BLEACHING SUSCEPTIBILITY AND GROWTH CHARACTERISTICS OF *PORITES LUTEA* FROM THE ANDAMAN SEA, SOUTH THAILAND

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper reports the results of an initial follow-up investigation on the growth characteristics and bleaching susceptibility of the massive coral *Porites lutea*, together with an examination of the differences in growth rates between severely bleached (all virtually white in colour) and partially bleached (pale) colonies following the extensive seawater warming and bleaching event around Phuket in 2010. Prior to bleaching (Dec 2008–Nov 2010), linear extension and polyp density did not differ between colonies which later suffered severe compared to partial bleaching. In the post-bleaching period (Jun 2010–Jan 2011), linear extension rates were significantly reduced in both partially and fully bleached corals, compared with pre-bleaching values. Linear extension fell dramatically by 27.6% (= SE 3.0%) in severely bleached compared to 7.2% in partially bleached (= SE 5.8%) colonies.