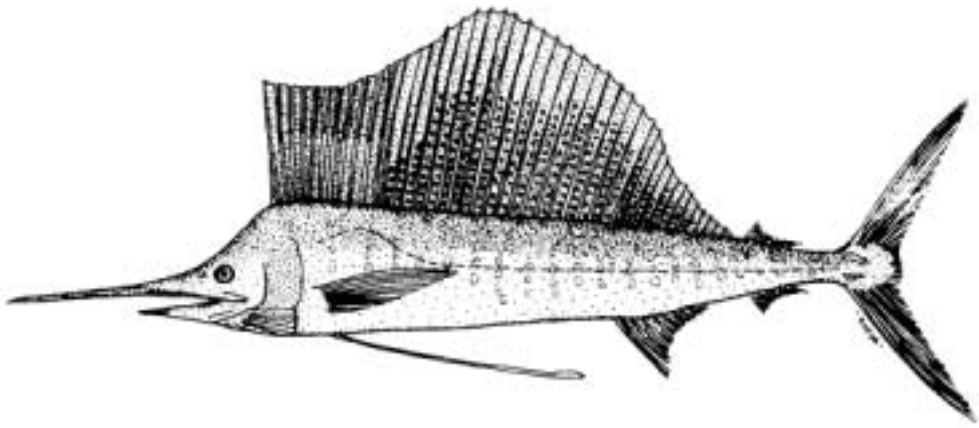
Istiophorus platypterus (Shaw and Nodder, 1792)



English Name:	**Indo-Pacific sailfish**	**Family:**	**XIPHIIDAE**
Local Name:	**Fangandu hibaru**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	**Common to** 2.7 m; max. 3.2 **m**	**Specimen:**	**MRS/P0478/97**

Distinctive Characters: **A** tall long-based sail-like dorsal fin with 42-49 rays. Small second dorsal fin with 6 or 7 rays. 2 anal fins, the first with 12-17 rays and second with 6-7 rays. Pectoral fin with 18-20 rays. Body compressed laterally. Pelvic fins very long. Body covered by embedded scales.

Colour: Dark blue dorsally, pale ventrally. About 20 pale spotted stripes on sides. Sail deep blue with dark spots.

Habitat and Biology: Oceanic, epipelagic and highly migratory. Feeds on a wide variety of fishes, crustaceans and cephalopods.

Distribution: Widespread in tropical and temperate waters of Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Remarks: The sailfish, *Istiophorus p/at ypterus* is the most commonly seen of the billfishes. Unlike other species, which tend to be rather oceanic, the sailfish is commonest in and around the atolls. It is frequently landed at Male fish market. Previously recorded under the family Istiophoridae.

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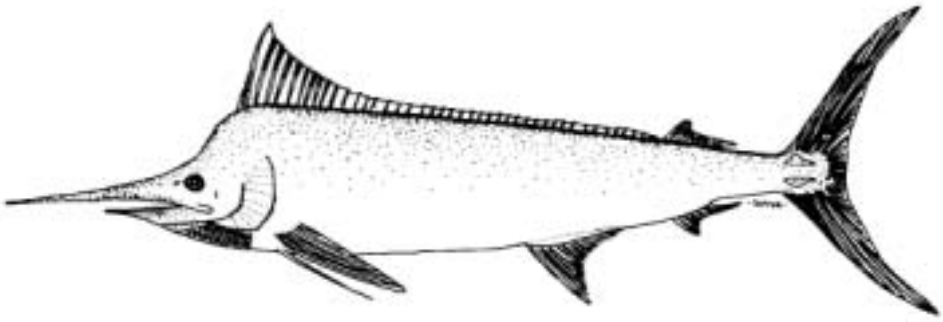
Makaira indica (Cuvier, 1832)



English Name:	Black marlin	Family:	XIPHIIDAE
Local Name:	**Kalhu mas** hibaru	**Order:**	Perciformes
Size:	**Common to** 3.8 m; max. 4.6 m		

Distinctive Characters: First dorsal fin with 38-45 rays. Second dorsal fin with 6-7 rays. First anal fin with 13-14 rays and second anal fin with 6-7 rays. Pectoral fin with 19-23 rays. Bill round in cross sections. Body strongly compressed. Nape very steep. Pectoral fins rigid, and not foldable naturally against sides. Body covered by densely embedded scales.

Colour: Dark blue dorsally, paler ventrally. Sometimes with a faint vertical stripes.

Habitat and Biology: Oceanic, epipelagic and highly migratory. Feeds on a wide variety of fishes, crustaceans and cephalopods.

Distribution: Warm waters of the Indian and Pacific oceans. Occasionally in Atlantic ocean.

Remarks: *Makaira indica* can he easily distinguished from *M. mazara* by the fact that its pectoral fins are rigid. Both can he distinguished from the superficially similar striped marlin *(Tetrapterus audex)* which has a more compressed body and dorsal fin lobe which is equal to or greater than the body. The black marlin is the largest of the bill fish, and the supreme game fish.

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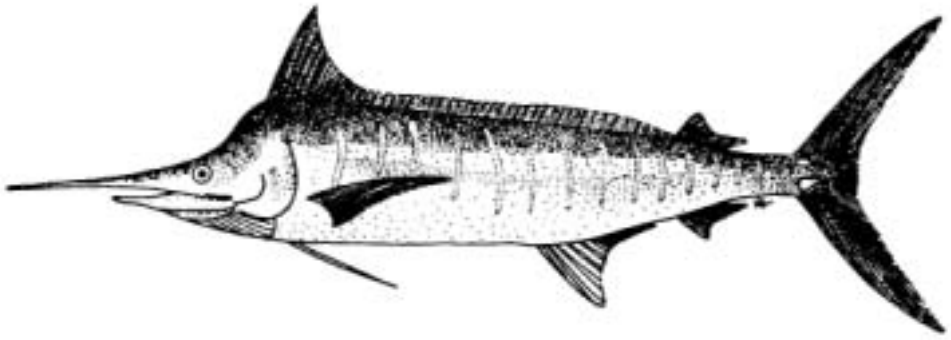
Makaira mazara (Jordan and Synder, 1901)



English Name:	**Indo-Pacific blue marlin**	**Family:**	**XIPHIIDAE**
Local Name:	**Noomas hibaru**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	**Common to** 3.5 m; max. 4.3 **rn**	**Specimen:**	**MRS/0319/88**

Distinctive Characters: First dorsal fin with 40-45 rays. Second dorsal fin with 6-7 rays. Pectoral fin with 20-23 rays. Bill round in cross-section. Body not strongly compressed. Nape highly elevated. Pectoral fins not rigid and can be folded. Body covered by densely embedded scales.

Colour: Blue black dorsally pale ventrally. About 15 cobalt coloured vertical stripes.

Habitat and Biology: Oceanic, epipelagic and highly migratory. Feeds on a wide variety of fishes, crustaceans and cephalopods.

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

Remarks: *Makaira mazara* has often been referred to as *Makaira nigricans* but this name is now only applied to the Atlantic Blue marlin. The two differ in lateral line morphology. Blue marlins are caught by commercial long lines and by sports fisherman. Previously recorded under the family Istiophoridae in the Catalogue of Fishes of the Maldives, Vol.3, page 446.

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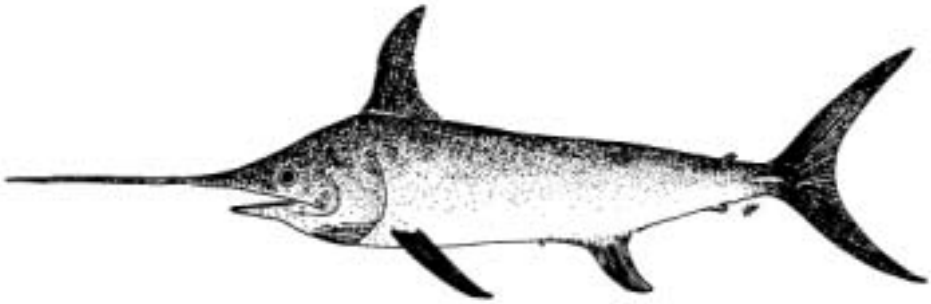
Xiphias gladius Linnaeus, 1758



English Name:	**Swordfish**	**Family:**	**XIPHIIDAE**
Local Name:	**Thungadu hibaru, Kanneli hibaru**	**Order:**	**Perciformes**
Size:	**Common to** 3 m; max. 4.5 m		

Distinctive Characters: First dorsal fin with 34-49 rays. Second dorsal fin with 4-6 rays. First anal fin with 13-14 rays. Second anal fin with 3-4 rays. Pectoral fin with 16-18 rays. Bill extremely long and flattened in cross-section. Pelvic fins and pelvic girdle absent. Single, large medium caudal keel in adults.

Colour: Dark brown above, paler below.

Habitat and Biology: Epipelagic to depths of 650 m, primarily oceanic and highly migratory. Feeds on a wide variety of fishes, crustaceans and squids.

Distribution: Circumglobal in tropical and temperate seas.

Remarks: The swordfish, *Xiphias gladius* is very common in the offshore waters around the Maldives. During the offshore fishery survey conducted by the R.V. 'Matha Hari' in 1987-88, roughly 80% of the billfish caught were swordfish.

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