SENSITIVITY OF DIFFERENT MURICID GASTROPODS TO TRIBUTYLTIN CONTAMINATION

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ABSTRACT

Imposex, the development of a penis and/or vas deferens in female gastropods, has been linked to the presence of the biocide tributyltin (TBT) used in antifouling paints. *Thais distinguenda*, *Thais bitubercularis* and *Montla musiua* were chosen as indicator organisms and their differences in sensitivity to TBT in terms of imposex frequency and relative penis size index (RPSI) were examined at five different stations along the south east coast of Phuket Island, Thailand. *T bitubercularis* was more sensitive than *T distinguenda* but only occured at stations with muddy water, whereas *T distinguenda* was abundant and widespread in both clear and slightly muddy habitats. The species were complementary and thereby extended the habitats which might be monitored. *M. musiua* was the least sensitive and should only be used as an indicator in highly TBT contaminated areas.