

Tobian Fish Dictionary (DRAFT)  
(Fish with their Tobian, English, & Latin Names)

by

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SQUALIFORMES (SHARKS)

PAHO is the general term for sharks, and means "smelling of excrement," referring to the strong smell of many species.

PAHO RAUR HORFAT is an unidentified species.

CARCHARHINIDAE (REQUIEM SHARKS)

ECHARIVUS comes from words meaning "always bites stone" and refers to the tendency of the ocean white tip, to bit at the stone weights used by dropline fishermen outside the reef.

MATAR – *Carcharhinus melanopterus* (Quoy Gaimard), Black-tip shark

ECHARIVUS – *Triaenodon obsesus*, White-tip shark

ECHABOR – *Carcharhinus limbatus* (Valenciennes), Ocean black-tip

SHYRAENDIDAE (HAMMERHEAD SHARKS)

SAUOP – *Sphyrna* sp. – Hammerhead sharks

ORECTOLOBIDAE (NURSE SHARKS AND CARPET SHARKS)

SABACHO comes from words meaning "sleep" and "awkward" referring to the ungainly swimming motion of this shark and to its habit of resting motionless on the bottom.

SABACHO probably *Stegostoma tigrinum* Bonnaterre, Leopard shark

RAJIFORMES (RAYS)

The general name for rays is FAI which means "flat."

MYLIOBATIDAE (EAGLE RAYS)

FAYHIYAB means "flat, concave."

FAYHIYAB probably *Aetobatus narinari* (Euphrasen)

ANGUILLIFORMES (EELS)

RABUT is the general name for all eels and also sea snakes. Predominantly black eels are called RABUT TUCHOR. Predominantly white ones are called RABUT BECH. Those of mottled or mixed colors are called RABUT SANGI.

OPHICHTHIDAE (SNAKE EELS)

REEMANGENGAE comes from words meaning "black," "crooked" and "stripes."

REEMANGENGAE probably *Myrichthys colubrinus* (Boddaert), Harlequin snake eel.

CLUPEIDAE (HERRINGS)

A small schooling fish called TIRIHAN (meaning small bait fish) which periodically appears outside the reef at Tobi, is, judging from its description, a herring with rather large scales.

ENGRAULIDAE (ANCHOVIES)

YENGAB is the family name for anchovies.

## SYNODONTIDAE (LIZARD FISHES)

SIYEFAB CHAIREN — *Synodus* spp., Lizard fish

## ANTENNARIIDAE (FROGFISHES)

USURIFARFMA comes from words meaning "slow" and "drifting log" and refers to a species of frogfish found associated with drifting logs in the open ocean.

## MUGILIDAE (MULLETS)

The general name for mullets is YAOH.

YAOH HER probably *Crenimugilis crenilabis* (Forsk.) Other names for unidentified mullets are: POUCHOR YAOH, TIRIMEE, and YAOH SIYABO.

## SHYRAENIDAE (BARRACUDAS)

BAOH refers to barracudas in general as well as being applied specifically to the largest species. The word means "bad smell."

SUHOWU and MERIFUTS are names for smaller unidentified species. These names both mean "dangerous."

BAOH — *Sphyraena barracuda* (Walbaum) — Great barracuda (?).

## EXOCOETIDAE (FLYING FISHES)

MANGAH, meaning "food," refers to any flying fish that is more than about six inches long.

POUCHOR means "dark hand" and refers to the dark pectoral fins of this fish.

HON means "fish food"—referring to a small species used as bait.

MEHENG means "mixed together" and refers to two species with spotted pectoral fins that Tobians recognize to be distinct, yet have difficulty differentiating. POUCHOR, the flying fish, is distinguished from POUCHOR, or PUUCHOR YAOH, the mullet, by adding the general term for flying fish, MANGAH, when the context of the conversation does not make the distinction obvious.

POUCHOR or POUCHOR MANGAH—*Exocoetus volitans* Linnaeus, Cosmopolitan flying fish

HON—a small unidentified species

PAUCHACHA probably *Prognichthys gibbifrons* (Valenciennes), pug-nosed flying fish

PAU MEHENG—*Cypsellurus Poecilopterus* (Valenciennes) spotted flying fish, and *Cypsellurus atrisignis* Jenkins—greater spotted flying fish.

## HEMIRHAMPHIDAE (HALFBEAKS)

The family name for this group is FRA.

TEWARI PASUOHUNG, loosely translated, means "good eating."

MARI PASUOHUNG, *Hyporhamphus unifasciatus* (Ranzani)—Black-tipped garfish.

## BELONIDAE (NEEDLEFISHES)

The family name for needlefishes is MAHI, which means "necklace" and refers to the fact that needlefish are often strung, when caught, like beads on a necklace, rather than simply piled in a basket like other fish.

MAHIROBUT refers to any species found on the reef in shallow water. MAHIROBUT comes from words meaning "necklace" (see above) and "outside." This is the most important species caught outside the reef using the famous breadfruit kite and spider web lure.

MAHARIMATAW probably *Thalassosteus appendiculatus* (Klunzinger)—keel-jawed needlefish.

## HOLOCENTRIDAE (SQUIRRELFISHES)

The general name for squirrelfish, MOR, loosely translated means "in mourning" and refers to the habit of

these fish of remaining hidden during the day. NGUSNGUS is an unidentified species; the name is onomatopoeic, describing the sound the fish makes when disturbed.

HUHUVAHATA is called HU when small. TATAHBUR is an unidentified species with two or three dark vertical bands. The name means "like a belt."

SAHA—*Holocentrus spinifer* (Forsk.)—spiny squirrel fish.

YETOH probably *Holocentrus operculare* (Valenciennes)—black-finned squirrel fish.

YARIFERA probably *Holocentrus sammara* (Forsk.)—blood-spotted squirrel fish.

HUHUVAFIATA — *Holocentrus* sp.

CHIMESOGI — *olocentrus* sp.

MARUTACHAM —*Myripristis* sp.

MARTAMIICH—*Myripristis* sp.

RED—*Myripristis* sp.

TAPEKANG—*Myripristis* sp.

## FISTULARIDAE (CORNETFISHES)

RIPAPA means "mimic" and refers, reportedly, to the similarity in shape of this fish to needlefish.

RIPIPA—*Fistularia* sp.

## SYNGNATHIDAE (PIPEFISH AND SEAHORSES)

The general name for both pipefish and seahorses is POHIJARIFOS.

## SCORPAENIDAE (SCORPIONFISHES)

Lionfishes, members of the genus *Pterois* are called WARUGAR. The name is that of a type of woven, decorated woman's skirt and refers to the colorful elongate fin spines of the lionfishes. Another name for this group is RARIWORONG which is also the name of a tree from which medicine is prepared to treat lionfish stings. tonefish, and a variety of related fish are called REYU. The name means "lazy" and refers to the sedentary habits of these species.

## PLATYCEPHALIDAE (FLATHEADS)

SIYAVAPAHO means "big long mouth like a shark."

SIYAVAPAHO—*Platycephalus* sp.

## DACTYLOPTERIDAE (FLYING GURNARDS)

Tobians recognize pictures of flying gurnards but could not recall a Tobian name for them.

## APOGONIDAE (CARDINALFISHES)

HAUBORAP, the family name for cardinalfishes, means "no (particular) hook" and refers the ease of catching these small fish on any type of hook.

## SERRANIDAE (GROUPERS)

BWURRA is the name for a type of bottom fishing using several hooks per line and refers to a group of predominantly red serranids that are among the fish often caught using this method.

HARI means, loosely, "takes any bait" and refers to a group of multi-colored serranids (including BWURRA).

NGENGIT means "of branching coral" and refers to the habitat of the BWURRAFANGENGIT.

VUSIVUS literally means "stone," but, by inference, means "white," since all stones on Tobi are of coral origin and therefore white; it thus refers to the white spots on the BWURRA VUSUVUS.

CHORIONG means "yellow," HOCHT means "black," MERONG loosely, means "always bites," and RAPATCHIMAR means "big head."

RUHUNO means "outside the reef where the waves break" and refers to the habitat of several unidentified

species all known as HARI RUHUNO.

YEHUNG means "yellow decorations" and refers to several unidentified species.

YECHOR means black.

HAUGUS, loosely translated, means "vacuum" and refers to any grouper over about three feet long. (The ability of large groupers to "inhale" their prey, including even, reputedly, hapless divers, is legendary in the tropical Pacific.)

MAHAHAPU, the name of an unidentified species, means "half-dark cheek."

MAN WARU HOH means "animal living in coral."

FOREPEE is the name of one or more species of pink to red serranid.

BWURRAFANENGIT probably *Epinephelus fasciatus* (Forsk.) black-tipped grouper.

BWURRA VUSUVUS possibly *Epinephelus sexfasciatus* (Valenciennes), six-banded grouper.

BWURRA WAYCHOKONG—*Variola louti* (Forsk.) ( ? )

HARI CHOR possibly *Cephalopholis pachycentron* (Valenciennes), brownbanded grouper.

HARI CHORIONG—*Epinephelus* sp.

HARI HOCHT—*Epinephelus tauvina* (Forsk.) ( ? )

HARI MERONG—*Cephalopholis cyanostigma* (Valenciennes), blue-spotted grouper.

HARI MUGGAH probably *Epinephelus merra* Bloch, honeycomb grouper.

HARI RAPATCHIMAR probably *Epinephelus megachir* (Richardson), long-finned grouper.

HARI YECHOR possibly *Epinephelus australis* (Castelnau), white-spotted grouper.

MAN WARUHOCH or HAMATSIWO probably *Cephalopholis urodelis* (Bloch and Schneider), flattailed grouper.

MAHAHAPO—*Cephalopholis coatesi* Whitley, freckled grouper.

## GRAMMISTIDAE (SPINY-CHEEKED PERCHES) ?

TEMAUBOUR means "bad smell" and refers to the odor of this fish.

TEMAUR BOUR—*Grammistes sexlineatus* (Thunberg), six-lined perch.

## ANTIDAE (SEA PERCHES)

FOTORIMAR means "like a man" and refers to the strong fight this fish puts up when hooked.

FOTORIMAR—*Anthias huchti* Bleeker, Hucht's sea perch.

## KYPHOSIDAE (RUDDERFISHES)

The family name for rudderfishes is HER.

HERISONOBOI—*Kyphosus cinerascens* (Forsk.) and possibly also *Kyphosus lembus* (Cuvier), rudderfish

HERIMUROU—*Kyphosus vaigiensis* (Quoy & Gaimard), rudderfish.

## PRIACANTHIDAE (BIG EYES)

REEPAU -- *Priacanthus* spp.

## LOBOTIDAE (TRIPLETAILS)

FAUMER means "drifting." This fish is seen hanging motionless, often on its side, under floating logs.

FAUMER—*Lobotes surinamensis* (Bloch), dusky triple tail.

## ECHENEIDAE (REMORAS)

CHERA is the family name for remora and is the name applied to a woman who dotes on a man and won't let him out of her sight.

It refers to the habit of remoras of following closely or actually adhering to larger fish.

Remoras seen in company of sharks are called CHERAR PAHO.

## CARANGIDAE (JACKS)

I experienced considerable difficulty in trying to match various Tobian names for carangids with particular species.

CHEP is the general name for small jacks.

YEB is the name of a type of strong fishing line and refers to an elongate jack that gets "very large." When they are small, YEB are called TANGITENGINAM, which means "crying sound," referring to the sounds they make when caught.

TETTER is an unidentified, slender-bodied jack. The name is that given to the action of pulling in slack fishing line and refers to this fish's habit of running towards the canoe when hooked.

MAMUCHIH is a small, slender-bodied jack often found in company with rainbow runners outside the reef.

RAHUNG refers to several species of deep-bodied, round-headed jacks.

FOFO means "breadfruit flower" and may refer to the fact that offerings of this fish plus breadfruit were customarily made to the gods of Tobi. Very large specimens of FOFO are called FOFORIMETAU.

CHEROHOKO means "to chum together" and refers to the custom of several fisherman throwing large quantities of bait into the water to attract schools of these fish and keep them in the vicinity for a day or more.

YETAM means "travels with a father" and refers to the fact that as adults these fish often accompany sharks, while as juveniles they seek shelter under jellyfish.

CHEROHOKO—*Alectis indica* (Ruppell) -plumed jack and/or *Carangoides armatus* (Forsk.) , long-finned jack.

FEEF possibly *Carangoides diversa* (Whitley), diverse jack

FOFO, FOFORIMETAU—*Elegatus bipinnulatus* Quoy & Gaimard, rainbow runner.

FARAYARI probably *Megalaspis cordyla* (Linnaeus), finny scad

NIMIY—*Gnathodon speciosus* (Forsk.) , golden jack

PATI probably *Selar crumenophthalmus* (Bloch), purse-eyed scad; *Trachurus boops* (Cuvier & Valenciennes), ox-eyed scad; and *Caranx mate* (Cuvier & Valenciennes), yellowtail scad.

YATAM—*Naucrates ductor* (Linnaeus), pilotfish

## CORYPHAENIDAE (DOLPHINS)

Tobians have three names, according to its size for the common dolphin fish, *Coryphaena hippurus* Linnaeus. They are called TARACHAB when under about 1 1/2 feet in length, TAPAHO when between 1 1/2 and 3 feet, and UWATAPA TAPA when over 3 feet long. TAPAHO is the name of a coconut frond mat woven in a tapered shape reminiscent of a dolphin.

## LUTJANIDAE (SNAPPERS)

RITCHUH refers not only to damselfish (see below) but also to many species of snappers when they are very small.

HAWEN is the name of an unidentified species with vertical yellow stripes.

MATACHA means "red eye."

RITITIFATS means "spot" and refers to several snappers with single large, distinct oval spots on either side below the soft dorsal.

HARIFO means "testing" and refers to the cautious, nibbling approach of this fish to the bait.

MATAFIS, meaning "star eye," is an unidentified species.

CHUHERIBAUT—*Aprion virescens* Cuvier & Valenciennes, green jobfish

FARAH—*Aphareus rutilans* Cuvier, small-toothed jobfish

HAFIRO—*Lutjanus* sp.

YETAT—*Lutjanus kasmira* (Forsk.) , blue-banded snapper

MATACHA—*Lutjanus vaigiensis* ? , "red snapper"

RITITIFATS— *Lutjanus* spp. See above

MOS—*Lutjanus argentimaculatus* ?. A "red snapper

## CAESIODIDAE (FUSILIERS)

RIMONGAR – a solid blue fusilier

TIRI BUHO – *Caesio chrysozonus* Cuvier – bananafish

REMERIONG – *Caesio cuning* (Bloch) – yellowtail fusilier

## THERAPONIDAE (GRUNTERS)

HATOOGH is the name of several unidentified, longitudinally striped species in this family.

## POMADAYSIDAE (GRUNTS AND SWEETLIPS)

IH RARO means "deep (water) fish."

TERIBOOER means "smell stinks"—which refers to the fact that when you touch this fish its smell adheres and is hard to wash off.

UREMAR means "to become an adult" and refers to the similarity between its black markings and the tattoos that were applied to Tobian males upon reaching manood.

RAAU means "study" and refers to the circumspect approach of this fish to a baited hook.

WAHABIR is an unidentified species that probably belongs to this family.

IH RARO – *Pseudopristipoma nigra* (Cuvier) – brown sweetlips

RAAU – *Plectorhynchus chaetodontoides* Lacepede – harlequin sweetlips and possibly also *Spilotichtys pictus* (Thunberg) – painted sweetlips

UREMAR—*Plectorhynchus goldmanni* (Bleeker), diagonal banded sweetlips; *Plectorhynchus cuvieri* (Bennet), straight banded sweetlips; and *Plectorhynchus lineatus* Cuvier, yellow banded sweetlips

## LETHRINIDAE (EMPERORS)

The general name for emperors other than HAUSIH (see below) is HATIH which means "hard to find" and refers to the fact that the colors of lethrinids characteristically provide them with effective camouflage.

HAUSIH is a general term for "long nosed" lethrinids and means, loosely translated, "long mouth."

HAUSIH—*Lethrinus miniatus* (Foster), long-nosed emperor, and other "long-nosed" species.

HATIH—*Lethrinus microdon* Cuvier & Valenciennes, small-toothed emperor and other species (see above)

HAUSIHI RI RARO—*Lethrinus nebulosus* (Forsk.) spangled emperor.

## NEMIPTERIDAE (SPINE-CHEEKS)

HURETEWAR is an unidentified species which appears to be a spine-cheek.

FARHONOR possibly *Eemipterus hexodon* (Quoy and Gaimard), ocellated butterfly bream.

## GERRIDAE (MOJARRAS)

TAGHUHUYATCH means "back handle" and may refer to the single long dorsal filaments on two unidentified species known by this name.

TAGHUHUYATCH—*Gerres* spp.

## MULLIDAE (GOATFISHES)

The family name for goatfishes is SO'OWO, which means "middle of the current." According to Tobians, several species of goatfish, when in schools, favor areas where the current is strong.

SO'OWOHABUG refers to several species with single dark oval spots on the lateral line near the caudal fin.

SO'OWOTABORRABOR means "mottled goatfish" and refers to several species with dusky markings on

their bodies.

SO'OWOSEIRICHIE means "pale yellow" goatfish and refers to several species with yellow bodies or yellow body markings.

SO'OWOCHIMACHANG means goatfish that is "red all over."

SO'OWOCHIMACHANG probably *Parupeneus janseni* (Bleeker), rosy goatfish SO'OWOWARIMEPIN, *Uneneus* spp.

## HAETODONTIDAE (BUTTERFLYFISHES)

PAIP is the family name for both butterflyfish and angelfish. (The lumping of these two families also occurs in the nomenclature of nearby Palau, as well as in Tahiti (Helfman and Randall, 1973).) The name is the same as that given to a hollow bone straw used by elderly or infirm Tobians to suck juice from coconuts, and refers to the protruding mouths of many butterflyfishes and angelfishes.

HATCHING means "bark" and refers reputedly to the habit of this fish of nibbling on the bark of the branches used in the construction of fish traps.

URECH means "erratic" and refers to the jerky, wandering path taken by this fish when it is pursued.

RUCHAHAY means "light grey" and refers to several species with a light grey to light purple body color.

HATCHING—*Heniochus permutatus* Cuvier, false morrish idol

MACHAVATCH —*Chelmon rostratus* (Linnaeus), beaked butterflyfish

RUCHAWAY —*Chaetodon ephippium* Cuvier, saddled butterflyfish and several other species.

URECH—*Heniochus acuminatus* (Linnaeus), false moorish idol

## EPHIPPIDAE (SPADEFISHES)

BURECH—*Platax teira* (Forsk.) round-faced spadefish

## POMACANTHIDAE (ANGELFISHES)

PAIP is the family name for both butterflyfishes and angelfishes.

NGUNGNPAHA means "son of thunder" and refers to the loud noise these fish make when alarmed.

FARUFON PITSAHE HE PULLO means "leg tattoo of Pulo Ana." Pulo Ana is a nearby island whose residents are very closely related to Tobians culturally and linguistically. The name refers to the similarity of the markings on this fish to traditional Pulo Ana leg tattoos.

NGUNGNPAHA juvenile *Pomacentrus imperator* (Bloch), imperial angelfish

NGUSPAHA adult *Pomacentrus imperator*

FARUFONU PITSAHE HE PULLO *Pygoplites diacanthus* (Boddaert), blue-banded angelfish

HOB—*Centropyge bicolor* (Bloch), yellow and black angelfish (check cards—UAHAB?)

MAHAVATCH—*Euxhipops sestriatus* (Cuvier), six-banded angelfish

## ZANCLIDAE (MOORISH IDOL)

Tobians believe that moorish idols do not spawn locally because they never see any juveniles. They believe that these fish come in from elsewhere on ocean currents accompanying drifting logs. Hence the name, WASORA, or "foreigner."

WASORA—*Zanclus cornutus* (Linnaeus), moorish idol

## POMACENTRIDAE (DAMSELFISHES)

The family name for damselfishes, clownfishes (*Amphiprionidae*) and very small lutjanids is RITCHUH, which means "little fish that never grows up." Those that are found generally among corals are sometimes called MENFARWORENGIT, meaning "animal of the coral."

RITCHUHPAH refers to a damselfish that "eats human excrement."

RITCHUH HANGAHANG means "orange" damselfish, RITCHUHOCHOR is a "black" damselfish, and RITCHUHMAYSOIS is a "yellow black" damselfish.

RIPERIYETCHO means "copra" and refers to the fact that coconut meat is often used as bait for these species. The name applies to all sergeant majors with dark vertical bands, excluding those in which the bands extend onto dorsal and anal fins.

RITCHUHCHOWANAP means "small and wide" and refers to the robustness of these small fish.

SONOBEI means "try for luck" and refers to the fact that this fish is cautious and hard to hook.

RAURPERGURITER probably *Abudefduf leucogaster* (Bleeker), white-breasted sergeant major

RITCHUH HANGHANG — *Abudefduf aureus* (Cuvier) (Faulkner), yellow damselfish

RITCHUHCHOWANAP, *Pomacentrus* spp.

RITCHUHPAH probably *Pomacentrus semifasciatus* Gunther, half-banded damselfish

RIPERIYETCHO *Abudefduf* spp.

RITCHUHMAYSOIS probably *Pomacentrus pavo* (Bloch), sapphire damselfish

SONOBEI probably *Abudefduf sordidus* (Forsk.) (Faulkner), yellow-banded sergeant major

RIHOHAUWER—*Pomacentrus perspicillatus* Cuvier, four spot damselfish

VISIVO probably *Pomacentrus chrysopoecilus* Schlegel & Muller, yellow spot damselfish

## AMPHIPRIONIDAE (CLOWNFISHES OR ANEMONEFISHES)

All clownfish are referred to as RICHUH FA TOH MARI, meaning "little fish in sea anemone" referring to the commensal relationship between these fishes and sea anemones.

## LABRIDAE (WRASSES)

There seems to be no general family name for wrasses. The cleaning wrasse, *Labroides dimidiatus* is called CHARA which means "suck" or CHARIFUGUT, meaning to "soothe" or "hypnotize" by "sucking." The name refers to the fact that larger fish hang motionless in the water, as though in a trance, while being divested of the external and mouth parasites upon which this wrasse feeds.

CHARAWARUNG means "lives under the waves" and refers to the fact that these fish are found where the waves break at the edge of the fringing reef. The bumphead wrasse is called MAM which means "grease," a reference to the esteemed gelatinous substance released copiously from the flesh of this species when it is cooked.

MECHERI means "slippery," a well deserved name mirrored by the English common name of this fish, "slippery dick." (Check this) The MOPAR is not eaten, for reasons Tobians have forgotten; the name means "taboo."

POHOS means "roof" and refers to the fact that these species often frequent the roofs of underhangs and caves in the reef.

REEBAIH means "a person who doesn't talk a lot" and refers to two or more unidentified small-mouthed species.

TAREYAR means "good flavoring"; this small fish is deemed particularly good when eaten with vegetable foods such as swamp taro. TANGARANGAR means, loosely, "delinquent" and refers to this species' reported habit of wandering aimlessly about.

MARANGOTI means "fence" and refers to the fact that this unidentified fish is often caught in a surround net.

TIRIFERUHUR is the name of an unidentified wrasse.

CHARA, CHARIFERIGUT, TIRIBUHUR—*Labroides dimidiatus* (Valenciennes), cleaning wrasse

CHARAWARUNG—*Thalassoma fuscum* (Lacepede), green-black wrasse and *Stethojulis albobittata* (Bonnaterre), orange-banded wrasse

MAM—*Cheilinus undulatus* Ruppell, bumphead wrasse

MECHERI—*Novculichtys macrolepidotus* (?) (Bloch) (must check up on this one)

MOPAR possibly *Novaculichthys taeniourus*

POHOS—*Cheilinus fasciatus* (Bloch), scarlet-breasted wrasse, and a variety of other bright, multi-colored wrasse

RAUSOUMER probably *Thalassoma anseni* (Bleeker), Jansen's wrasse, and *Thalassoma hardwicki* (Bennett), six-barred wrasse

REECOHO possibly *Hemipteronotus pentadactylus* (Linnaeus), keel-headed wrasse

TAREYAR — *Thalassoma* sp.

WAKEEK—*Gomphosus* spp. (recheck name & ident. with Patris).

## SCARIDAE (PARROTFISHES)

FASURMATABOROBOR is the family name for all parrotfishes other than the very large and distinctive species, *Bolbometopon muricatus*. The name means "shining eyeball."

HAO means "missing" and refers to the ability of two bright-colored species to get off the hook frequently.

MASUK means "sleep"; many species of parrotfish sleep at night.

MOCHUYAR means "good sleeping mat" and, like the previous name, refers to the sleeping habits of this species.

MATIRAI means "stomach full of sea urchins."

HAO—*Cetoscarus pulchellus* (Ruppell) — red-speckled parrotfish, and *Chlorurus strongylocephalus* (Bleeker), purple-headed parrotfish

MASUH probably *Callodon hobban* (Forsk.), blue-barred orange parrotfish

MATIRAI, TIRAI, *Bolbometopon muricatus* (Cuvier & Valenciennes), bumphead parrotfish

MOCHUYAR probably *Callyodon cyanognathus* (Bleeker), blue-fronted parrotfish

## BLENNIDAE (BLENNIES)

RIHOSOBIR is the family name for blennies and gobies.

SIN RAUGOMAR probably *Runuke amblyrhynchus* (Bleeker), blunt-nosed blenny

## GOBIDAE (GOBIES)

RIHOSOBIR is the family name for blennies and gobies, and means "bait for pole fishing."

RIGACHEEF is the name of those species which live in holes in the bottom. The name is that given to the act of snapping someone with one's finger, as a mother does to a child as a mild form of punishment. It refers to the reported habit of some of these gobies of nipping aggressively at the feet of waders.

HARI CHIMERIFAS—*Ctenogobius criniger* (Valenciennes), hair-finned goby

## BROTULIDAE (EEL-POUTS)

The family name for brotulids is SINTAREYAR.

## ACANTHURIDAE (SURGEONFISHES, TANGS, UNICORNFISHES)

There seems to be no family name for this group of fishes.

BAOTOOT means "protruding nose" and refers to the horn on the head of this unicornfish. The purple-finned sailfin tang is known as PINGAO, which means "rare smell."

BURAHARE means "shining morning" or "early in the morning" and apparently refers to the greater ease with which these fish are caught early in the morning. FARAMWE means "good for hooking up."

FARASEO means "only one"; this species has only one caudal spine on each side of its caudal peduncle, whereas some of its relatives have two.

HORACH is the name of a tree from which comes medicine to counteract an illness common on Tobi characterized by chancre sores and a fever. The fish of the same name, ground up without the intestines removed, and eaten raw, is another traditional cure. MOGHU is the name of the latter illness — and the

name of another surgeonfish that is similarly used in its cure.

MERANGU means "facing into the bottom" and apparently refers to the typical attitude of these unidentified, spotted, hornless unicornfish when feeding on algae.

BAOTOOT probably *Naso brevirostrus* (Cuvier & Valenciennes), short-snouted unicornfish

BURAHARI—*Naso literatus* (Bloch & Schneider), poll unicornfish

FARAMWE—*Naso vlamingi* (Cuvier & Valenciennes), Vlaming's unicornfish

FARASEO—*Paracanthus hepatus* (Linnaeus), wedge-tailed blue tang

HORACH—*Acanthurus triostegus* (Linnaeus), convictfish

KUM—*Naso unicornish* (Forsk.) long-snouted unicornfish

MERANGU—*Naso* sp.

OWAHABU—*Acanthurus lineatus* (Linnaeus), blue-lined surgeonfish and *Ctenochaetus striatus* (Quoy & Gaimard), orange-dotted, hair-toothed tang

SIRIBOGUG—*Naso annulatus* (Quoy & Gaimard), ring-tailed unicornfish

MONO—*Acanthurus glucopeus* Cuvier (spelling?), head band surgeonfish and *Ctenochaetus strigosus* (Bennett), blue-dotted, hair-toothed tang

PINGAO—*Zebrasoma veliferum* (Bloch), purple-finned sailfin tang

PAHAPA—*Acanthurus Ruttatus* Bloch and Schneider, spotted surgeonfish

## SIGANIDAE (RABBITFISHES)

All species with a significant amount of yellow coloring are referred to as MEACH.

Others are called UMUROU which means "come together." The name refers to the schooling of these fish.

MEACH—*Siganus canaliculatus* (Park) and *Siganus* spp.

## SCOMBRIDAE (TUNA AND MACKEREL)

TAGHU is the general name for tuna other than (?).

TANGIH refers to individuals of any species of tuna which weigh more than about fifty pounds.

HABAU means "pole caught," the centuries old Tobian method of catching skipjack tuna by polefishing is very similar in many details to the method used commercially today throughout much of the western Pacific.

The dogtooth tuna goes by different names depending upon its size. Large ones are called TAGHU

MACHAO or by the contraction, CHAO. Medium sized individuals are called YASSUR and small ones are called HABAU.

TATAHAHAB is the name used for both yellowfin and albacore tuna.

YASSUR means "discourage"; Tobian fisherman say this species tends to chase away other fish, such as rainbow runners, which might otherwise strike their lures.

YOMA, loosely translated, means "approximate" and probably refers, according to my informants, to the fact that this species, the mackerel tuna, looks similar to the more common skipjack.

NGELNGAL means "can't miss bait" and refers to the rather dependable response of the spanish mackerel to the fisherman's bait or lure.

HANGAP means "stripe tattoo" and refers to the similarity of the stripes on skipjack tuna to certain traditional tattoos.

MASOWAH means "very strong" and probably refers to the fact that this fish, smaller individuals of which are often used as live bait, stay alive on the hook longer than most other bait species.

HANGAP—*Katuwonus pelamis* (Linnaeus), skipjack

MASOWAH—*Scomber Japonicus* Houttuyn, Japanese chub mackerel

TATAHAHAB—*Neothunnus macropterus* (check this), yellowfin tuna, and *Thunnus germo* (check this), albacore

NGELNGAL -- *Scombermorus commersoni* (Lacepede), spanish mackerel

YOMA—*Euthynnus affinis* (Cantor), mackerel tuna

YAR—*Acanthocybium solandri* (Cuvier), wahoo

## XIPHIDAE (BROADBILL SWORDFISH)

Swordfishes are known by the same name as marlin, TAUCHACHA.

## ISTIOPHORIDAE (BILLFISHES)

All marlins are called TAUCHACHA. The name is also that of a weaving instrument made from pairs of bills from these fish. The sailfish is called MAHARECHOB, a name which means "wearing a mat for a decoration," referring to the enlarged dorsal fin.

TAUCHACHA—*Makaira* sp.

MAHARECHOB—*Istiophorus platypterus* (Shaw & Nodder) (check this name), Pacific sailfish

## BRAMIDAE (POMFRETS)

APICHUKOY—*Collybus drachme* Snyder, Pygmy pomfret

## TETRAGONURIDAE (SQUARETAILS)

MAHAB—*Tetragonurus pacificus* Abe, Pacific squaretail

## BOTHIDAE (LEFT EYE FLOUNDERS)

REEPEH means "flat."

REEPEH—*Bothus* spp.

## OSTRACIONTIDAE (TRUNKFISHES, BOXFISHES)

Boxfishes are called TAVITEF, which means "fishing box." Tobians make distinctive fishing tackle boxes from breadfruit wood. The name, like the English common name, refers to the hardness and boxlike angularity of these fish.

Another name is PENGING which means "having four angles." There are about eight species of boxfish in Tobi waters.

## BALISTIDAE (TRIGGERFISHES)

Tobians have names for ten (check) different species of triggerfish and most of these are readily identifiable with pictures of triggerfish in Munro's "Fishes of New Guinea." It would appear that almost every species of triggerfish has a specific Tobian name, whereas the nearby Palauans have only five different names for triggerfish. Tobians use an ingenious hook to catch triggerfish—a group that are difficult to catch on conventional hooks. Triggerfish thus make up a much more important part of their catch than is the case in Palau.

BUB is the family name for triggerfish. The word is the Tobian equivalent to "parallelogram" and refers to the shape of the outline of the body of these fish.

BUB is also the name of the Southern Cross—a constellation similarly arranged in the shape of a parallelogram.

PECHEMAY means "collapsing tail."

BOUTACHO means "rounded body."

BUOCHOR means "black triggerfish."

MANGICHUR means "stays on the coral reef," adults of this species reportedly do not leave the cover of corals to feed like many other species do. It is called BUCHO when small. The last syllable of BUCHO is onomatopoeic and represents the sound made by this fish when it is disturbed.

BUBRHATOHOBEL means "Tobian triggerfish."

BUBRHOCHARIH means "Helen's Reef triggerfish," referring to a species common on a reef 30 miles east of Tobi.

BUOCHCHIG means "red triggerfish" and refers to the red teed of this species.

BUMERIF means "flat-bodied triggerfish."

BUWERGUS means "spotted triggerfish."

BUWAR means "turtle triggerfish"; the reason for this name is not clear.

FATUPES means "protruding eyebrow."

RUHURUHO is an old family name for triggerfish. The name means "throw net." The young of certain species are found in the open sea, often clustered around drifting logs. They are caught with a throw net and used for bait, since they are a natural food of tuna.

RUGERUG A MAHAGERAU contains words which mean "throw net" (see above), "necklace" and a type of tree with orange flowers. The latter two names refer to the yellow "bib" on this species.

TEEGENGHEN means "a mixture of yellow," when this fish becomes large it is called BUWAR.

PECHEMAY—*Hemibalistes chrysopterus* (Bloch & Schneider), golden-finned triggerfish

BOOMARAY—*Abilistes stellaris* (Bloch & Schneider), starry triggerfish

BUCHO, MANGICHUR—*Balistapus undulatus* (Mungo Park), vermiculated triggerfish

BUOCHECHIG—*Odonus niger* (Ruppell), red-toothed triggerfish

BUBRHATOHOBEL—*Rhinecanthus aculeatus* (Linnaeus), white-barred triggerfish

BUBRHOCHARIH—*Rhinecanthus echarpe* (Anon.), wedge-tailed triggerfish

BUMERIF—*Canthidermis rotundatus* (Proce), white-spotted triggerfish

BUWERGUS—*Balistoides conspiculum* (Bloch & Schneider), yellow-blotched triggerfish

TEEGENGHEN, BUWAR probably *Melichthys vidua* (Richardson), white-tailed triggerfish

FATUPES, RUHURUHO A MAHAGERAU—*Pseudobalistes flavimarginatus* (Ruppell), green triggerfish

## MONACANTHIDAE (FILEFISHES)

BUTAHAA means, literally, "coconut vessel," referring to the use of a half coconut shell as a bowl. The loose translation is "liver so big it fills the bowl," referring to the large (and esteemed) liver found in several unidentified species of filefish.

MABUNUKUNG means "ugly shape" and refers to two or more species with enlarged pelvic bones.

PAHITET means "thin" and refers to two or more unidentified filefish as well as one species of pufferfish.

MOBUNUKANG—*Oxymonocanthus longirostris* (Bloch & Schneider), beaked filefish, and other species (see above).

BUTAHAA, BOUCHOR—*Monacanthus mylii* (Bory de Saint-Vincent), centerboard filefish

RIYANGAHEI MAU—*Amanses scopas* (Cuvier), brush-sided filefish

## TETRADONTIDAE (PUFFERS)

UUS, which means "very slow," is the family name for puffers.

PAHITET—*Canthigaster margaritatus* (Ruppell), ocellated puffer

## DIODONTIDAE (PORCUPINEFISHES)

The family name for porcupinefishes is TAUS, which means "spiny."