atoll on 6 November 1993. A local report of breeding on Gaafu Alifu Atoll has not been confirmed. Refs 3, 4, 31, 32.

**BROWN BOOBY Sula leucogaster** (Kalhu maadhoon). *S. l. plotus*. (Two captured at K. Malé, one in 1981 and the other in 1983, photographed by Shafig, proved to be an adult and a juvenile.) A fairly common visitor, most frequently xi-xii. Also recorded: Lhaviyani Atoll; K. Kassanfaru Reef; and a captured bird at B. Thulhaadho on 19 August 1992 (R. C. Anderson). Refs 2, 3, 4, 25, 27, 31, 32, 33.

**LITTLE EGRET Egretta garzetta** (Kuda lagana). (In 1993, L. Maandhoo, one on 12 November; L. Kunahandho, one on 12 November; L. Isdhoo, one on 14 November; L. Maabaidhoo, one caged on 14 November. A. Feridhoo, one caged on 17 November.) Uncommon winter visitor recorded about eight times; also on B. Eydyafushi; S. Hulhadhoo. Refs 2, 6, 14, 25, 27, 33.

**WESTERN REEF EGRET Egretta gularis** (Bodu raabodhi). Ahamed Shafig states one arrived with Cattle Egrets in 1990 and was photographed on B. Thulhaadho; others had been reported elsewhere earlier. The photograph has not been examined and no description is available. Ref 32.


**PURPLE HERON Ardea purpurea** (Dhabu maskanaa). (In 1993, a caged bird on L. Hithadhoo on 12 November.) Probably a frequent visitor, at least eight records of 1-7 birds in vii and x-ii, all except one from Seenu Atoll. Refs 6, 12, 25, 33.


**INTERMEDIATE EGRET Mesophoyx intermedia** (no local name). (A captured bird on K. Malé in 1982 was photographed [Shafig]. In 1993 a caged bird was photographed on L. Kunahandho on 12 November. The first records for the Maldives.) Ref 2, 6, 32.

**CATTLE EGRET Bubulcus ibis** (Iravaa hudhu). (A captive bird on 21 April 1984 in K. Malé, where there were 11 birds in May [Ash].) In 1993, two on M. Muluh on 8 November; L. Kadhidhoo, one on 10 November, L. Maandhoo, one on 10 November, L. Hithadhoo, one, and L. Kunahandho one caged, on 12 November; Dh. Ribudhoo, one caged on 16 November.) A regular visitor, arriving in small flocks in x-ii until iii-v; possibly bred Seenu Atoll in ix. Also recorded: K. Dhiifushi and Seenu Atoll. Refs 2, 6, 12, 13, 25, 27, 32, 33.

**INDIAN POND-HERON Ardeola grayii** (Huvadhoo raabodhi). *A. g. grayii; A. g. philipsi*. (In 1993, L. Isdhoo, two on 14 November. It is not known if these were migrant nominate *grayii*, of which there have been two previous records further north in the archipelago, or an extension of range of the resident race *philipsi*, abundant on the two southerly atolls of Seenu and
Gaafu Alifu/Gaafu Dhaalu.) A. g. grayii is a straggler collected at Dhaviyani Atoll, and three pond-herons reported at K. Vilingili in it probably belong here; philippus is confined to the southern atolls, where it is an abundant resident. Breeding activity in xii. In addition recorded: Seenu and Gaafu Alifu/Gaafu Dhaalu Atolls. Refs 2, 6, 12, 13, 25, 27, 28, 30, 33.

**Striated Heron Butorides striatus** (Dhvehi raabodhi). B. s. didii and B. s. albipusus. (In 1984, one to three noted in April-May 1984 on K. Kurumba Resort and K. Kan' doonmaafushi; H. A. Dhihdhoo and H. A. Maamandho [Ash]. In 1993, widely distributed with 54 individuals on M. Mulidhoo Atoll. L. Maanandho, L. M. Mendho, L. Kunhemandho, L. N. Farres, L. Ishhoo, L. North Athisheeda, L. Vadinolhu, L. Maambaidhoo, L. Harudhoo; A. Peridhoo. Presumably all didii, with many birds, especially on Laamu Atoll, being pale grey to whitish.) Common resident throughout the archipelago, but probably decreasing. B. s. didii is the race reported from the northern and central atolls, while albipusus is reported to be confined to the southern. Also recorded Kaafu Atoll: K. Malé, K. Vilingili, K. Hulhule and K. Guraadho; Seenu Atoll: S. Hithaadhoo and S. Gamu; Gaafu Alifu/Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll. Breeds x-xi. Refs 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 33.

**Black-crowned Night-heron Nycticorax nycticorax** (Raabodhi). (A bird captured on Kaafu Atoll in 1983 was photographed [Shafeeg].) This is the only record from the Maldives. Ref 32.

**Yellow-bittern Isobycthes sinensis** (Dhonranboodhi). (A bird captured on Seenu Atoll in 1987 was photographed by Shafeeg.) A rare visitor recorded twice on S. Meeedhoo. Refs 25, 32, 33.

**Cinnamon Bittern Isobycthes cinamonomus** (Raabodhi). (A bird captured without details of date or locality was photographed by Shafeeg.) An occasional visitor recorded about four times; once on Toddu Islet, west of K. Malé and three times on Seenu Atoll in iii, viii, x. Refs 25, 27, 32, 33.


**Great Bittern Botaurus stellaris** (no local name). A rare vagrant seen on three days, x-xii, on S. Gamu. Refs 25, 33.

**Greater Flamingo Phoenicopterus ruber** (Gudu gudaax dhooni). (One caught Haa Alifu Atoll, undated, was photographed [Shafeeg].) Ahamed Shafeeg states that it occurs sporadically and that it is well-established in local folklore. Ref 32.

**Glossy Ibis Pelagis falcinellus** (Kalhu bulli thubi). Rare visitor to S. Gamu in i and x. Refs 25, 33.

**Eurasian Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia** (Dheyfax dhooni). Twice caught in Vaavu Atoll, according to Ahamed Shafeeg, once in the 1950s and again in 1984. Ref 32.

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**Great White Pelican Pelecanus onocrotalus** (Hudhu girubaax dhooni). (An adult captured in Shaviyani Atoll in 1974 was brought to Male and photographed [Shafeeg].) Ahamed Shafeeg reports observing two in 1962. Ref 32.

**Spot-billed Pelican Pelecanus philippensis** (Alhirigruha dhooni). Ahamed Shafeeg reports this as a rare visitor, with a maximum of five together, the first two observed in 1962. However, no details are available. Ref 32.

**Great Frigatebird Fregata minor** (Maa hoara). A frequent visitor, recorded i, v, vi, xii, from K. Malé; Seenu Atoll; Gaafu Alifu Atoll; L. Hithaaddoo; Baa Atoll; Gyaaviyani Atoll. Refs 2, 3, 25, 27, 31, 33.

**Lesser Frigatebird Fregata ariel** (Hoora). F. a. iridates. (In 1993, Vattaru Channel, one on 5 November. M. Mulah, two on 9 November; L. Maanandho, one on 10 November and two on 11 November, L. Kunhemandho, one on 12 November, L. Maambaidho, two on 15 November.) Plentiful around most atolls and probably resident on some. Breeding x and xi (ref 14). Also recorded: B. Olhuqueri and B. Thulhuhaadho; Gaafu Alifu/Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll; S. Gamu; Gyaaviyani Atoll. Refs 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 25, 27, 31, 33.


**Wedge-tailed Shearwater Puffinus pacificus** (Bodu hoogalaax). (One off Sh. Maagooddho on 30 April 1984 [Ash].) A frequent visitor, sometimes plentiful, iii-vi. Also recorded between Seenu and Gaafu Dhaalu Atolls. Frequents adjoining sea areas, iv-x. Refs 2, 4, 25, 27, 31, 33.

** Flesh-footed Shearwater Puffinus carneipes** (Maa hoogalaax). (One captured 26 May 1982, K. Malé was photographed [Shafeeg].) Small numbers in the south, iii-vi, vii and x, in the Equatorial Channel between Seenu and Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, and from 7 July 1991 in the channels between Laamu and Thaa and between Thaa and Dhaalu (R. C. Anderson). Refs 2, 3, 11, 15, 25, 27, 31, 33.

**Audubon’s Shearwater Puffinus lherminieri** (Dhvehi hoogalaax). P. l. bailloni (P. l. persicus according to ref. 14). (Two between Shaviyani and Noonu Atolls, 30 April 1984; two, one and one between Shaviyani and Kaafu Atolls, 6 May 1984 [Ash].) Two birds caught at K. Malé in 1983, were photographed [Shafeeg]. In 1993: off M. Rajamandho, two on 5 November; M. Kurei, one on 9 November; Dh. Dhoores, two heard, probably this species (A. M. Hutson). Stated to breed on Meemu Atoll, on all small islands from M. Kollhufushi north-east to M. Rajmailandho.) A frequent and widespread visitor, sometimes in large numbers, but possibly decreasing: breeding xii, perhaps throughout the year. Also recorded: great numbers breed Lh. Dhiffushhi and Lh. Olhuvelivishhi; reported to breed on G. A. Hithaaddoo; observed in small numbers in the Equatorial Channel. Refs 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 14, 18, 25, 27, 31, 32, 33.
ASIAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER *Terpsiphone paradisi* (no local name). Two records in x and xi on S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 33.

EVERBROOKED TURSH *Turdus obscurus* (no local name). (A bird captured at M. Musuru in 1983 was photographed [Shafeeg].) This is the only record for the Maldives. Refs 8, 32.

INDIAN ROBIN *Saxicolaoides flicata* (no local name). One record in xi on Seenu Atoll. Ref 33.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe* (no local name). One record in x on Seenu Atoll. Ref 33.

PIED WHEATEAR *Oenanthe pleschanka* (no local name). Irregular winter visitor with six records on S. Gamu, x-xii. Refs 2, 25, 33.

ISABELLINE WHEATEAR *Oenanthe isabellina* (no local name). A fairly regular autumn visitor, with eight records, x-xii, on S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 33.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris* (no local name). One on Seenu Atoll in i. Refs 2, 17, 25, 33.

COMMON MYNA *Acridotheres tristis* (Mainaa). This species became established on K. Malé through the release of cage-birds prior to 1939. The population of c.200 died out during World War II during a period of acute local food shortage (Ahamed Shafeeg). Only one record since, on K. Vilingili, in spite of the statement that it is well established in the Maldives (Ali and Ripley 1987). Refs 2, 13, 32.


PLAIN MARTIN *Riparia paludicola* (Forikye). One record in xi on Seenu Atoll. Ref 33.


NORTHERN HOUSE-MARTIN *Delichon urbica* (Forikye). (One, H. A. Maarandho, on 4 May 1984. It soon attracted the company of six House Crows, with which it played in elaborate aerobatics for at least half an hour. Identification as *D. urbica*, rather than Asian House-Martlin *D. dasypus*, is claimed with confidence [Ash.]) Irregular winter visitor, x-ii, sometimes in moderate numbers. Also recorded: K. Malé and K. Hulhu; S. Gamu. Refs 2, 4, 12, 14, 23, 25, 27, 33.

WARBLER PHYLLOCEPHUS (no local name). One recorded on Seenu Atoll in x was considered by the observer to be a Willow Warbler *P. trochilus*, but this seems very unlikely to be correct, given that there is only one record for the species from the Indian subcontinent. Ref 33.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus* (Gay kurulla, a Singalese name). (One to three seen often in two sites in K. Malé in April and May 1984. The males had a broad black throat line above a conspicuously large black breast patch,
and had a striking call rendered as a plaintive 'sweet' [Ash].) Ahamed Shafeeg observed the establishment of this species in K. Male', which commenced in 1962 when a local resident began to release surplus birds he was rearing in captivity. This continued over the years, leading to the build-up of a large resident population, which was augmented by c.100 birds that arrived with a grain ship from Sri Lanka in around 1980. This population was almost entirely exterminated by a German rodent control team in around 1981, but it is now building up again with a present population of c.200 mainly based in the port area. There are no other records from the Maldives. Refs 4, 32.

**Yellow Wagtail** Motacilla flava (Fenfoa dhooni). Irregular winter visitor in small numbers, x-xii, and sometimes iii-iv, probably mainly on passage, on K. Male', S. Gamu and once on a ship 72 kms south of Seenu Atoll. Refs 2, 12, 25, 27, 33.

**Grey Wagtail** Motacilla cinerea (no local name). Two records of single northern migrants in xii and xii on S. Gamu. Refs 2, 25, 33.

**True Pintail** Anas platyrhynchos (Dhon fenfoa dhooni). One record of a single bird in xii on K. Male'. Refs 2, 25, 27.


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**REFERENCES**


All Shafeeg, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, Male 20, Republic of Maldives.
APPENDIX 1

NAMES OF MALDIVIAN ATOLLS

Each atoll generally has two names; an older 'geographical' name referring to the atoll feature, and a newer 'code' name referring to the administrative unit. There are 26 natural atolls but only 19 administrative units - some units cover two atolls, but some of the large atolls are divided into two units (the capital Male' is regarded as a twelfth). The two systems are equally correct and both are current at present. However, the code name is becoming increasingly popular and is used particularly by younger people. Some atolls seem to be known regularly by their code name (e.g. Dhaalu), others by their geographical name (e.g. Alifu). There seem to be no rules as to which name system is used, except that they should not be mixed. One authority is said to use geographical names for scientific papers, whilst another apparently uses the code name because it is simpler. The code system is named after the Maldivian alphabet, and the atolls are named from north to south. There is enormous variation in spelling, presumably because it is not necessarily clear how to transcribe the Maldivian script into our alphabet (the presence or absence of 'u' at the end of a word is particularly variable).

A third, separate, naming system is based on the basic alphabet ('letter' in the list below). Administrative units are assigned letters from A to Z starting from the north; Male' town is assigned the letter 'I'. This system is used for a few special applications, for example in boat registrations.

`Atholhu' is 'atoll', 'Uthuruburi' is north part and comes after the name, and 'Dhivrethuburi' is south part and also comes after the name; however, the English names are used below. The spellings used are from an island and atoll compendium currently being compiled by Hassan Maumik. Atoll code names (in italics in the left hand column) are used in the systematic list. A cross reference to all synonyms is provided in the following list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Code and code names*</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Geographical names and synonyms</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Alifu (A)</td>
<td>0°37'N</td>
<td>Ari, Rando and Thoddhu</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Baa (B)</td>
<td>3°00'N</td>
<td>part of Alifu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Dhaalu (D)</td>
<td>2°00'N</td>
<td>Malamadhu South &amp; Gaafafshadhoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Fuaa (D)</td>
<td>3°15'N</td>
<td>Malamadhu North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vaavu (E)</td>
<td>3°20'N</td>
<td>part of Vaavu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Addu (F)</td>
<td>5°25'N</td>
<td>part of Vaavu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Maafaru (G)</td>
<td>8°45'N</td>
<td>Gagayyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Gaafaru (H)</td>
<td>4°30'N</td>
<td>part of Kaifu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Dhaalu (I)</td>
<td>5°30'N</td>
<td>Harih (Harih)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Haa Alif (J)</td>
<td>6°15'N</td>
<td>Harih (Harih)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Dhaalu (K)</td>
<td>2°00'N</td>
<td>Gagayyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Addu (L)</td>
<td>4°15'N</td>
<td>part of Baa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Maafaru (M)</td>
<td>4°45'N</td>
<td>Thilahunathi North &amp; Huvadhoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Dhaalu (N)</td>
<td>4°45'N</td>
<td>Thilahunathi North &amp; Huvadhoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Addu (O)</td>
<td>2°00'N</td>
<td>Geesha (Geesha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Dhaalu (P)</td>
<td>0°30'N</td>
<td>part of Dhaalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Maafaru (Q)</td>
<td>0°15'N</td>
<td>Fuvah (Fuvah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Haa Dhaalu (R)</td>
<td>0°00'N</td>
<td>part of Baa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Addu (S)</td>
<td>2°00'N</td>
<td>Laamu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Haa Alif (T)</td>
<td>0°30'N</td>
<td>Geesha (Geesha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Haa Dhaalu (U)</td>
<td>0°15'N</td>
<td>part of Baa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Addu (V)</td>
<td>4°20'N</td>
<td>Kaaf (Caaf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Addu (W)</td>
<td>4°15'N</td>
<td>part of Kaifu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Addu (X)</td>
<td>1°15'N</td>
<td>Harih (Harih)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Addu (Y)</td>
<td>2°25'N</td>
<td>part of Haa Dhaalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Addu (Z)</td>
<td>5°25'N</td>
<td>part of Kaifu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2

List of islands mentioned in the text

The names conform as far as possible with the Map of Maldives (col. 1). Alternative spellings used in the cited references are also given, with the reference numbers given in parentheses.

Alipas (Lhaviyani Atoll)

Addu (Addu Atoll)

Addu (Alif Alif Atoll)

Addu Atoll (Alif Alif Atoll)

Addu Atoll (Alif Alif Atoll)

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CONSERVATION OF BIRDS IN THE MALDIVES

In order to conserve the wildlife, environment and natural beauty of the archipelago for the benefit of its people, several early decisions and actions require to be undertaken by the Government of the Republic of the Maldives. Following a visit with the Bird Conservation Trust by the three undersigned ornithologists to the Maldives in November 1993, and by one of us with an FAO project in 1984, we propose the following recommendations for consideration regarding bird-life.

1. It is suggested that an experienced expatriate conservation/wildlife adviser should visit the Maldives for a period of up to one year to work with the government’s personnel in drawing up a conservation management plan for the whole archipelago.

2. What appears to be a major widespread threat to birds between the atolls and Malé, involving the import of firewood from abroad, and the dispatch of birds from other atolls to Malé, needs to be fully investigated and assessed. It seems that there has been some movement of sea birds to export them for use in the Maldives, and urgent legislation is required for their protection and to prevent their total loss.

3. As in many other countries, e.g. Seychelles, New Zealand, etc., breeding colonies of seabirds are an important tourist attraction being visited by increasing numbers of ‘eco-tourists’. Early action should be taken to survey and record all known present and previous breeding sites throughout the Maldives as a basis for an action plan. The importance of seabirds as indicators of fish presence is, of course, well-known.

4. Establish an educational conservation-awareness programme throughout the atolls, in collaboration with the conservation/wildlife adviser. This should be directed primarily through the schools, but be supported by radio talks, television programmes, lecture tours, etc.

5. Before much international support or recognition can be expected the Maldives needs to prove convincingly that it is serious in its intent to preserve its wildlife and environment. At an early stage support should be received for a conservation/wildlife adviser through international aid and conservation agencies (e.g. WWF, IUCN, BC, RSPB, etc.). Effective action should do much to further the Maldives’ image overseas, and so attract the increasing number of conservation-minded tourists.

6. Other potential sources of support and funding might include the following: the introduction of a ‘conservation tax’ of, say, 3-5% on all tourist ‘taxis’; Shell Chemicals through an environmental impact study following their seismic survey; various airlines serving the Maldives; the recent islands themselves, etc.

7. Restrictions will need to be imposed on the use by tourists of unhabited islands in the neighbourhood of resorts. The establishment of reserves, or protected islands, could commence immediately, but in the first place should be confined to selected islands already known to hold breeding colonies of seabirds, or feeding areas for shorebirds. Public access to breeding colonies on relatively small islands needs to be controlled very carefully.

8. The marketing of birds could cease almost totally and immediately through the suspension of the bird market in Malé, the prevention of the recent islands being used as potential marketing channels (apparently currently being undertaken in connection with live lobster transfers), and through directives to Ani chiefs to the community under their control, particularly with regard to the wholesale capture of breeding seabirds.

9. An on-site training programme could be developed by the conservation/wildlife adviser. Early thought should also be given towards appropriate training overseas for a Maldivian Wildlife Officer and a Conservation Education Officer. It would obviously be of value for the national Wildlife Officer if a tour was arranged to the Seychelles or elsewhere to study the methods employed in their system of wildlife tourism management.

10. The presence of House Crows presents a problem on some islands. Where crows control becomes necessary, an ecological approach to the problem is recommended. Suppression of their numbers could be greatly controlled by an improvement in sanitary conditions and better organised garbage disposal - both of which at present probably provide much of the birds’ diet. An attempt is needed to suppress numbers to an acceptable level, rather than their total elimination.

11. There may be a need to seek alternative activities for the many people currently involved in bird persecution. Many might be required as bird-guides in tourism, and as wardens on protected islands.

J. S. Ash
R. Howard
A. Moore
November 1995