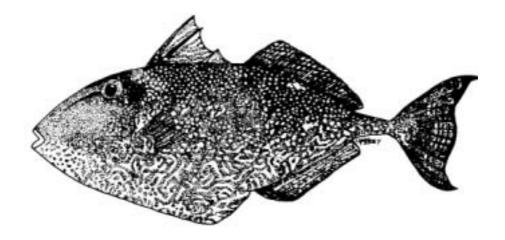
Abalistes stellatus (Lacepède, 1798)



English Name:Starry triggerfishFamily:BALISTIDAELocal Name:Than ronduOrder:TetraodontiformesSize:Max. 60 cmSpecimen:MRS/P0378/92

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 25-27 rays. Anal fin with 24-25 rays. Pectoral rays 15-16. Body deep and laterally compressed. Scales enlarged above the pectoral fin base, forming a flexible tympanum. Cheeks scaly. Prominent groove on snout in front of eye. Longitudinal scale ridges on posterior part of the body. Caudal peduncle wider than deep. Caudal fin double emarginate.

Colour: Background colour grey dashed with olive green, suffused with yellow, overlaid with many pale spots. Three whitish blotches on back (faint or absent in large individuals). Pectoral fins yellow.

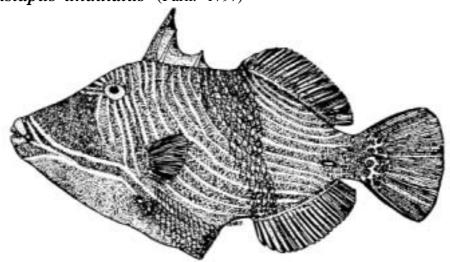
Habitat and Biology: Found over sand, sponge and weed bottoms to depths of 100 m. Solitary or in small groups. Feeds on benthic animals.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific.

Remarks: Ahalistes stellatus is not very often seen in the Maldives, because it is a moderately deep dwelling species. It appears to be commonest in the atoll basins.

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Balistapus undulatus (Park. 1797)



English Name: Orangestriped triggerfish
Local Name: Dhaifuku rondu
Order: Tetraodontiforrnes
Size: Max. 30 cm
Specimen: MRS/0349/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 24-28 rays. Anal fin with 20-24 rays. Pectoral fin with 12-14 rays. Third dorsal spine of moderate length (not minute). No groove in front of eye. Second dorsal and anal fins not elevated anteriorly. Caudal fin slightly rounded.

Colour: Dark greeny brown with bright orange lines. Adult male with no bands on dark snout.

Habitat and Biology: Occurs in a variety of habitats on reef flat and reef edge. Extremely varied diet: live corals, benthic algae, sea urchins, crustaceans, other benthic invertebrates and also small fishes.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Ba/istapus undu/atus is a common inhabitant of the Maldivian reefs. It is an interesting aquarium fish.

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Balistoides conspicillum (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)



English Name:Clown triggerfishFamily:BALISTIDAELocal Name:Bis ronduOrder:TetraodontiformesSize:Max. 45 cmSpecimen:MRS/0344/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 24-26 rays. Anal fin with 21-23 rays. Pectoral fin with 14 rays. A deep groove anterior to eye. Region around lips fully scaled. 3-4 rows of spines posteriorly on side of body. Caudal fin rounded, the corners acute.

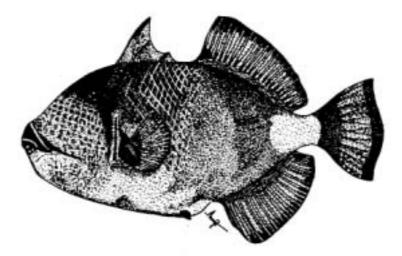
Colour: Black with very large white spots on lower half of body. Yellow markings around mouth, on face and fins. A yellow reticulum anteriorly on back.

Habitat and Biology: Usually found on outer reef terraces with surge channels. Feeds on small benthic animals.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Balistoides conspicillum is one of the most strikingly coloured of all reef fishes. In consequence it fetches a high price in the aquarium trade.

Balistoides viridescens (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)



English Name:Titan triggerfishFamily:BALISTIDAELocal Name:MaaronduOrder:TetraodontiformesSize:Max. 75 cmSpecimen:MRS/P0343/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 24-26 rays. Anal fin with 23-24 rays. Pectoral rays 14-15. A deep groove before eye. 4 or 5 rows of small spines posteriorly on sides of body. Second dorsal and anal fins slightly elevated anteriorly. Caudal fin rounded to double emarginate.

Colour: Yellowish, the scale centers dark brown to dark olive, abruptly whitish posteriorly. A wedge-shaped blackish bar from top of head to gill opening, enclosing eye. A broad blackish streak on upper lip crossed by two narrow pale blue bands.

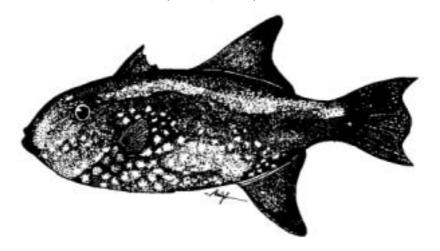
Habitat and Biology: Found on a wide ranging of habitats but mainly on reef slopes. Feeds on a wide variety of benthic invertebrates, including sea urchins, corals and molluscs.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Balistoides viridescens is fairly common in the Maldives and ranges widely from lagoons to deep reef slopes. Eggs are laid in nests on sandy or rubble patches on the slope. These are protected by the adults, which drive away any intruders including divers with great ferocity.

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Canthidermis maculatus (Bloch, 1786)



English Name: Ocean triggerfish
Local Name: Oivaali rondu
Size: Max. 50 cm
Family: BALISTIDAE
Order: Tetraodontiformes
Specimen: MRS/P0l32/87

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 23-27 rays. Anal fin with 20-23 rays. Pectoral fin with 14-15 rays. Mouth terminal. No enlarged scales above pectoral fin base forming distinct tympanum. Cheeks scaled and without longitudinal groove. A deep groove before eye, below nostrils.

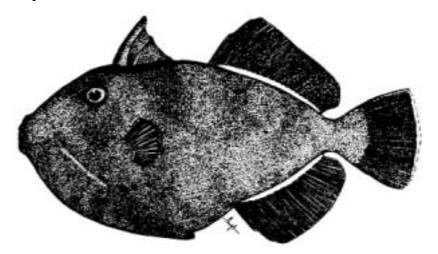
Colour: Adults with body and head dark, lighter below with elongate white spots that can disappear with growth. All fins dark. Small juveniles with spots not confined to ventral surface.

Habitat and Biology: Occurs in offshore waters. Epipelagic throughout its life. Adults as well as juveniles are often associated with drifting objects.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific.

Remarks: Unlike other triggerfishes *Canthidermis maculatus* is most often encountered offshore, where it is frequently associated with drifting flotsam. It is therefore often seen by Maldivian tuna fishermen, although there is no local market for this species so it is almost never caught. *C. rotundatus* is a synonym.

Melichthys indicus (Randall and Klausewitz, 1973)



English Name: Indian triggerfish
Local Name: Hindhu kalhu rondu
Size: Max. 25 cm
Family: BALISTIDAE
Order: Tetraodontiformes
Specimen: MRS/0339/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 30-34 rays. Anal fin with 29 rays. Pectoral fin with 14-16 rays. Caudal fin truncate or slightly rounded. Ridges on caudal peduncle not prominent.

Colour: Dark, almost black. White along bases of second dorsal and anal fins, and around caudal margin. Sometimes displays a rust brown patch behind spiny dorsal.

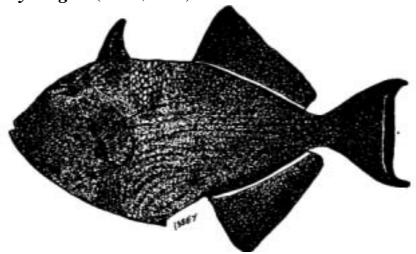
Habitat and Biology: Found on coral reef areas. Feeds well above the bottom, evidently on zooplankton.

Distribution: Indian Ocean.

Remarks: *Melichthvs indicus* is one of a pair of very similar black trigger fishes. The other is *M. niger* (next page). In the field they are most easily differentiated on the basis of tail shape and colour. *M. niger* has an emarginate caudal fin that is all dark.

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Melichthys niger (Bloch, 1786)



English Name: Black triggerfish Family: BALISTIDAE

Local Name: Kalhu rondu Order: Tetraodontiformes

Size: Max. 35 cm Specimen: MRS/P0350/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 32-35 rays. Anal fin with 28-31 rays. Pectoral fin with 15-17 rays. Prominent longitudinal ridges following scale rows on caudal peduncle. Caudal fin emarginate to lunate (except juveniles).

Colour: Dark blue-green to black. Blue-white lines at base of soft dorsal and anal fins. Submarginal blue line on caudal fin bends into lobes.

Habitat and Biology: Occurs on upper reef edge of outer slopes of seaward reefs. Feeds predominantly on calcareous algae; also feeds on zooplankton.

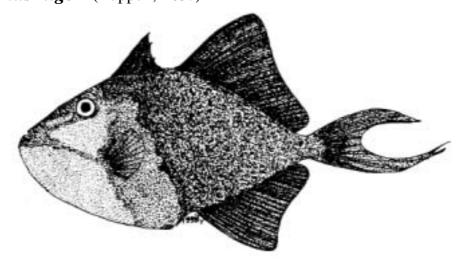
Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: *Melichthys niger is* very similar in appearance to, and easily confused with *Mindicus* (previous page). *M. niger* is more widely distributed.

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Odonus niger (Ruppell, 1837)



English Name: Redtoothed triggerfish
Local Name: Vaalan rondu
Size: Max. 40 cm

Family: BALISTIDAE
Order: Tetraodontiformes
Specimen: MRS/0337/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 33-36 rays. Anal fin with 28-31 rays. Pectoral fin with 14-15 rays. Cheeks scaled. Margins of soft dorsal and anal fins distinctly concave. Caudal fin lunate, the lobes greatly prolonged in adults.

Colour: Body deep blue, sometimes very dark, or brownish, or greenish. Teeth red.

Habitat and Biology: Found on upper part of seaward reef below reef edge. Feeds mainly on zooplankton and also sponges.

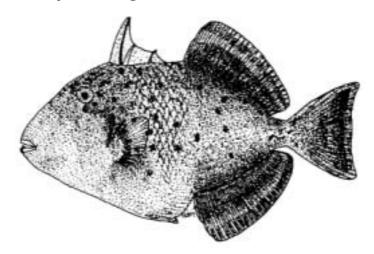
Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Odunus niger is possibly the commonest Maldivian triggerfish. Large groups can be seen swimming up in the water column above the reef slope. At night, and when harassed, they take refuge in small crevices with just their turquoise scissor-like tail showing.

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Pseudobalistes flavimarginatus (R üppel 1. 1829)



English Name: Yellowmargin triggerfish
Local Name: Vilu rondu
Size: Max. 60 cm
Family: BALISTIDAE
Order: Tetraodontiformes
Specimen: MRS/0347/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 24-27 rays. Anal fin with 23-25 rays. Pectoral fin with 15 or 16 rays. Deep groove anterior to eye. Shallow horizontal groove on cheek. Anterior part of cheek without scales; posterior part with small scales. Caudal peduncle with 5 or 6 rows of small spines. Caudal fin rounded in young, emarginate in adults, the lobes prolonged in large adults.

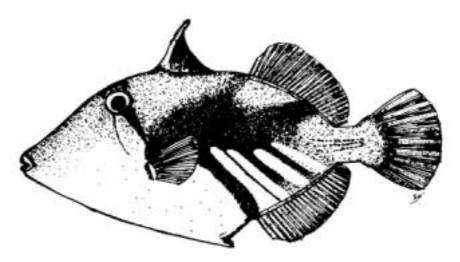
Colour: Pale yellowish brown. Scales with dark centres. Front of head often light yellow-orange. Margins of second dorsal, anal, and caudal fins often yellowish.

Habitat and Biology: Found in a wide-ranging habitats, hut commonest on sheltered reef areas with much sand. Feeds on benthic invertebrates.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: *Pseudobalistesflavimarginatus* is one of two large triggerfishes commonly seen by divers in the Maldives. The other is *B. viridescens. P. flavimarginatus* nests in deep lagoon areas. Fortunately this species does not defend its nests as aggressively as *B. viridescens*, although this some individulas can be very aggressive.

Rhinecanthus aculeatus (Linneaus, 1758)



English Name: Picasso triggerlish
Local Name: Gabulhi rondu
Crder: Tetraodontiformes
Size: Max. 28 cm
Specimen: MRS/0054/86

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 24-26 rays. Anal fin with 21-23 rays. Pectoral fin with 12-14 rays. Head pointed; dorsal and ventral profiles nearly straight. 3 rows of forward curving spines on caudal peduncle. Caudal fin rounded to double emarginate, the corners angular.

Colour: Pale brown shading to white below. Complexly coloured with blackish, blue, and yellow hands. Peduncular spines black edged with blue. Anus black.

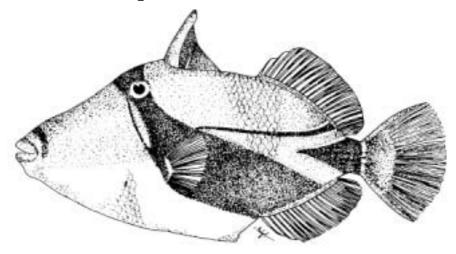
Habitat and Biology: Common on shallow lagoon reef environments dominated by sand. Omnivorous, feeding on a wide range of invertebrates., fishes and also algae.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Rhinecanthus acu/eatus is a very common inhabitant on Maldivian reefs. It is often seen sleeping on its side at night and makes a whirring noise when startled. A popular aquarium fish.

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Rhinecanthus rectangulus (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)



English Name: Reef triggerfish Family: BALISTIDAE

Local Name: Gabulhi fattaa rondu Order: Tetraodontiformes

Size: Max. 25 cm Specimen: MRS/0346/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 23-24 rays. Anal fin with 20-21 rays. Pectoral fin with 13-15 rays. No grooves infront of eyes. 4-5 rows of small forward curving spines posteriorly on body. Caudal fin rounded, the corners acute.

Colour: Ground colour olive brown above, pale below. Black band across body, and black triangular patch on caudal peduncle. Black areas partially outlined with green-yellow. Orange at base of pectoral.

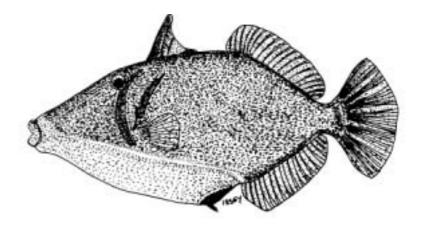
Habitat and Biology: Common in the shallow outer reef environments exposed to surge. Diet even more varied than *R. aculeatus*, feeding on a wide range of invertebrates, fishes and also algae.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: *Rhinecanthus rectangulus* is readily distinguished from *R. acu/eatus* (previous page), on the basis of colour pattern. Both are found on shallow areas, but *R. rectangu/us* prefers more exposed locations. *R. rectangu/us* is a very wary fish, hence difficult to approach under water.

בשנות ללת

Sufflamen bursa (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)



English Name:Boomerang triggerfishFamily:BALISTIDAELocal Name:Dhon falhu ronduOrder:TetraodontiformesSize:Max. 20 cmSpecimen:MRS/0345/89

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 27-29 rays. Anal fin with 25-27 rays. Pectoral fin with 13-14 rays. Dorsal and ventral profiles of head nearly straight. Cheeks scaled. Prominent groove in front of the eye. Longitudinal scale ridges on posterior part of the body extending forward to the middle of the body. Caudal fin truncate to slightly rounded.

Colour: Greyish brown, pale below. A white line from corner of mouth to anal fin origin. Two dark curved bars posteriorly on head which may be either yellow or black.

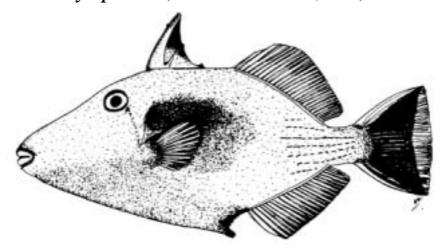
Habitat and Biology: Usually in reef flats and reef slopes. Omnivorous, feeding on algae and a wide variety of small benthic invertebrates.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Sufflamen hursa is a common inhabitant in the Maldivian reefs. It is readily distinguished from the similar sized and shaped S. chrysopterus (next page) by colour. S. chrysopterus is dark brown.

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Sufflamen chrysopterus (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)



English Name:Flagtail triggerfishFamily:BALISTIDAELocal Name:Falhu ronduOrder:TetraodontiformesSize:Max. 20 cmSpecimen:MRS/055/86

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 26-28 rays. Anal fin with 23-26 rays. Pectoral fin with 12-14 rays. Deep groove before eye. Longitudinal rows of small spines following scale centers on about posterior third of body. Dorsal and anal fins slightly elevated anteriorly. Caudal fin truncate to slightly rounded with acute corners.

Colour: Dark brownish with one pale streak from eye to lower pectoral base and another short one above gill opening. Lower part of head and abdomen dark blue or purplish. Caudal fin brownish yellow, broadly edged in white.

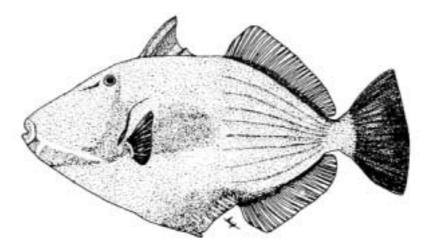
Habitat and Biology: Usually seen in sheltered reefs and lagoons. Feeds on benthic invertebrates.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Sufflamen chrvsopterus is replaced in the Red Sea and Gulf of Oman by the closely related S. a/hicaudatus (Ruppell), which differs in having a broad white zone across basal part of caudal fin.

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Sufflamen fraenatus (Bloch and Schneider, 1801)



English Name: Brown triggerfish
Local Name: Mushi rondu
Size: Max. 38 cm

Family: BALISTIDAE
Order: Tetraodontiformes
Specimen: MRS/041 1/92

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 27-31 rays. Anal fin with 24-28 rays. Pectoral fin with 14-15 rays. Cheeks scaled. Deep groove in front of eye. Longitudinal scale ridges on posterior part of the body extending forward to the middle of the body. Caudal fin rounded in young, truncate to slightly emarginate in adults.

Colour: Brown to pale brown with a pale yellowish ring around mouth and a narrow pale yellowish band across chin. Juveniles with longitudinal dark brown lines.

Habitat and Biology: Usually seen in depths greater than 25 m. Feeds mainly on sea urchins, heart urchins, brittle stars, fishes, bivalve molluscs, tunicates and crustaceans.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Sufflamen fraenarus is a somewhat deep dwelling species, being apparently most common in atoll basins. S. capistrarus Shaw, is a synonym.