

## **An Action Plan for Coral Reef Management in Thailand Following Coral Bleaching Events**

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Widespread and severe coral bleaching on most reef sites in Thai waters was clearly documented in 2010. Bleaching in the Andaman Sea was more severe and extensive than in the Gulf of Thailand. The most susceptible corals were *Acropora* spp. and *Pocillopora* spp. This research aims to synthesize lessons learned concerning coral reef management in Thailand following the 2010 coral bleaching events. There were several meetings, seminars and conferences which were organized by government agencies, NGOs and universities for solving the coral bleaching problems and providing recommendations for coral reef management. An urgent action plan includes raising public awareness about coral bleaching and best practices for coral conservation, surveying on coral recovery trends at the bleached reef sites, determining appropriate measures for each critical reef such as temporary closure, limited number of divers, controlled activities, provided artificial reefs for diving and nature tours in the forests, etc., preventing land-based pollution, effectively enforcing coral reef related laws and regulations, conducting priority research themes and collaborating of all stakeholders and relevant agencies for integrated coastal management. Strategies for driving the action plan to implementation comprise submitting the status report on coral bleaching and consequent mortality to the cabinet, establishing a coral bleaching committee under the national environment board, approving the national strategic plan for coral reef management by the cabinet resolution, providing adequate funding supports from Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, National Research Council of Thailand, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Thailand Research Fund, and corporate social responsibility projects of private companies for conservation, research, management and restoration of coral reefs. Local participation in management is very essential for reef resilience under the climate change impacts.

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