Acanthocybium solandri (Cuvier, 1831)

English Name:	**Wahoo**	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	**Kunumas**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	**Common to 1.3 m; max.** 2.1 m	**Specimen:**	MRS/P0331/88

Distinctive Characters: First dorsal fin with 23-27 spines, second dorsal fin with 12-16 rays followed by 8 or 9 finlets. Anal fin with 12-14 rays followed by 9 finlets. Teeth triangular, compressed and finely serrate. Snout about as long as rest of head. Gill rakers undeveloped.

Colour: Back iridescent bluish green. Numerous dark vertical bars on sides.

Habitat **and** Biology: Epipelagic; oceanic. Common on outer atoll reefs. Solitary or forming loose aggregations rather than compact schools. Feeds on pelagic fishes and cephalopods.

Distribution: Circumtropical.

Remarks: *Acanthocybium solandri* is caught by trolling and also by a specialised fishing technique called *'heymas* ***he/un'.*** This is carried out from small rowing boats and involves skipping a wooden model fish across the sea surface to lure the wahoo up within harpoon range. Wahoo are usually caught outside the atoll a bit beyond the point at which the reef disappears from sight.

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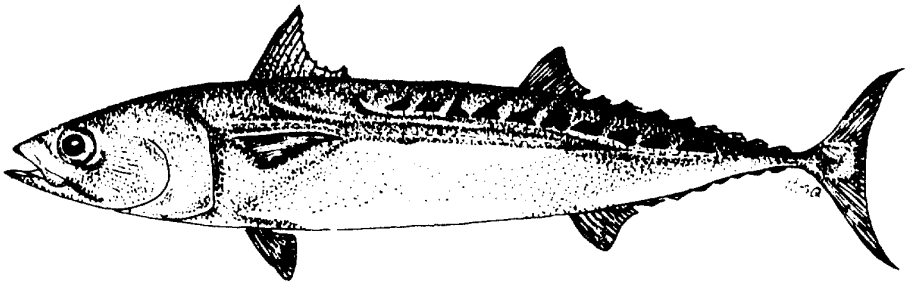
Auxis rochei (Risso, 1810)



English Name:	**Bullet tuna**	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	Geburu raagondi	**Order:**	Perciformes
Size:	Common to 30cm; max. 50cm	Specimen:	MRS/0l43/87

Distinctive Characters: Two dorsal fins, the first with 10-Il tall spines, separated by large interspace, the second fin followed by 8 finlets. Pectoral fins short, not reaching as far as dorsal patterned scaleless area. Anal fin followed by 7 finlets. Corselet (band of scales along lateral line) relatively well developed, usually 10-IS scales wide under second dorsal fin origin.

Colour: Dark bluish above silvery below. Scaleless area on back with about 15 or more relatively broad dark bars.

Habitat and Biology: Epipelagic, neritic and oceanic. Feeds on fishes like anchovies and sardines.

Distribution: Circumtropical.

Remarks: *Auxis rochei* is very similar in appearance to *A. thazard* (next page). It differs, however, in a number of small details: the length of the pectoral fins, the breadth of corselet and the dorsal patterning. *A. rochei* appears to be rather rare in Maldives, specimens occurring only occasionally among the large catches of A. *thazard* landed at Male fish market.

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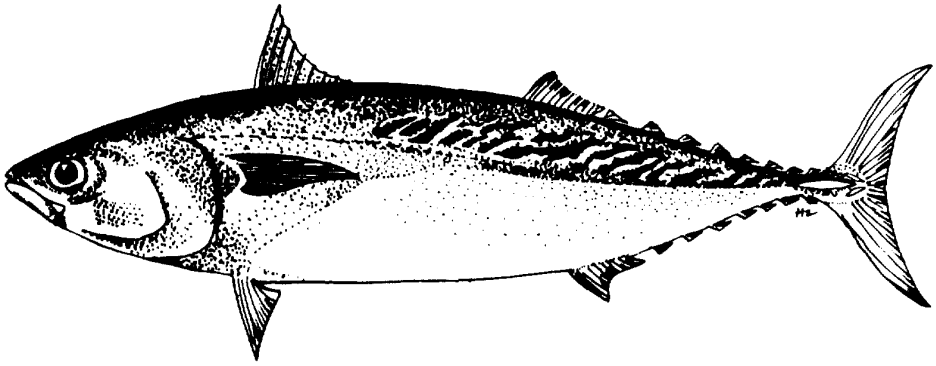
Auxis thazurd (Lacepède, 1800)



English Name:	**Frigate** tuna	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	**Raagondi**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	Common to *35* cm; max. 58 cm	Specimen:	MRS/0476/97

Distinctive Characters: Two dorsal fins, the first with 10-12 spines, separated from second by a large interspace, the second followed by 8 finlets. Anal fin followed by 7 finlets. Pectoral fin short but reaching past vertical line from anterior margin of scaleless area above corselet. Corselet narrow, no more than 5 scales wide under origin of second dorsal fin. A strong keel on each side of caudal fin base.

Colour: Bluish dorsally turning to deep blue on head, silvery white below. A pattern of 15 or more narrow, oblique to nearly horizontal, dark wavy lines in the scaleless area above the lateral line.

Habitat and Biology: Epipelagic, neritic as well as oceanic species. Forms large schools. Feeds on small pelagic fishes, planktonic crabs, shrimps and stomatopod larvae.

Distribution: Tropical and temperate waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Remarks: *Auxis thazard* is a major fishery species in the Maldives. It is third in importance interms of catch after skipjack and yellowfin tuna. Caught mainly by pole and line, but also by trolling. It is not as a popular food fish as skipjack, perhaps because of its small size, boniness, and possible confusion with the poisonous *'raagondi koli'* (see page 372).

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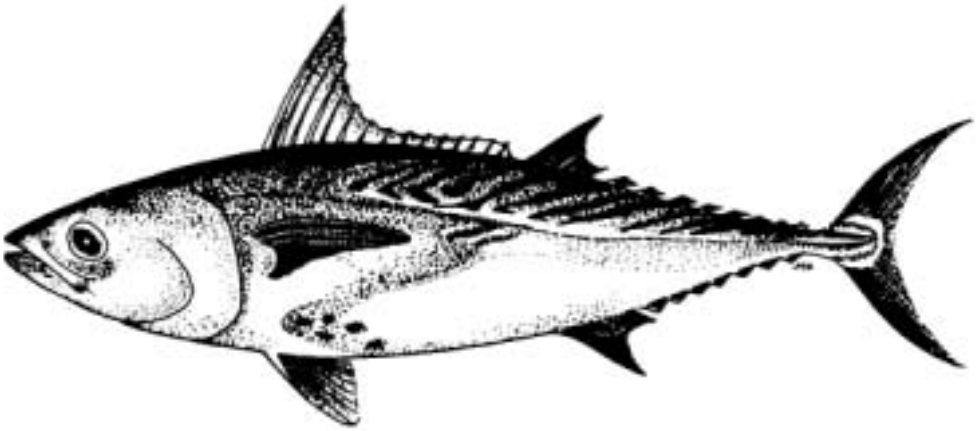
Euthynnus affinis (Cantor, 1849)



English Name:	**Kawakawa**	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	**Latti**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	Common to *55* cm; max. about I m	Specimen:	MRS/0075/86

Distinctive Characters: Two dorsal fms, the first with 11-14 spines, both fin separated by a narrow interspace. Anterior spines of dorsals much higher than those midway, giving the fins a strongly concave outline. Second dorsal fin much lower than first and followed by 8-10 finlets. Pectoral fins short. Two flaps between pelvic fins. Body naked except for corselet and lateral line.

Colour: Bluish black dorsally, silvery white ventrally. Many dark bands above lateral line. One or more small black spots between pelvic and pectoral fin (may not always be very conspicuous).

Habitat and Biology: Epipelagic, neritic species inhabiting water temperatures ranging from 18°Cto 29°C. Form schools. Feeds on small pelagic fishes, planktonic crabs, shrimps and stomatopod larvae.

Distribution: Warm waters of the Indo-West Pacific.

Remarks: *Euthynnus afJInis* is commonly caught in the Maldives by trolling. Unlike the other major tuna species (which are more oceanic) this species is closely associated with the atolls. Kawakawa is also known as "little tuna", but this name can be confused with "small tuna" so is best avoided.

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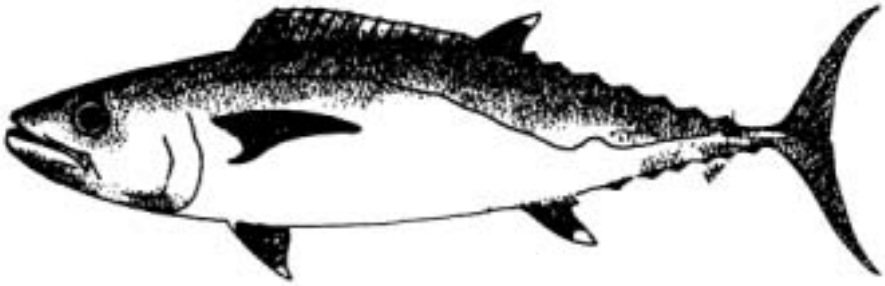
Gymnosarda unicolor (Ruppell, 1838)



English Name:	**Dogtooth tuna**	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	**Woshimas**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	Common to 1.1 m; max. 1.5 m	**Specimen:**	MRS/P0477/97

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fins close together, the first with 13-15 spines, its margin nearly straight, the second followed by 6-7 finlets. Anal fin with 12-13 rays followed by 6 finlets. Pectoral fin with 25-28 rays. Body elongate and moderately compressed. Mouth fairly large. 14-31 large conical teeth on both jaws. Interpelvic process large and single. Lateral line strongly undulating.

Colour: Overall appearance grey. Back blue-black, fading to silvery below. Anterior edge of first dorsal fin dark, other fins greyish. Tips of second dorsal and anal white.

Habitat and Biology: An epipelagic species, usually encountered around coral reefs. Generally solitary, or occurs in small groups. Voracious predator, feeding on small schooling fishes and squids.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Unlike other tunas, which are more or less fishes of open ocean, *Gymnosarda unicolor* is usually associated with coral reefs. It is caught by trolling and handlining. A wide size range is landed at Male fish market but most are within the range 40-110 cm fork length.

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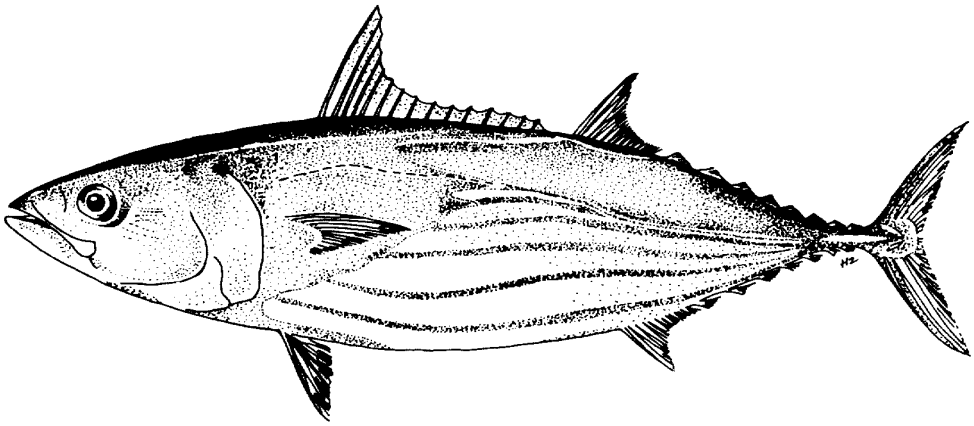
ؤسِرَوَشُ ثَرْمَيْتُو رَثْرَوْثَرَوْتَوْ ثَثْرَوَمْثَرِ، مَثْرَثْرَوْسِرَسْوْثَرَوْمِ وِسْرَمِسْ مَوْ سَسْوْثَرَوْ مَمِرْثَوْ رَوْرَوْ، جِمِ سَسِرَوْ وَرَسْ وَرَثَسْ مَسْرَوْثَوْسْ رَثْرَسْرَوْرَوْ، رَوْرَوْ مَسْرَوْمِرَوْمِ ثَوْرَسْ ثَوْسْ رَثْرَسْ وَمْرَوْمْ مَرْثَرَوْمْ رَثْرَوْ، رَوْرَوْ ثَمْرَسِرَوْمِ ثَرْثَمْرِمَمِ رَثْرَسْرِ وَرَسْ سَمِرِوْمِ ثَرِرْثَرِوْسْرَسْرَوْ ثَوْرَسْرَوْ، مَمِ وَسْرَوْ ثَوْرَسِرَوْمِ 13 مَوْمِ 15 مَ وَرَوْرَوْ مَوْرَسْ سَرْسِرَوْرَوْ، رَوْرَوْ مِرَوْسْ وَرَسْرَوْسْرَوْمْ ثَوْرَسْ سَرْوْسْرَوْ وَرَسْ رَثْرَوْ، رَوْرَوْ مِرَوْسْرَوْ وَرَوْسْرَوْمِ ثَوْرَسْ وَرَثْرَوْسْ مِرَسْرَسْرَوْ رَثْرَوْ، ؤسِرَوْرَوْ رَمِرَوْمِ سَوْرَسْرَوْ، سَسْوْثَرَوْسْرَسْ رَثْرَسْرِ مِرِرْسْرَوْمْرَوْرَوْ، رَوْرَوْ ثَمْرَسِرَوْمِ وَرَسْرَوْ ثَوْرَسِرَوْمِ رَثْرَسْرِ سَوْرَسْرَوْمْرَوْرَوْ، رَمِرَوْمِ رَثْرَسْرِ سَوْرَسْرَوْمْرَوْرَوْ.

ؤسِرَوَشُ مِرَوْمِ رَسْوْثَرِسْ مَرْسَرَ مَمِ مَوْ وِسْرَمِسْ وَرَثْرَوْرَوْ ثَثْرَسْ وَرَمْرَمِرَوْسْ مَرْوْرَسْ رَسْوْثَرِسْرَسْرَوْمِ ثَثْرَ مِرَوْمِسْ سَمِرَوْ رَوْرَوْ، مِرَوْرَوْ رَسْوْسْرَمِسْ وَسِرَوْمِ رَثْرَسْرِ مَسْرَسْرِ، سَرَوْرَوْسْ ثَوْمِرَمَمِسْ سَرَمِرَوْسْ ؤسِرَوَشُ وَرَثْرَوْ ثَثْرَوْمِ مَوْرَسْرَوْسْرَوْمِرَوْرَوْ، جِمِ 1.5 جِرَوْسْ ثَثْرَوْ رَوْرَوْ، رَوْرَوْ ثَثْرَوْمِ مَمِسْ سَرَمِرَوْسْ مَوْ رَوْ، ثَوْرَوْمِ، ثَوْرَمِرَوْرَوْ.

Katsuwonus pelamis (Linnaeus, 1758)



English Name:	**Skipjack tuna**	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	**Kalhubilamas**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	Common to 70 cm; max. 1.08 m	Specimen:	MRS/0050/86

Distinctive Characters: Two dorsal fins separated by a small interspace (not larger than eye). The first dorsal fin with 14-16 spines, the second followed by 7-9 finlets. Anal fin with 14-15 rays followed by 7 finlets. Pectoral fin with 26-28 rays. Body scaleless except for the corselet and lateral line.

Colour: Back dark purplish blue. Lower side and belly silvery, with 4-6 very conspicuous longitudinal dark bands (which in live specimens may appear as discontinuous lines of dark blotches).

Habitat and Biology: Epipelagic and oceanic usually above the thermocline. Forms massive schools together with juvenile yellowfin tuna. Feeds on small fishes, cephalopods and crustaceans.

Distribution: Tropical and warm temperate waters throughout the world.

Remarks: *Katsuwonuspelamis* is the most commercially important species in the Maldives. This one species accounts for about two thirds of the total recorded fish catch. It is caught almost exclusively in the livebait pole and line fishery. This is a traditional fishery that has almost certainly been in existence for over one thousand years.

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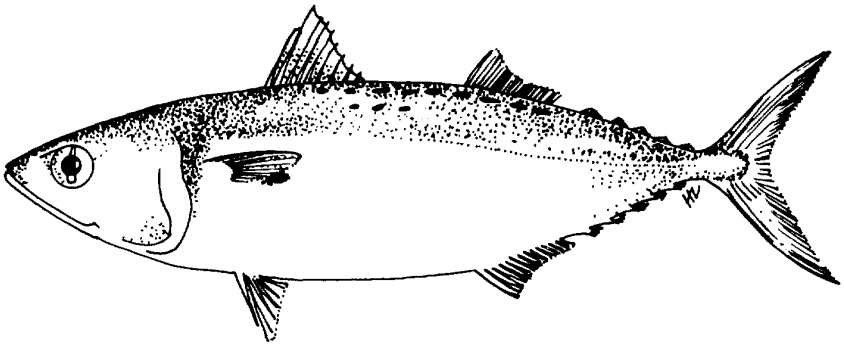
Rastrelliger kanagurta (Cuvier, 1817)



English Name:	**Indian mackerel**	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	**Karaverimas**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	**Max.** 35 cm	**Specimen:**	MRS/P0155/87

Distinctive **Characters:** Dorsal fins well separated. The first triangular with 8-II spines, second dorsal and anal fins followed by 5 finlets. Pectoral fin short with 19-20 rays. Body moderately deep, its depth at margin of gill cover 4.3-5.2 in fork length. Gillrakers very long and visible when mouth is open.

Colour: Back blue-green, sides silver with golden tint, narrow dark longitudinal bands on upper part of body (golden in fresh specimens). A black spot on body near lower margin of pectoral fin.

Habitat and Biology: Pelagic in coastal waters. Often schooling in large numbers. Juveniles feed on phytoplankton, adults primarily on macroplankton such as larval shrimp and fish.

Distribution: Widespread in Indo-West Pacific.

Remarks: *Rastre//iger kanagurta* appears to occur only irregularly in central and southern Maldives. However, it occurs more regularly in northern Maldives, particularly during the north-east monsoon.

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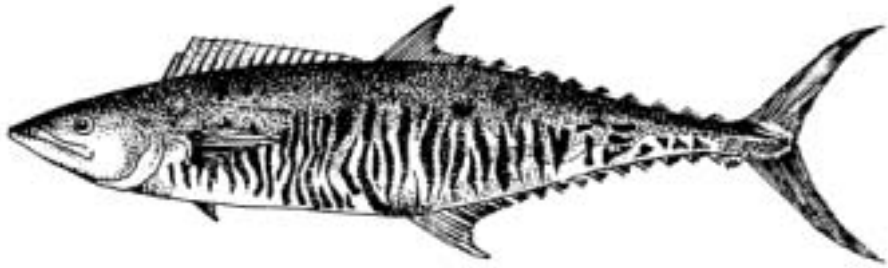
Scomberomorus commerson (Lacepède, 1800)



English Name:	**Narrow-banded** spanish mackerel	Family:	SCOMBRIDAE
Local Name:	**Galhi kurumas**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	**Max.** 2.2 m		

Distinctive Characters: Two dorsal fins. The first with 15-18 spines, second dorsal fin with 15-20 rays followed by 8-10 finlets. Anal fin with 16-21 rays followed by 7-12 finlets. Pectoral fin with 21-24 rays. Lateral line wavy but abruptly bent downward behind second dorsal fin.

Colour: Deep blue-grey above, pale below. Numerous thin, wavy vertical bands on sides. Juveniles are frequently spotted.

Habitat and Biology: Pelagic in coastal waters at depths between 15 to 200 m. Forms small schools. Known to undertake longshore migrations. Feeds on small schooling fishes such as sardines.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific.

Remarks: *Scomberomorus commerson* is rare in Maldives. Few specimens are landed at Male fish market among the much more common wahoo. S. *commerson* is a migratory species common off the coasts of Sri Lanka and India. The individuals that turn up in Maldives are perhaps strays from those countries.

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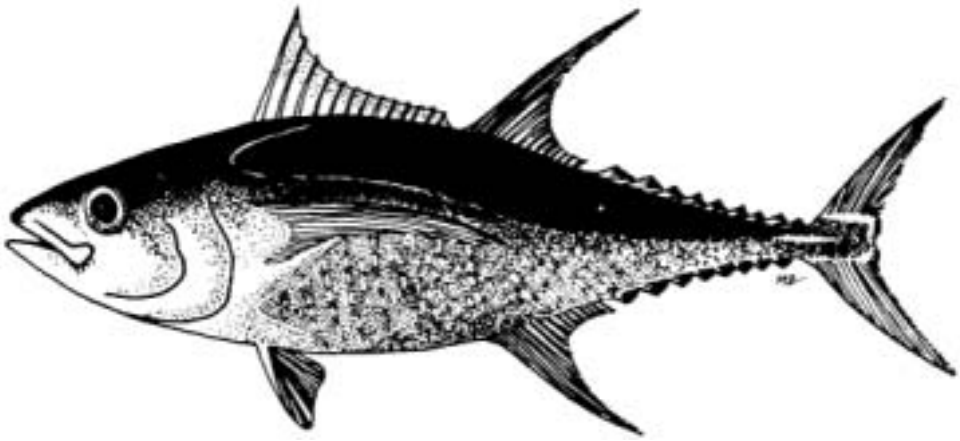
Thunnus albacares (Bonnaterre, 1788)



English Name:	**Yellowfin tuna**	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	**Reendhoo uraha** kanneli	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	**Max. 2 m**	**Specimen:**	MRS/0012/86

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fins close together. The first with prolonged spines anteriorly giving a strongly concave outline. First dorsal with 13-14 spines, second dorsal and anal fin extremely tall in large specimens. 7-10 finlets behind second dorsal and anal fins. Pectoral fins moderately long, usually reaching beyond second dorsal fin origin. No striations on ventral surface of liver; right lobe elongated.

Colour: Metallic steel blue on back to silvery below. Belly crossed by about 20 broken, lines of light spots which curve posteriorly. Dorsal and anal fins and finlets bright yellow.

Habitat and Biology: Epipelagic, oceanic, above and below the thermocline. Forms schools by size, also with other species. Feeds on wide variety of fishes, crustaceans and cephalopods.

Distribution: World-wide in tropical and subtropical seas.

Remarks: *Thunnus albacares* is the second most important species in the Maldivian fishery. It accounts for roughly 10% of the total recorded catch. Most yellowfin tunas caught in the Maldives are juveniles of about 30-60 cm fork length, taken by pole and line. However, increasing numbers of adults are being taken by livebait handline.

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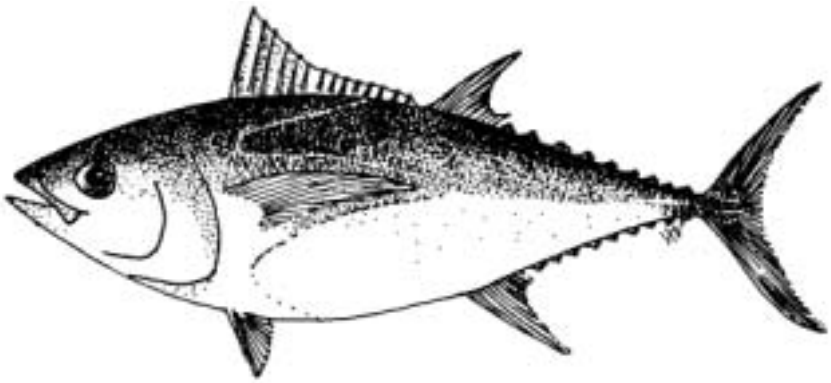
Thunnus obesus (Lowe, 1839)



English Name: Bigeye **tuna** **Family:** **SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name: **Loabodu kanneli** **Order:** Perciformes
Size: Max. 2.1 m

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fins close together. First dorsal with 13- 15 spines, second dorsal and anal fins falcate, each followed by 8-10 finlets. Pectoral fins moderately long in larger specimens (over 1 .1 m fork length). Corselet of large and thicker scales developed but not very distinct. Ventral surface of liver striated; all three lobes of roughly equal in length.

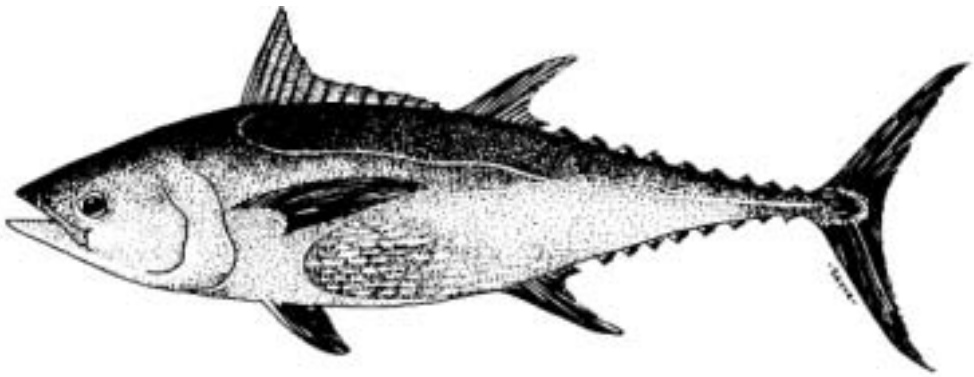
Colour: Dark blue above, pale below. Dorsal and anal fins yellow. Finlets yellow with black edges. Roughly 8-10 near vertical, and more or less continuous pale lines on sides.

Habitat and Biology: Epipelagic and mesopelagic in oceanic waters from the surface to 250 m. Juveniles school with yellowfin and/or skipjack tuna. Feeds on fishes, cephalopods and crustaceans.

Distribution: World-wide in tropical and subtropical oceans.

Remarks: *Thunnus ohesus* is very similar to and frequently confused with yellowfin tuna (previous page). It differs in having a heavier, thicker-set body and shorter second dorsal and anal fins. The pattern of pale lines on the sides is different. In addition, the liver of yellowfin tuna has one lobe noticeably longer than the other two and is not striated. Bigeye tuna is widespread in the Indian Ocean but is deeper swimming than yeilowfin tuna, so rarely appears in normal Maldivian catches.

Thunnus tonggol (Bleeker, 1851)



English Name:	**Longtail tuna**	**Family:**	**SCOMBRIDAE**
Local Name:	**Nigoo dhigu kanneli**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	Max. 1.3 **m**	**Specimen:**	**MRS/P0494/97**

Distinctive Characters: A medium-sized tuna species, deepest near middle of first dorsal fin base. Gill rakers few, 19-27 on the first arch. Pectoral fin moderately long with 30-35 rays. Ventral surface of liver not striated; right lobe of liver much longer than other two. Swimbladder absent or rudimentary.

Colour: Back dark blue or black. Lower sides and belly silvery white with colourless elongate oval spots arranged in horizontal rows. Dorsal, pectoral and pelvic fins blackish.

Habitat and Biology: Epipelagic and neritic. Avoids areas with reduced salinity and turbid waters. Forms schools of varying size. Opportunistic feeder, feeding on cephalopods, crustaceans and fish.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific

Remarks: *Thunnus tonggol* is a neritic species, common around the coasts of India. It is extremely rare in Maldivian waters. In fact only one specimen has been positively recorded from the Maldives. It was caught by a team from the Marine Research Section while carrying out tuna tagging in the One-and-a-half Degree Channel in February 1994. Earlier records of it from Maldives appear to be in error.

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