Baitfish are small schooling fish used in Lakshadweep’s pole & line (P&L) fisheries as lures to catch larger fish like tuna. They are caught from the reefs and lagoons of the islands and are indispensable to the sustenance of Lakshadweep’s P&L fisheries.
**Nila mahi**
- **Average length**: Around 10 cm
- **Lifespan**: About 1–2 years
- **Sexual maturity**: Male and female
- **Spawning**: Synchronously on a semi-lunar cycle, on full moon and new moon nights.
- **Eggs**: High fecundity, hatch in 2-3 days.
- **Fishing gear**: Monofilament lift nets are used.

**Mukuram**
- **Average length**: About 35 cm
- **Lifespan**: Sexual maturity attained quickly
- **Spawning**: Large aggregations throughout the year, on full moon and new moon nights.
- **Fishing gear**: Lift nets of about 5 mm mesh size made of monofilament PVC material are used.

**Hondeli**
- **Average length**: About 10.5 cm
- **Lifespan**: Maximum of about one year
- **Sexual maturity**: Become sexually mature at about 3.7 cm in approx. 3–4 months.
- **Spawning**: In large aggregations at pre-dawn, higher during new moon nights.
- **Eggs**: High fecundity, hatch in 2-3 days.
- **Fishing gear**: Nylon or polyvinyl chloride (PVC) encircling nets with a mesh size of 1mm (previously 6mm) with lead sinkers are used.

**Rahi**
- **Average length**: About 7 cm
- **Lifespan**: Maximum of one year
- **Sexual maturity**: Become sexually mature in 3–4 months, at a size of 3.5 cm.
- **Spawning**: Similar to Hondeli.
- **Fishing gear**: Encircling nets with lead sinkers are used. Bamboo poles are used to keep the net well positioned in the water.

**Boadhi**
- **Average length**: About 7.4 cm
- **Lifespan**: Of 4–6 months
- **Sexual maturity**: Become sexually mature in 3–4 months.
- **Spawning**: They spawn multiple times in their lifetime. After courtship & spawning, the female releases a mass of eggs. The male fertilizes the eggs & scoops them into its mouth until they hatch.
- **Eggs**: About 6000 eggs
- **Fishing gear**: Encircling nets made of PVC are used to catch the Bodhi hovering over coral heads.