

A photograph of a sandy path leading into a dense tropical jungle. A wooden sign with the words 'JUNGLE WALK' is placed on the path. The jungle is filled with various green plants, including palm trees and other tropical foliage. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

Dhigali Jungle Walk

Dhigali Maldives is unique because of its dense vegetation and rich flora and fauna. Tall above the rest, gently swaying coconut palms, sea hibiscus, Indian almond trees and Alexandrian Laurels give the island its aerial identity. Blossoms from the pandanus and beach gardenia scent the evening air.

“Dhigali” quite possibly an evolution of - “Dhigu [long] Ali [light]” in Dhivehi (native language), over a period of time. In times past, when we did not have electricity, planktons lighted up the entire shoreline during certain times of the year and this island would have looked like a “long light”. During the day, the white beach would have done the same.

DHIGALI
MALDIVES



Coconut Palm

Dhivehi Name: Dhivehi Ruh

Coconut Palms are found almost every corner of the island. Dhigali used to be the main source of coconuts and firewood for the folks from close by islands. Here in Maldives, people say 'there is nothing to go waste in coconut palm trees. Like, coconut husk can be used make coir rope and coconut leaf can be used make thatch roof. Also the trunk of the tree can be used to build boats. Even the roots can be used medicinally and as a dye



Indian Almonds

Dhivehi Name: Midhili

Indian almond trees are also quite common in Dhigali. Like coconut palms Indian almonds can be seen all over the island. These trees can grow quite tall and wide which gives shade. The timber can be used to make furniture and some parts of the boats. The fruit and the nut (kanamadhu) inside the shell are eaten. People collect the nuts, dry it and cut in half to take the nut inside.



Beach Cabbage/Sea Lettuce

Dhivehi Name: Magoo

It is a large bush reaching up to about 4 m in height typical of littoral zones where it grows very close to the sea exposed to the salt spray, usually on sandy or pebbly soils. Leaves are slightly succulent, about 20 cm long, closely alternate and crowded at the stem tips. Beach Cabbages are quite common in Dhigali Maldives, especially around the island



Beach Gardenia

Dhivehi Name: Uni

Beach gardenia is a small to medium sized shrub reaching between 5 – 10 m in height and 3 m in width. It is present in all islands of Maldives. It grows in abundance along coastlines. The wood is used as firewood and in lacquer work. The flowers of these trees have a very pleasant fragrance and they scent the evening air as you walk past them. The latex of the plant is used medically to treat wounds and the flowers are used in Ayurvedic medicine.



Alexandrian Laurel

Dhivehi Name: Funa

These type of trees abundant all around Dhigali Maldives. Almost 40% of the Dhigali jungle is covered with Alexandrian Laurel. These trees can reach as high as 20m. These trees are particularly popular with the fruit bats. Alexandrian Laurel are widely using to build boats around the Maldives. Due to the dense composition of the timber traditional boat builders always used timber from Funa trees for the keel of their boats.



Sea Hibiscus

Dhivehi Name: Dhiggaa

When we walk around dhigali you will see Sea hibiscus trees a lot. The tree gives a cup shaped beautiful flower. Sometimes it is yellow and sometimes it's in light red color. Sea Hibiscus acts as wind blocks as they can grow rather wide and bushy. Carpenters use the tree trunk to build boats and to make furniture.



Screw Pine - Pandanus

Dhivehi Name: Kashi keyo / Medhu keyo

Screw Pines can be seen a lot inside the jungle and just next to the beach of Dhigali Maldives. These trees seen in Dhigali are 5 to 10 m in height. The leaves are sword shaped and spiny. The fruit changes from green to bright orange or red as it matures. The fruits can stay on the tree for a very long time. Kashimaa – the flower of the pandanus tree is quite fragrant and like their tropical cousins the beach gardenia, they give off a very pleasant aroma when they are in bloom. Fruit from the larger variety (commonly known as Maa Kashi Keyo) is widely eaten among Maldivians as a refreshing juice or in the form of a porridge cooked with rice.



Poison Bulb – Spider Lily

Dhivehi Name: Kan'dholhu

Poison bulbs are quite common and visible on the island, especially at the sides of the roads. The entire plant is known as poisonous, however, the leaves, stem and root have been widely used and still using in traditional medicine. This too has very fragrant flowers. Check the flowers at sunset as you walk along.



Banyan Tree

Dhivehi Name: Nika

Banyan trees are another prominent feature of Dhigali, which enhances the tropical character and makes it popular with birds. These trees can grow really tall and wide. When you see islands from very far, first things you see are the biggest and tallest trees, and many times those trees would be none other than Banyan trees. The fruits are small and are in reddish color. Almost every part of the tree has been used in traditional medicine. The berries/fruits of these trees are delicacies for the fruit bats.



Gloriosa Superba / Spider Lily

Dhivehi Name: Vihalagondi

These beautiful red, yellow and green flowers punctuate the natural vegetation of Dhigali. The bright red and yellow can be seen in many areas of the island during the flowering season. This plant contains colchicine (toxin) and the bulb/root can hibernate for up to six months a year. This plant and flower are held in many parts of the world. In Tamil Nadu, India, it is the state flower.

Other Common Plants Seen in Dhigali Maldives



Portia Tree
Dhivehi Name: Hirun'dhu



Octopus Bush
Dhivehi Name: Boashi



Sea Trumpet
Dhivehi Name: Kaani



Ironwood
Dhivehi Name: Kuredhi



Noni Tree
Dhivehi Name: Ahi



Headache Tree
Dhivehi Name: Dhakandhaa



Garden Lizard

Dhivehi Name: Bon'du

As you walk along the pathways of Dhigali, you will see these lizards crossing the road totally, they are harmless so no need to be concerned. Climbing up on coconut trees and even resting on tree branches. These beautiful little creatures can grow up to 10cm and normally their diet is small insects such as flies and mosquitoes. Oriental garden lizard. Males turn to a bright red or orange during the breeding season, which usually falls during May and June.



Common House Gecko

Dhivehi Name: Hoanu

Nature's own mosquito control - Common house geckos can be seen normally at night on walls, trying to catch insects and flies attracted to porch lights. These small geckos are non-venomous and they are harmless so no need to be concerned.



Common Wolf Snake

Dhivehi Name: Nannugathi

Common wolf snake is a species of nonvenomous snake found even in Dhigali. These snakes hunt for shrews and lizards. They are harmless so no need to be concerned. They are quite shy and do not come out often. In island culture, sighting a snake is associated with good luck.



Crow

Dhivehi Name: Kaalhu

They are one of the most common birds found in Maldives. Crows are intelligent, wary and adapt well to human activity. Some locals do care and admire crows in the Maldives. Even in Dhigali Maldives you will spot these birds flying above the island every now and then.

These birds are very territorial and you can often see them getting into duels with the bats. We advice not to feed them due to their adaptive nature around humans.



Grey Heron

Dhivehi Name: Maakanaa

These long legged and long necked birds can be seen on the beaches of Dhigali Maldives every now and then, trying to catch their meal. Grey herons normally hunt from the beach, and their prey normally are Bigeye scads, mackerels and even silver sprats. They are constant fixtures on Maldivian shores during the times of the year when you spot bait balls in the lagoon.



Fruit Bat

Dhivehi Name: Vaa

Also known as Flying Foxes. These are the largest in the bat family with good eyesight and keen sense of smell. They are known to be very articular about which fruits they eat. Fruit bats are harmless creatures native to the Maldives. With wingspans that can reach up to 2 to 4 feet, they make quite the impression on all who watch them cruise from tree to tree. Look up to find them dangling from the palm trees in search of nectar and fruit, of which they must eat half their weight daily.



Common Tern

Dhivehi Name: Valla

Common Terns normally can be seen in coastal areas and open sea. When we cruise for dolphin and when we take you for sunset fishing and sunset cruise, you will be able to see these black capped white birds flying around the reefs.

This bird is protected in the Maldives.



Maldivian Waterhen

Dhivehi Name: Dhivehi Kanbili

In Dhigali, we hear their calls from the jungle but we do not normally see them as they hide when they see people. However, if you are lucky you might see them crossing the roads. They usually walk and run alone or in pairs in the jungle and do not fly a lot. They can be noisy especially at dawn and dusk, with loud croaky calls, during breeding season they lay their eggs in the under brush. The chicks are very camouflaged to to blend with the dead leaves on the ground. Usually the chicks are seen foraging for insects and worms with their mothers



Asian Koel

Dhivehi Name: Dhivehi koveli

Most interesting behavior of Asian koel is they lay its egg in the nests of crows. They normally eats fruits but also eats insects and caterpillars as well. Here in Dhigali, when you hear birds' call from far as like common cuckoos calling, which sure will be an Asian koel. This bird is protected under the Environmental protection and preservation Act in the Maldives.



Ghost Crab

Dhivehi Name: Kiru Kakuni

The name "ghost crab" derives from their nocturnality and their generally pale coloration. They normally come out at night and even they come out at day time on Dhigali beaches it is hard to spot as they are very much same color as the beach, especially the young ones. They move very fast and even dig their own burrows on the beach.



Hermit Crab

Dhivehi Name: Baraveli

In Dhigali Maldives hermit crabs can be seen on the beach, under the trees near the beach and also inside the bushes. They even crawl just near your villas. The best part of hermit crab is that it is always looking for a new home to live in.. As they outgrow one shell, they find another, it is generally shells of sea snails that they choose.



Shrews

Dhivehi Name: Hikandhi

Shrews are not rodents. They are more closely related to moles and hedgehogs. Shrews regulate and condition the soil as they forage in leaf litter for worms and seeds. They are an integral part of tropical eco systems. The particular type of shrew found in Maldives is a prominent fixture on Dhigali and you can often see them crossing the pathways. Generally confused for mice or rats. These are nocturnal creatures with poor vision however with excellent smell.