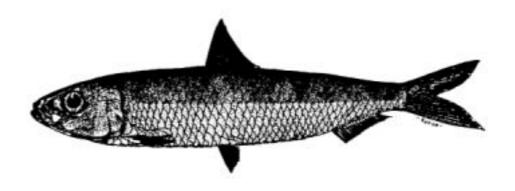
Amblygaster leiogaster (Valenciennes, 1847)



English Name: Smoothbelly sardinella Family: CLUPEIDAE Local Name: Maarehi Order: Clupeiformes Size: Specimen: MRS/0492/97

Distinctive Characters: Body moderately slender, belly rather rounded, scutes not prominent. 31-35 lower gill rakers on first gill arch. Pelvic fin with 8 rays. Last two anal fin rays enlarged. Fronto-parietal bones (on top of head) with 7-14 striations. Upper and lower bulges on supramaxillary bone symmetrical.

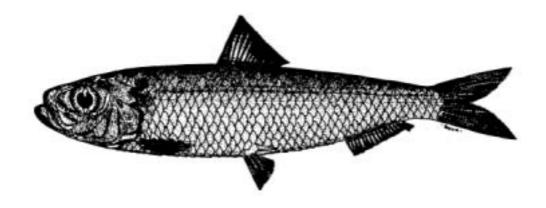
Colour: Back blue-green, flanks silvery and without spots. Dorsal fin dusky.

Habitat and Biology: Pelagic and usually inshore, forms schools in shallow coastal waters.

Distribution: Indo-West Pacific.

Remarks: Arnhlvgaster leiogaster does not appear to be especially common in the Maldives, since this is the first record of its occurrence here. However, this may be due to the fact that it is not caught by the fishing gears normally used here. The specimen reported here was taken during experimental fishing carried by Marine Research Section using gillnets on 25th April 1996.

Herklotsichthys quadrimaculatus (Ruppell, 1837)



English Name: Bluestripe herring Family: CLUPEIDAE
Local Name: Gumbalha Order: Clupeiformes
Size: Max. 14 cm Specimen: MRS/0033/86

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 17-20 rays. Anal fin with 17-19 rays. Pectoral fin with 15-16 rays. Body depth 3.3-5.5 in standard length. Fusiform and moderately slender body. Belly with a distinct scutes. Top of head with few fronto-parietal striae, a broad wing-like scales almost hidden beneath the overlapping predorsal scales.

Colour: Back bluish green without spots. Flanks silvery with an electric blue line preceded by two orange spots.

Habitat and Biology: In daytime forms dense schools in shallow lagoons. During night time moves into deeper water. Feeds on zooplankton mainly at night.

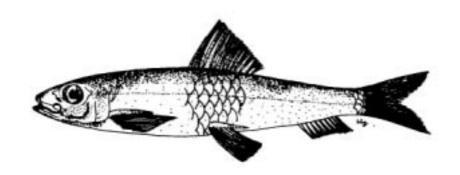
Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: *Herklorsichthys quadrirnaculatus* forms large daytime schools in shallow lagoons, often in association with schools of Bigeye scad. Previously recorded as *Sardenella melanura* in the Catalogue of Fishes of the Maldives, Vol. 1, page 52. Sometimes used as livebait in the tuna fishery.

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Spratelloides delicatulus (Bennett, 1831)



English Name:Blue spratFamily:CLUPEIDAELocal Name:HondeliOrder:ClupeiformesSize:Max. 7 cmSpecimen:MRS/0034/86

Distinctive Characters: Dorsal fin with 11-13 rays. Anal fin with 10 or 11 rays. Pectoral fin with 11-13 rays. Slender, subcylindrical body. Pectoral fin shorter than snout and eye together. Dorsal fin at mid body of fish. Pelvic fin below the base of dorsal fin. Anal fin near the caudal, belly smooth. Body covered with thin. delicate scales.

Colour: Dark bluish on back, sides and belly silvery. Fins hyaline.

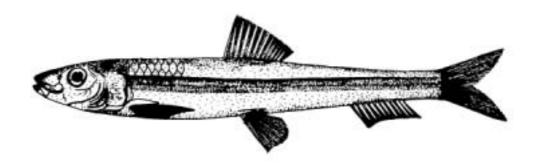
Habitat and Biology: Pelagic and usually inshore, occurs in large schools within the atolls.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Spratclloides delicatulus is widely used bait for pole and line tuna fishing in the Maldives. It does, however, appear to be much commoner in the south of the country than in the center and north.

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Spratelloides gracilis (Temminck and Schiegel, 1846)



English Name:Silver spratFamily:CLUPEIDAELocal Name:RehiOrder:ClupeiformesSize:Max. 9.5 cmSpecimen:MRS/0031/86

Distinctive Characters: Slender body. Pectoral fin short and is slightly shorter than eye and snout together. Body covered with thin, comparatively large scales, Head scale-less. Belly without scutes.

Colour: Dark blue dorsally, silvery white ventrally. A very distinct silvery lateral band from operculum extends to the base of caudal fin.

Habitat and Biology: Pelagic and usually inshore, occurs in large schools within the atolls.

Distribution: Indo-Pacific.

Remarks: Spratelloides graci/is **is one of the** most widely used bait for pole and line tuna fishing and it is very much preferred over other species of bait in the Maldives. On the eastern side of Maldives it is **commonest** during the southwest monsoon, while on the western side it is commonest during the northeast monsoon. This species was previously recorded as S. japonicus.