



SNORKELLING
FACTSHEET

Kurumba

MALDIVES



SNORKELLING IN THE MALDIVES

The Maldives covers an area of 90,000 sq. km and lies in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Its 1196 coral islands are grouped into 26 Atolls. Most of the islands are surrounded by a large ring-shaped coral reef, while others share one common reef with just one or two islands. It protects the islands inside the atoll against high waves and rough sea.

Water temperature on the shallower, down to 30 metres reef areas varies from only 26 to 30 degrees Celsius throughout the year. Inside the shallow lagoon the water temperature may reach slightly higher levels. The abundance of marine life is a source of attraction for not only divers but also for those passionate about snorkelling. The waters around Kurumba are home to more than 1200 species of fish and other marine creatures as well as more than 1000 coral species and other reef invertebrates that create the reef on which they live.

What makes Maldives special for those snorkelling is the presence of rare marine life species like the giant Napoleon Wrasse as well as turtles, eels, sharks and many many more.

IMPORTANT – SNORKELLING NOTICE

Please be aware that strong currents can occur in the Maldives creating dangerous snorkelling conditions. For your own safety, please read the below recommendations:

- We recommend that all guests complete a complimentary snorkel lesson with Majaa Recreation prior to snorkelling around Kurumba or on a snorkeling safari.
- Note: The Point, Eelsville & Parrot Cage can experience high currents. For experienced snorkellers only.
- Review the “Important – Snorkelling Notice” and the “Protect Our Reef” notes.
- Always snorkel with a buddy and keep in close proximity to the shore.
- Do not snorkel : when there are large waves.
: when there are strong currents.
: in the late afternoon or evening.
: in areas where there is boat traffic.
- Snorkel with a life vest particularly if you are not a strong swimmer.
- Check the current, tides and weather conditions prior to snorkeling.
- Wear brightly colored rash vests and or a life jacket and wear plenty of sunscreen even when it is cloudy.
- Retain your energy. Snorkelling should be relaxing, so slow and gentle is recommended.
- Always use the marked snorkel channels that are highlighted by buoys and never walk or stand on or near coral.
- Take advantage of the weekly Marine Biology presentation as stated in the “Colours of Kurumba” guests newsletter.
- Note that there are Titan Triggerfish around most islands in the Maldives. When nesting, these fish can become aggressive and have a nasty bite. If they try to attack you, use your fins and kick away from them. Ask Majaa Recreation for more information.

HELP PROTECT OUR REEF

- **Do not stand on the coral**

Corals can take many years to grow just a few centimeters. Pay attention to your fins. If you want to stand, find a sandy place. Please use the snorkelling channels. Corals are fragile so the slightest contact can do irreversible damage. Even kicking up sand onto the coral with your fins is detrimental.

- **Never touch, hold or break off coral**

Removing any coral or shell from the reef is illegal in the Maldives and subject to large fines. Please just admire the coral and leave it be for future guests and generations.

- **Never touch or feed marine animals**

Never feed the fish or sharks as this can make them aggressive. Feeding fish will also discourage them from cleaning the reef, which in turn causes coral to die. Without the presence of coral, fish will not come and this does not benefit anyone.

- **Leave shells on the beach**

It is also important not to pick up shells on the beach as these shells will become future homes for hermit crabs. Hermit crabs play an important role in cleaning our beaches and reducing sand fly populations.

- **Do not litter**

If you smoke, please throw your cigarette stubs in the ashtrays available around the resort. Trash bins are placed everywhere for your convenience.

- **Reduce chemical leaching into the sea**

You can do this by reducing your linen and towel changes in your room. For more information, please read the notice available in your room.

- **Take home refuse that cannot be disposed.**

Help save the environment by taking home any empty plastic containers, exhausted batteries, sunscreen bottles, remaining soaps etc. as they cannot be properly disposed in the Maldives.

KURUMBA SNORKELLING MAP



SNORKELLING SITES

CORAL GARDEN

Depth	: 1 to 2 metres, any tide depth
Water Conditions	: Calm, gentle current, 27 - 32°C
Sea Floor	: Mostly sand with scattered coral stands
Experience Level	: Beginner to intermediate

This is the perfect spot for beginner snorkelers. In the calm, shallow lagoon waters there are many small and juvenile fish that hover over the bottom looking for food. Heading out from the shore you will be spotted by the curious and almost transparent pursemouths and pompanos. Once you are over the coral outcrops you may be lucky enough to spot juvenile pufferfish hovering, anemone fish hiding, damsel fish protecting their homes, small butterfly fishing fluttering around and busy goatfish digging through the sand. Many reef fish species use the lagoon as a nursery for their young so keep an eye out and you could spot many interesting things.



SHARK POINT

Depth	: 1 to 2 metres on flat, drop off to 30 metres, suitable at mid to high tide
Water Conditions	: Weather dependent, can be choppy, variable current, 27 - 30°C
Sea Floor	: Sand flats with a coral edged drop off
Experience Level	: Advanced snorkelers, strong swimmers.

Shark lovers galore, this point of the reef has long been known to be home to many adult black tip reef sharks. The sand flats are shallow at low tide and can experience some wave action so it is recommended to head out at a narrower part of the reef and swim around to the point. Any way you go the treasures of this area do require quite a long swim so only attempt this area if you are a strong swimmer and the weather is calm with low seas. This must be snorkeled with a buddy. As well as sharks there are many other marine species to discover.



THE WALL

Depth	: 1 to 2 metres on flat, drop off to 30 metres, suitable at mid to high tide
Water Conditions	: Weather dependent, can be choppy, gentle to medium current
Sea Floor	: Mostly sand with scattered coral stands
Experience Level	: Beginner to intermediate

This part of the reef offers a slightly larger flat which heads out to a steep reef wall. This area is home to a huge group of schooling bannerfish, many wrasse species as well as a great deal of corals. You are likely to see large trevally such as the Giant and Blue-fin species as well as a multitude of snapper and sweetlips. As you head out over the sand flat keep your eye peeled for feathertail or blue spotted sting rays that will bury themselves down into the sand as you approach.



SALLY'S PATCH

Depth	: 1 to 2 metres on flat, drop off to 30 metres, suitable at mid to high tide
Water Conditions	: Weather dependent, can be choppy, gentle to medium current, 27 - 30°C
Sea Floor	: Coral stands on the reef, flat with a steep drop
Experience Level	: Intermediate to Advanced



This is arguably the most interesting part of Kurumba's reef to investigate. Head out over Coral Garden to a break in the wall around 5 metres down from the salt water intake tower in the water and keep your eye peeled for an occasional turtle sitting on the reef flat. Once you are near the drop off turn to the right and make your way slowly to the tower, stopping off to check out the large coral boulder about 2 metres back. Underneath the tower you can spot a number of snapper, sweetlips, wrasse and a huge porcupine fish named Priscilla. Peer into the depths to see a large school of batfish and if you are lucky a white tip reef shark. Meander on your way to spot many other fish including Sally the Shark who looks after and patrols this part of the reef. The very fortunate have an opportunity to spot 4 cuttlefish who occupy the waters near the surface.

HOUSE REEF / EELSVILLE

Depth	: 1 to 2 metres on flat, drop off to 30 metres, suitable at any tide from the service jetty
Water Conditions	: Weather dependent, can be choppy, variable current with some surge at the temps, 27 - 30°C
Sea Floor	: Mostly sand with scattered coral stands
Experience Level	: Intermediate to Advanced



Heading to the right from the jetty steps is a great spot for watching the multitudes of blue triggerfish swimming about busily. Head left around the jetty and you will discover remoras waiting patiently for food scraps and large fish species also waiting their turn. Peering down into the coral and rock wall of the jetty and harbour wall you will have the chance to spot one of the many moray eels that have made their home here. Interestingly you can often see 2 or more different species all living in the same hole.

PARROT CAGE

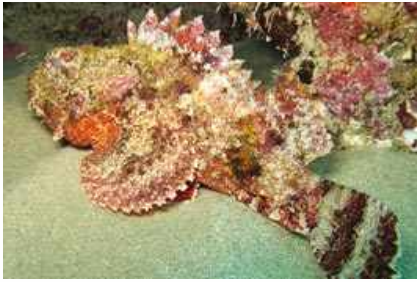
Depth	: 1 to 2 metres on flat, drop off to 70 metres, mid to high tide
Water Conditions	: Weather dependent, can be choppy, variable current, 27 - 32°C
Sea Floor	: Sand with anemones and coral rubble
Experience Level	: Beginner to Advanced



This part of the reef has less live coral due to boat wash which makes it the perfect place for parrot fish spotting. There are hundreds of them ranging in size up to 80cm in length, all busily recycling dead coral in sand for our beaches. Watch as they nibble off the coral rubble, filter out the goodies and swim off distributing sand as they go. This is also the best spot for Nemo watching as there are many anemones playing home to these much loved creatures. When you have had your fill head inside the lagoon flat and hover slowly over the sand to spot reef pipe fish, a relative of the sea horse, sitting on the sand. Look out for a pregnant male who carries the eggs in pouches on his side.

PLEASE BE AWARE OF THESE MARINE LIFE**TITAN TRIGGER FISH**

There are numerous species of Triggerfish in our waters that range in size from 25cm to 60cm. Triggerfish lay eggs in a nest on the bottom of the reef and guard them until they hatch. Titans spawn for 4 days each month and during this time will defend their nest vigorously, chasing away other fish and humans who get too close. If you come across a Titan Triggerfish that is defending its nest (it will be laying on its side) we recommend that you respect its desire to defend its young and leave the area by swimming around it, over deeper water, in a semi circle. If a titan rushes at you, it will turn away at the least second on the first run. This is a display to get your attention. It means "go away". If this happens, you should get your fins between you and the Titan Triggerfish and swim away, kicking at it if it rushes at you again. It will soon leave you alone. You may also practice slapping the water with your hand or fin. The noise will deter the fish from coming closer and long enough for you to swim away.

**STONE FISH**

A more dangerous fish is the Stone Fish, the False Stone Fish and the Leaf Scorpionfish whose camouflage is extraordinary. They lie quietly on the corals waiting for their prey. It is not easy to see them, so once again we recommend that you do not touch corals or walk on them, with respect for the ecosystem as well as for your own safety.

**LION FISH**

The Lion Fish is a beautiful fish that appears on the reef at dusk. These graceful creatures can also be dangerous if you were to touch their spines. We recommend that you observe them from a distance and not to get too close.

**STING RAY**

There are 6 common stingray species in the Maldives, from the giant Manta-Ray to the Electric Ray. The most common around Kurumba are the Feathertail and Blue Spotted Stingray. They are often seen buried in the sand with only their tail showing. When nearby sand is disturbed, they tend to gently glide away. Stingrays feed on clams and animals buried in the sand. They are also known for the strong spine on their tails which can cause injury to humans if you were to accidentally step on them. Do not try to pick up a stingray or handle them. When entering the water, move your feet in circular motions in the sand. This will tell them that someone is coming and they will move away from your path.

TRY SPOTTING THESE MARINE LIFE

There is such huge diversity in marine life in the waters of the Maldives, with the region playing host to many rare and endangered species. One of the most important marine species is the coral reef, which is home to many other marine species. Here we will tell you a bit more about a few of the common species to be seen in the shallow waters around Kurumba. More information is available from our colleagues at Majaa Recreation, from the Dive Centre, or you can purchase your own book from Breeze Boutique in Reception.



CORAL REEFS

Many people are unaware that Coral Reefs comprise of living flora and fauna. They are a symbiotic partnership of coral polyps (animals) and zooxanthellae (plants), which exude skeleton, composed of calcium carbonate. As the polyps die, they leave their skeleton. Other corals then build on top of this skeleton to create the reef we see. Corals reproduce by mass-spawning events that are described by many as similar to being in a snowstorm in the ocean. Coral reefs are fragile and can be easily damaged by human touch. We strongly urge that you do not touch, stand or knock at them while you are in the water. This will ensure their continued reproduction for our future enjoyment.



BLACK TIP REEF SHARK

Although many people have been frightened of sharks due to their portrayal in medias, the reef sharks around the Maldives are not aggressive to swimmers. Reported bites are confined to those involved in shark feeding or careless handling. Kurumba's shallow protected lagoon acts as a nursery for juvenile Black Tip Reef Sharks and they can easily be seen swimming lazily through the calm waters surrounding us. Beyond the lagoon (and occasionally inside at high tide), mature adults can also be seen. Black Tips have a very small home range and will often patrol their section of reef for many years. They are normally timid and skittish but capable of explosive speed when chasing their prey.



SURGEONFISH

There are a variety of Surgeonfish in the Maldives but the two most commonly spotted in our waters are the Powder Blue Surgeonfish, frequently seen on the reef and recognized by its beautiful blue and yellow colours and the Unicorn fish is easily determined by the horn like growth in its head. This fish can be spotted with its horn above the water surface near the jetty as it hopes for random feeding of fish food. Surgeonfish are herbivores and graze on the reef.



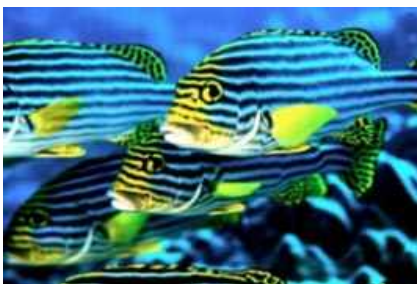
GIANT MORAY EEL

Most Moray Eels make their home inside burrows underneath reefs or rock. The Giant Moray can grow up to an impressive 2.2m in length. If not provoked, Morays are gentle and graceful creatures, which are most often spotted when they poke their head out from their burrow to catch an unsuspecting prey. If spotted, allow them space by snorkelling or swimming around their home.



WRASSE

Wrasses are a large and diverse family of fish that vary in size from the giant Napoleon Wrasse which grows up to 2m in length to the much smaller Cave Wrasse. Two of the most common Wrasses you will see around Kurumba are the Six-barred Wrasse, a colourful and extremely friendly fish that will frequently approach snorkelers, and the Cleaner Wrasse. Cleaner Wrasses are an important part of the reef ecosystem as they help “clean” other fish. You will see pairs of them hover over parts of the reef or busily roaming over much larger fish, nibbling parasites or food from them. The fish being cleaned will sometimes oblige by opening their gills to allow the Wrasse to enter and even opening their mouth for cleaning. These areas are known as cleaning stations and at busy periods, usually in the late afternoon, queues can form as fish wait their turn.



ORIENTAL SWEETLIP

According to Maldivian legend, there was once a Heron that wouldn't eat anything but the most beautiful fish in the sea and that, was the Oriental Sweetlip. With beautiful white and black stripes on the side and yellow-tinted fins and mouth, you can see how this legend came about. Sweetlips are nocturnal hunters that lie serenely in mid waters or under overhangs. At Kurumba, the Oriental Sweetlips are often spotted below the salt-water intake platform on the Western side of the island.



PUFFERFISH

Gentle and graceful, the Pufferfish does not normally (as commonly believed) suck in water and puff themselves up when approached. However if provoked, they will do so. If this act does not deter would-be predator, the organs and skin of the pufferfish also contain a deadly poison. Pufferfish in the Maldives range in size from the diminutive Sharpnose Pufferfish to the beautiful 80cm long Starry Pufferfish.



REMORAS

Often seen cruising around, off the end of the jetty at Kurumba, the Remoras or Suckerfish as they are also known, are unique fish that appear to swim upside down. They also attach themselves to larger hosts such as rays, sharks, turtles and dolphins using a large sucker pad on the top of their head. They do this to gain free transportation and scavenge scraps of food from them.



TURTLES

Turtles are not very frequently seen around Kurumba, however lucky swimmers do come across them while out snorkelling, so keep your eyes peeled. Turtle are incredibly graceful and serene creatures that seem to have deep, knowing eyes. They can be shy but at times will happily graze near snorkelers or divers.



PARROTFISH

As numerous other reef species, Parrotfish are hugely important to life on the reef. With powerful teeth Parrotfish feed by scraping algae and the underlying limestone rock off the reef. This does not only keep the reef clean but also produces sand as a by-product. There are 23 recorded species of Parrotfish in the Maldives and they range vastly in size and colour. However, many of them are brightly colour and can be easily spotted.



DOLPHINS

While only seen infrequently cruising past Kurumba, dolphins are very common in the Maldives. Up to 20 species have been sighted in the Maldives. The most common are the Spinner and Bottlenose dolphins. The relatively small Spinner dolphins are a very playful lot, often giving acrobatic performances for people as they ride the bow wave of boats. Bottlenose dolphins are the largest of the beaked dolphins and range in size from 1.9 meters to 4 meters in length.

This is a guide only, as we are dealing with wild marine creatures not all of the above mentioned species may be seen at all times. Also although most of the marine life around Kurumba is harmless if undisturbed some creatures may defend themselves, their family or their home so give the creatures their space and swim away with you fins towards the animal if any fish displays aggressive behaviors. Do not under any circumstances attempt to pick up or catch any animal as it may result in risk to yourself.

CONDITIONS

There are inherent risks with snorkelling and you should be physically fit with a good swimming ability. This fact sheet is a reference guide only and if you are snorkelling in Kurumba Maldives or on one of its associated companies tours, you are required to sign and agree to the terms and conditions on the disclaimer located at the Water Sports center.