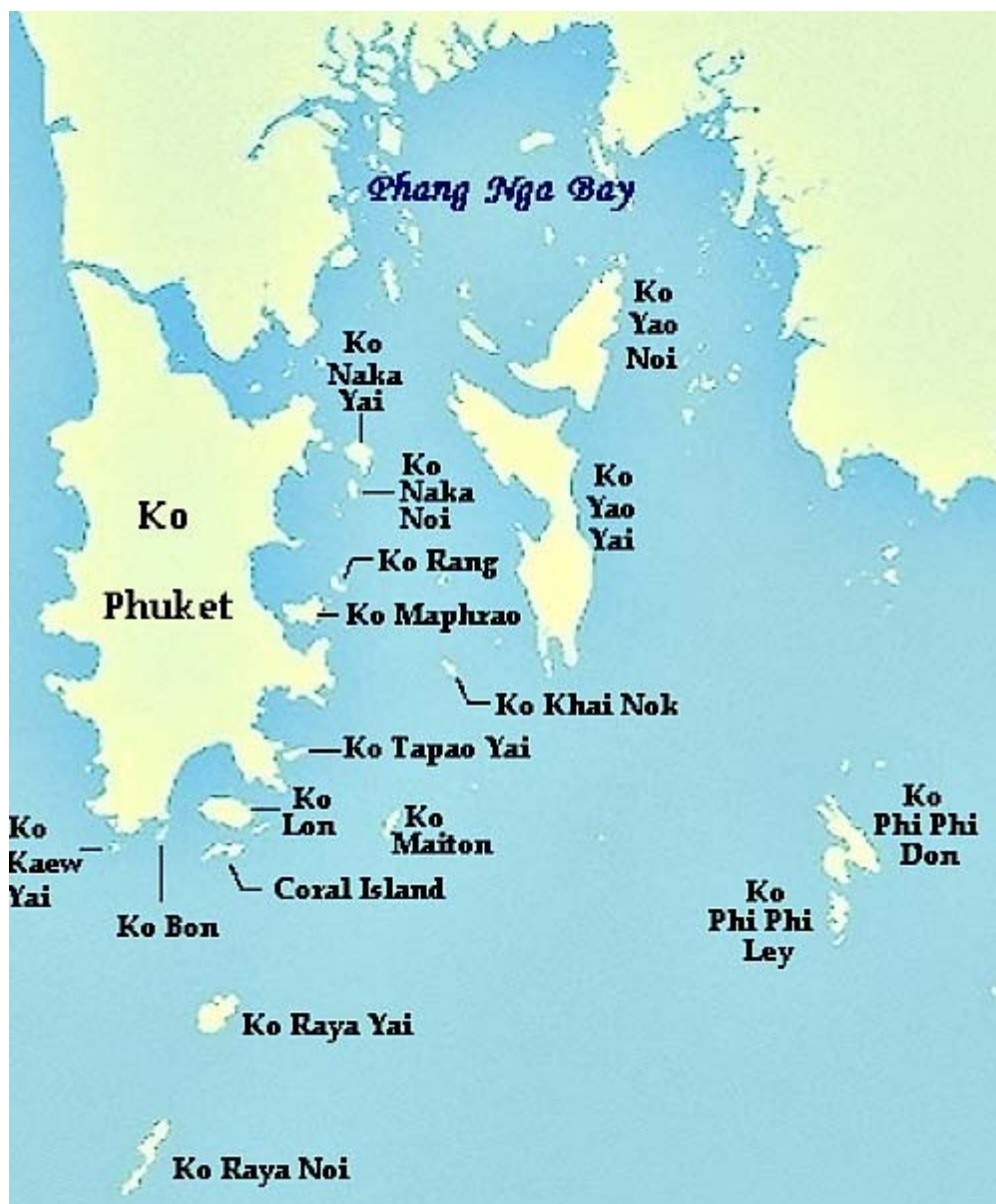


Dave in Thailand ...

Phuket

April 2019



up early, taxi waiting ...



- to the airport and Bangkok Airways ...



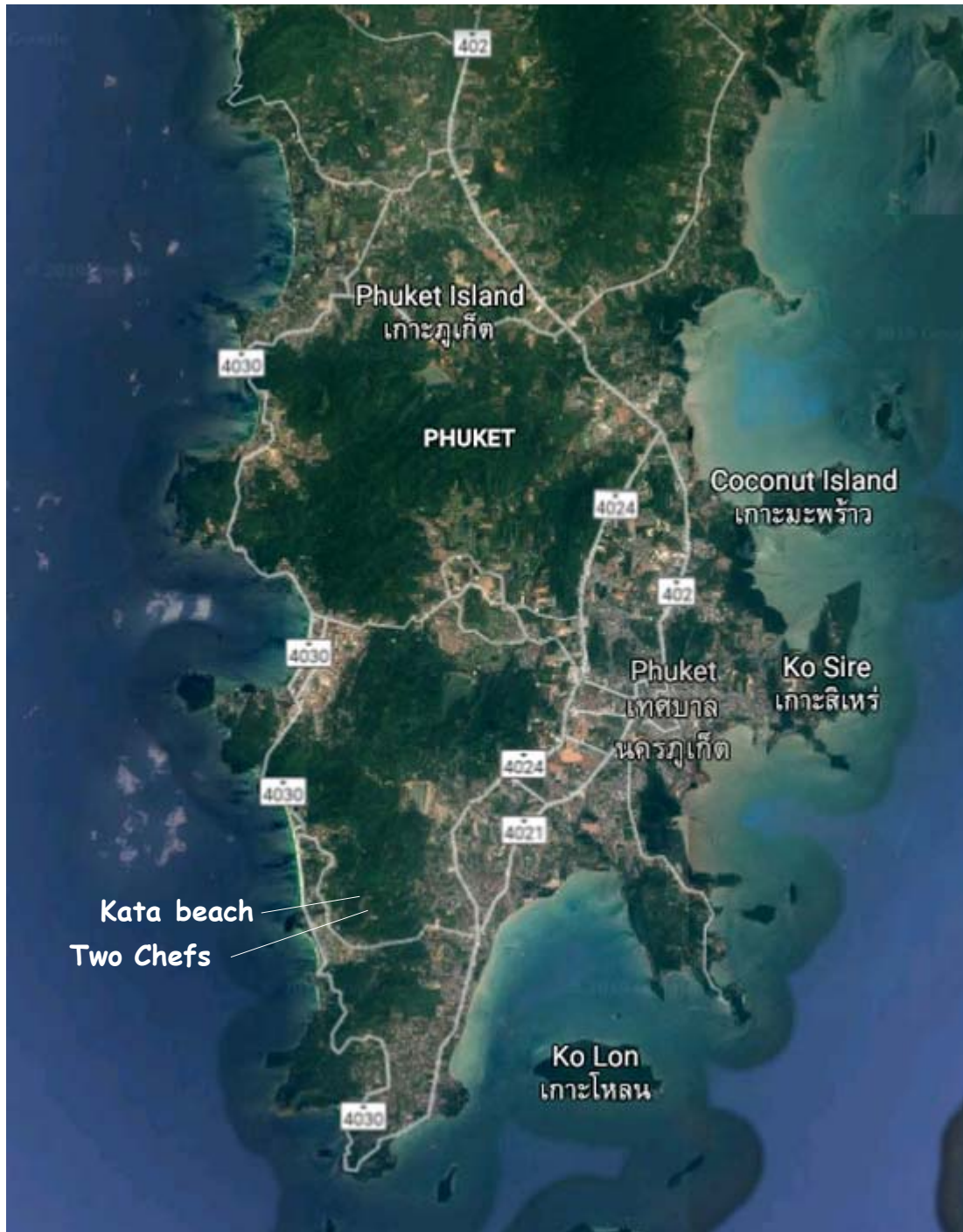
some nice views of the Andaman Islands on the trip over - here is Phi Phi, looks very inviting, all those beaches are supposed to have beautiful coral - next trup

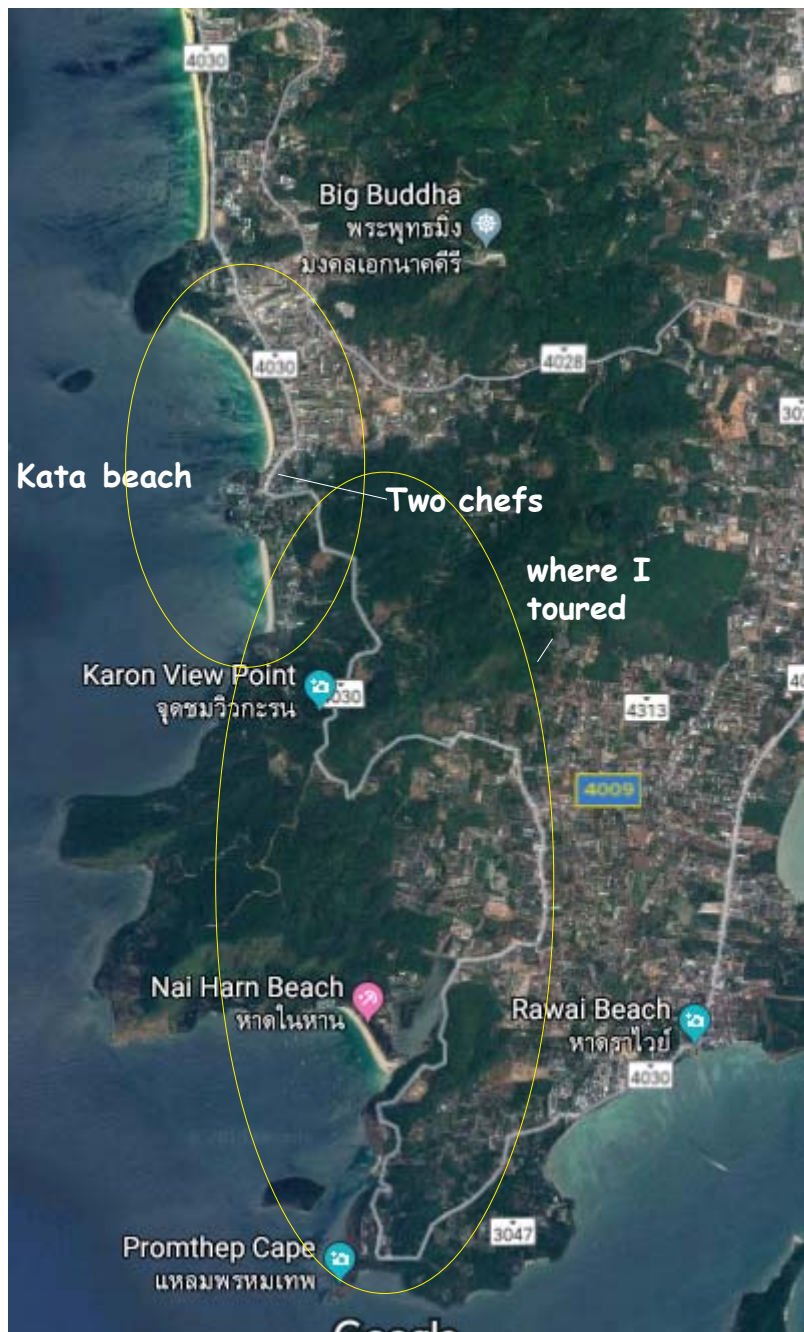


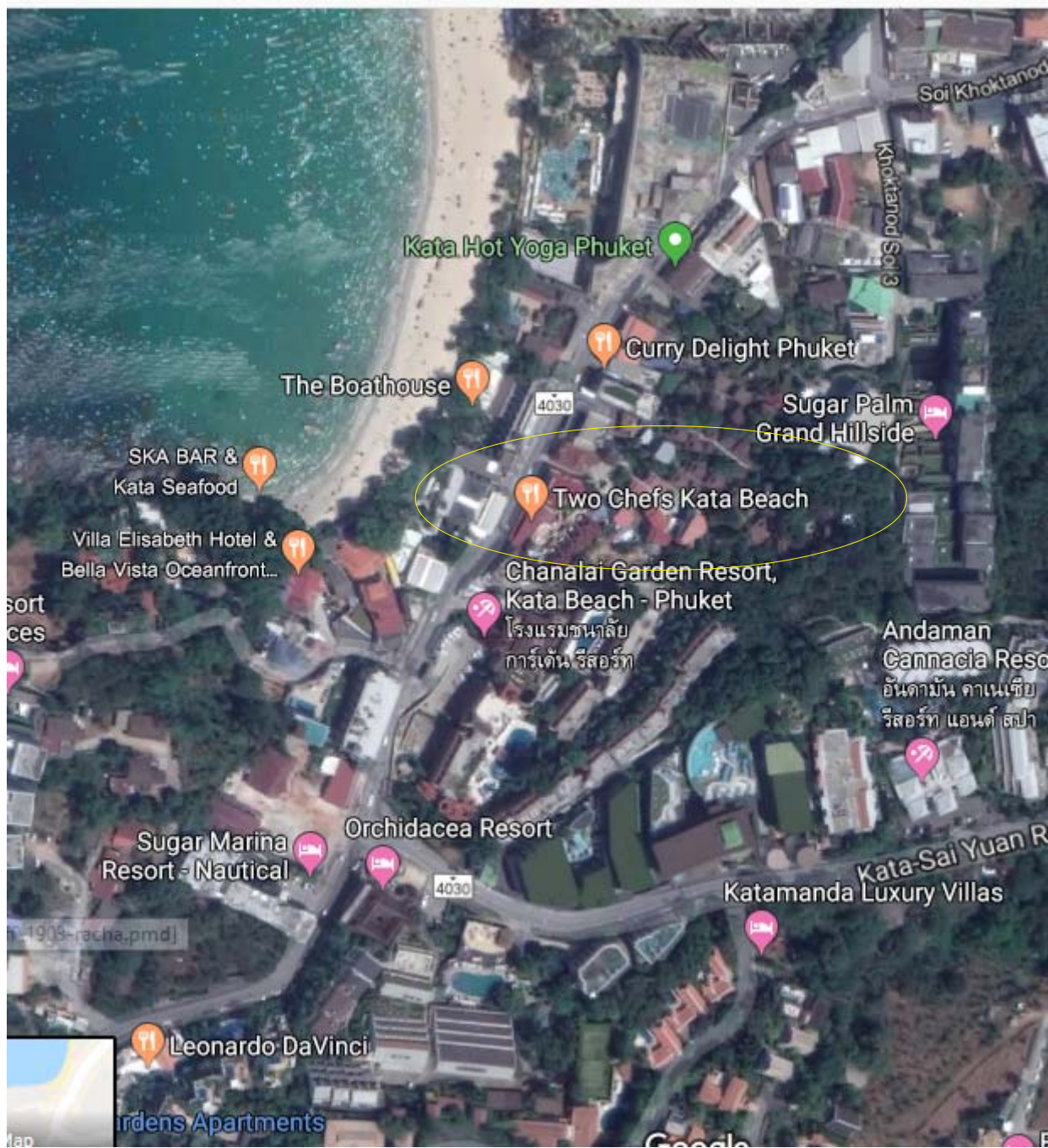
- coming into the Phuket airport, over the getting-famous beach ..



for orientation - I'm staying in the south-west, place called Kata Beach, at the Two Chefs inn



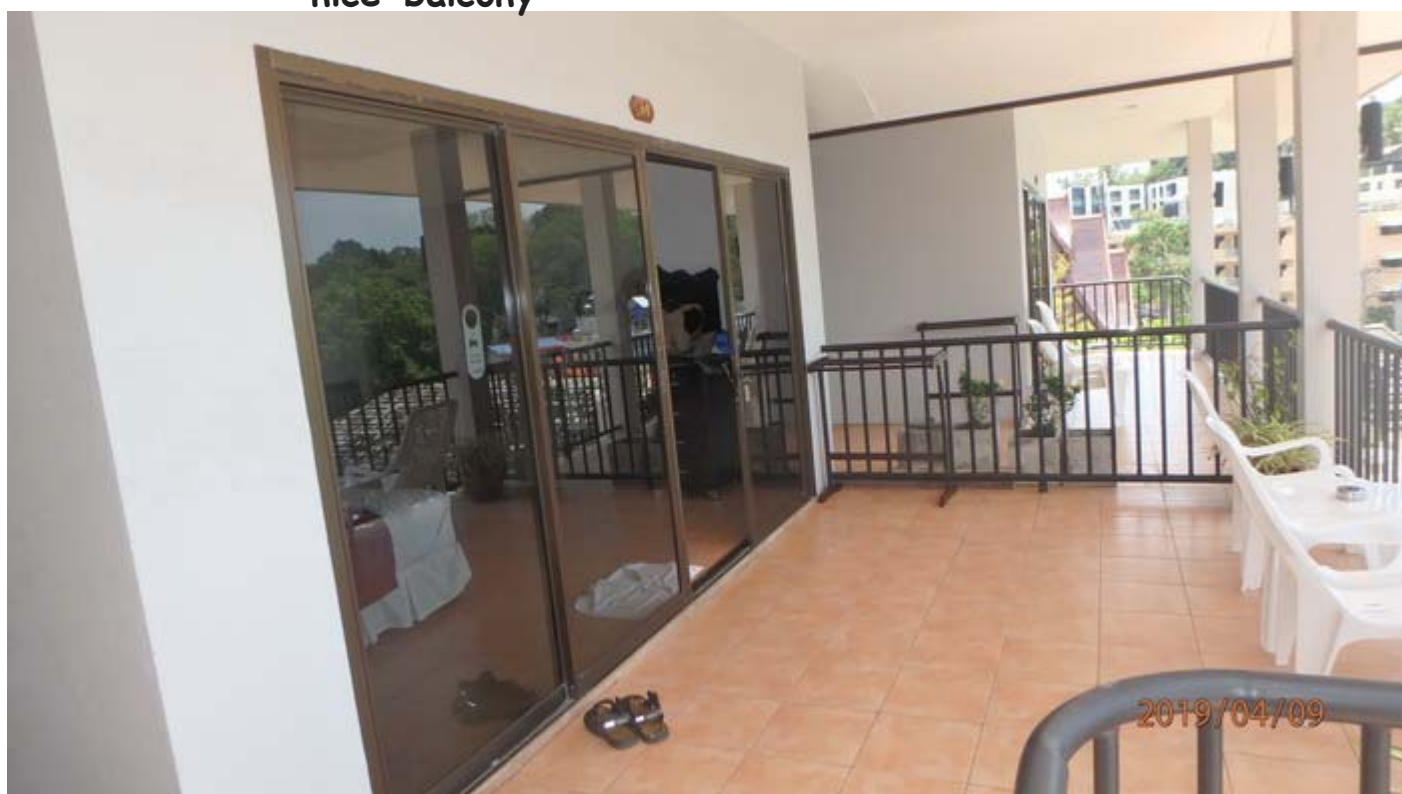




the Two Chefs

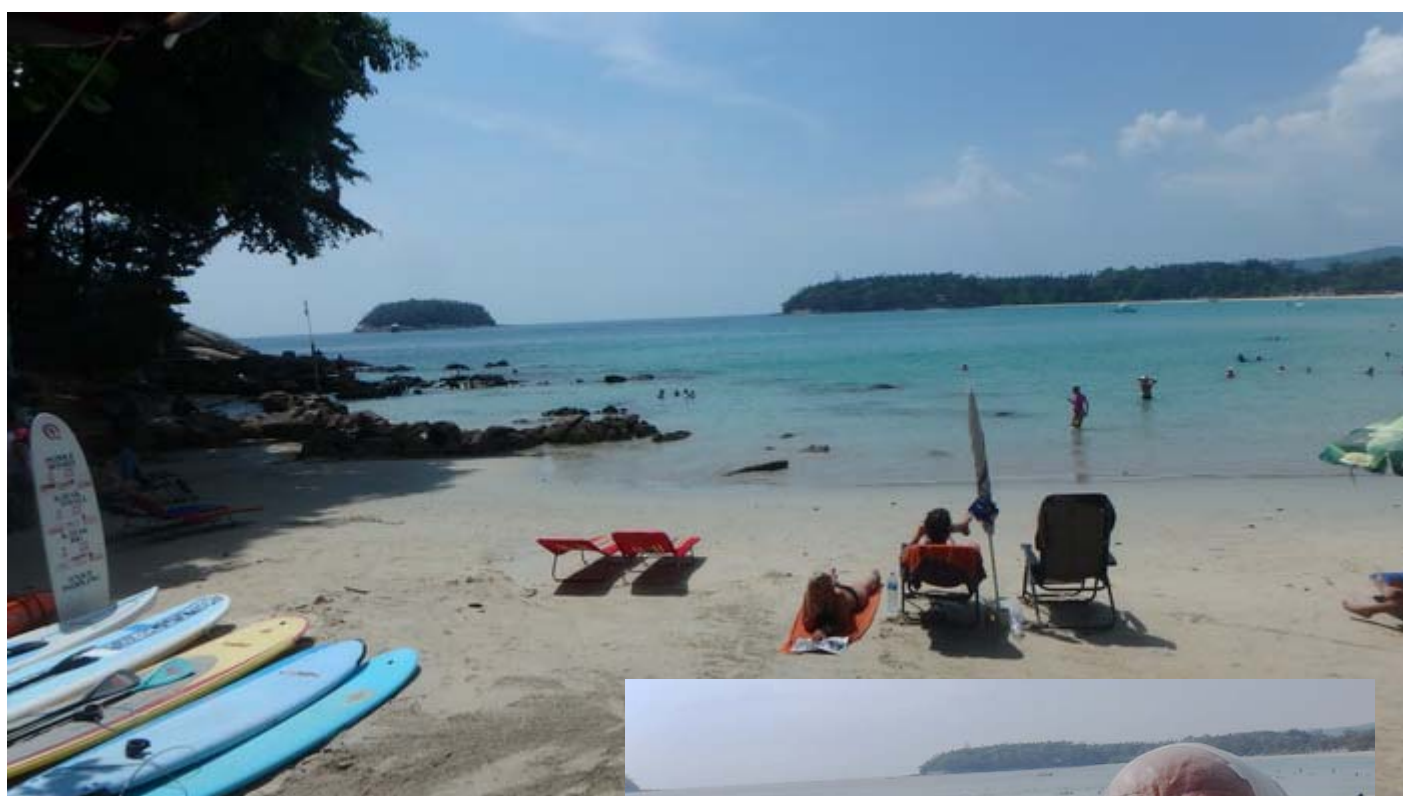
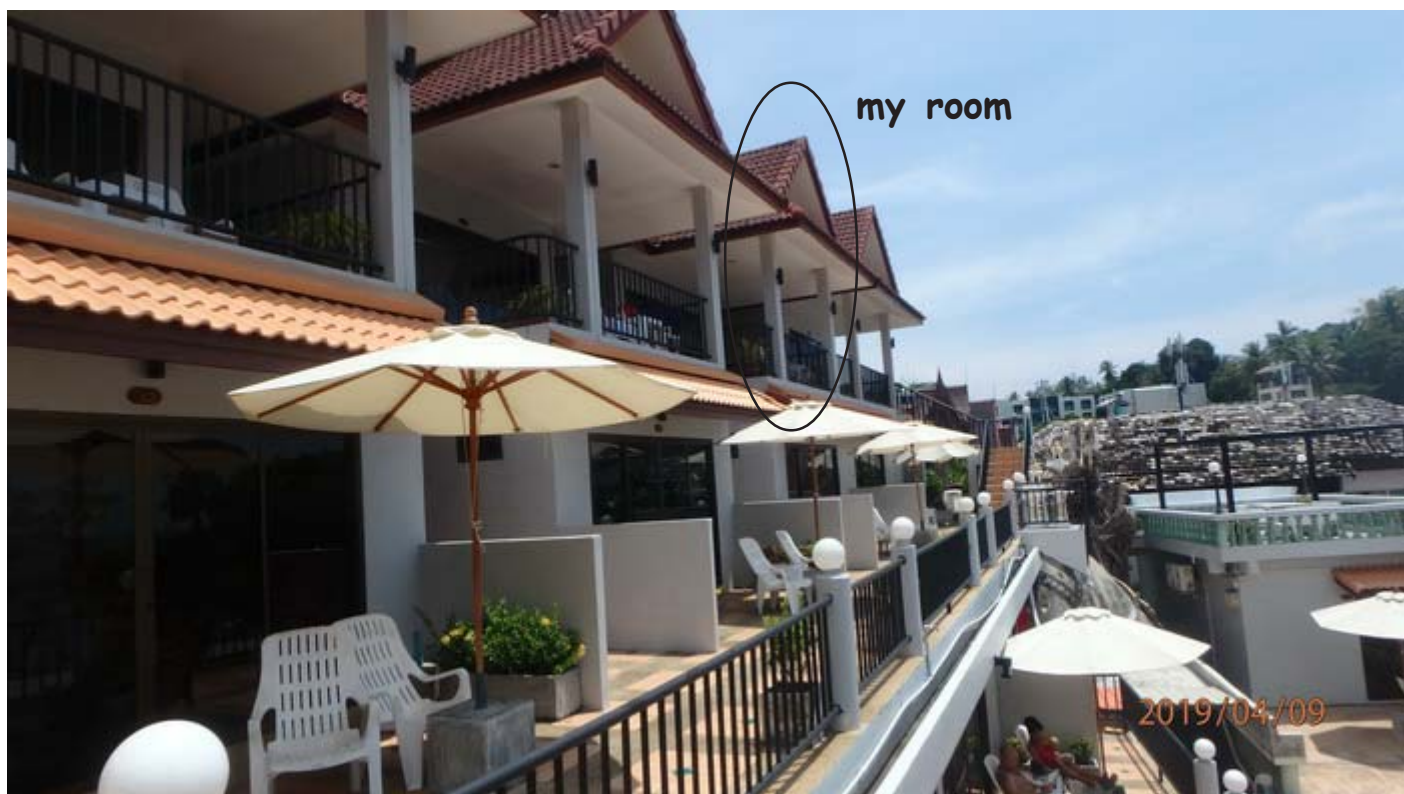


nice balcony





nice view, nice room - at 1300 baht/night!!



first snorkel -
Kata south
cape



short intro - just for context - below is a pic I grabbed off the net to not have to go looking through hundreds of my own pics from years in the past - this is what a 'healthy' reef looks like, overall - many varieties of coral, colorful, obviously healthy, lots of fish of many species and colors and sizes swimming around - I went to 3 places that were advertised as 'some of the best snorkeling in Phuket', and found nothing even remotely approaching what we might call a 'healthy and vibrant reef' - just bits of coral growing on rock here and there and a few mostly not very interesting fish swimming around ...



first snorkel - Kata south cape - color is a bit greenish, partly the camera, but mostly these were 1-2 meters underwater where the light was not great, and also the water a bit murky because of a constant swell stirring up the bottom a bit - but not a major disappointment, because not much at all to see ...



rabbitfish,
very common



credit where due -
this Fuji XP worked
well underwater and
above - all the un-
derwater pics here
with this camera
(used my Olympus
Toughie for most of
the not-underwater
shots)

- looking back in







- regardless of the lack of coral, it's a pretty nice place, and my room (circled) a very nice room and location ... it was a nice hour in the water, where I love to be ...



ok, back to shore ...

beautiful sunset from my balcony, with someone doing the para-gliding over Kata Bay - there were people doing this continually the nights I was there, must be a good view from up there



and finally I head down for supper 8-8:30, very excellent food here, first night I tried the ribs - went overboard, that is a 'whole rack', a half would have been plenty -

Day 2 - day trip to Racha Island

- didn't do much in the morning - good breakfast at the Inn, free - and anything from the regular menu, along with real coffee and very excellent bread which I ate before remembering to get a pic -



- then a walk along the main street behind kata, and back across the beach - took a pic of the surf, looks like fun, and is for swimmers, but that kind of surf is a pain for snorkeling - trying to get fins on or off while dealing with that kind of swell can be very trying ... and the waves stir up the sand, making for poor visibility in the inner shore area ..



at 1 - the boat and gang heading for Racha



the view from inside the boat heading for Racha (not impressed with these speedboat tours, like the longtails in the south Andaman much better ... won't start the cynical rants ...



location of Racha from Kata



- today we are going to Patok Beach (yellow circle indicates my approximate snorkel route)



arriving at Racha



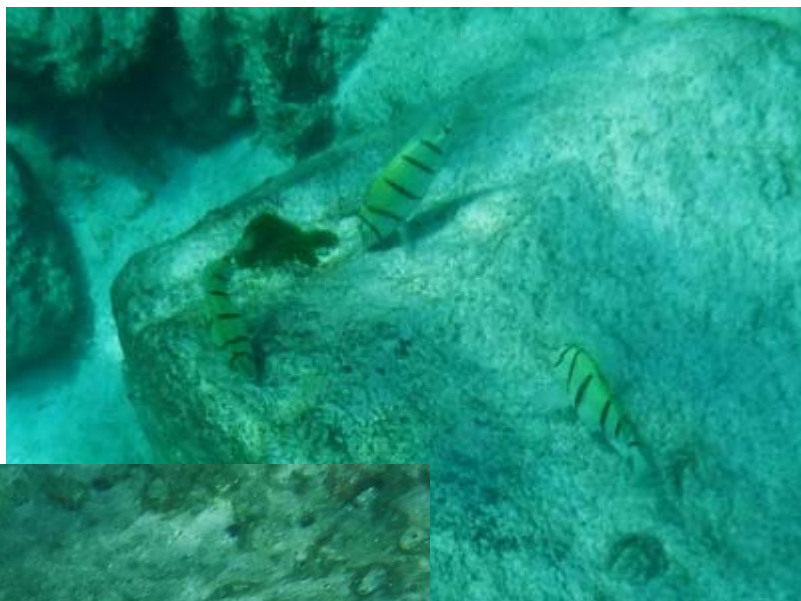
first glimpse of the bay - many people and boats!!



made my way over to the northeast corner after a few minutes of wandering around and got into the water



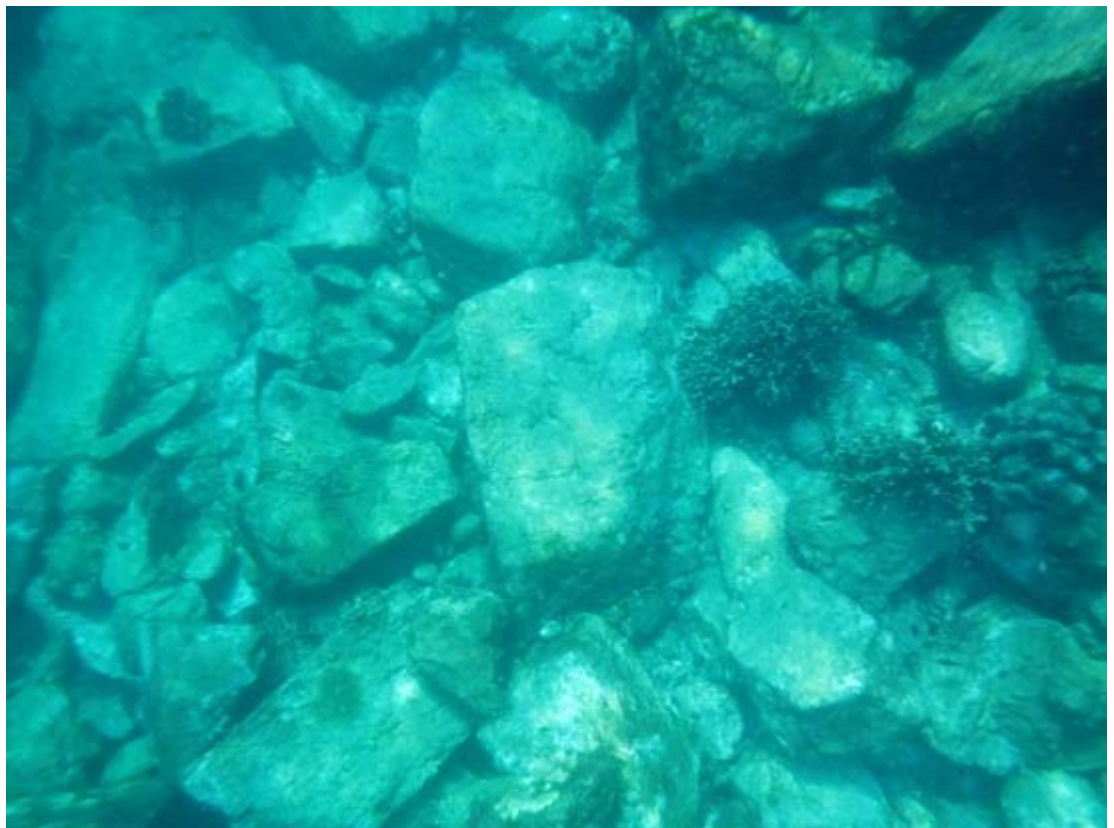
first fish, a kind I have not seen much of, but still feeding around rocks, not coral ...



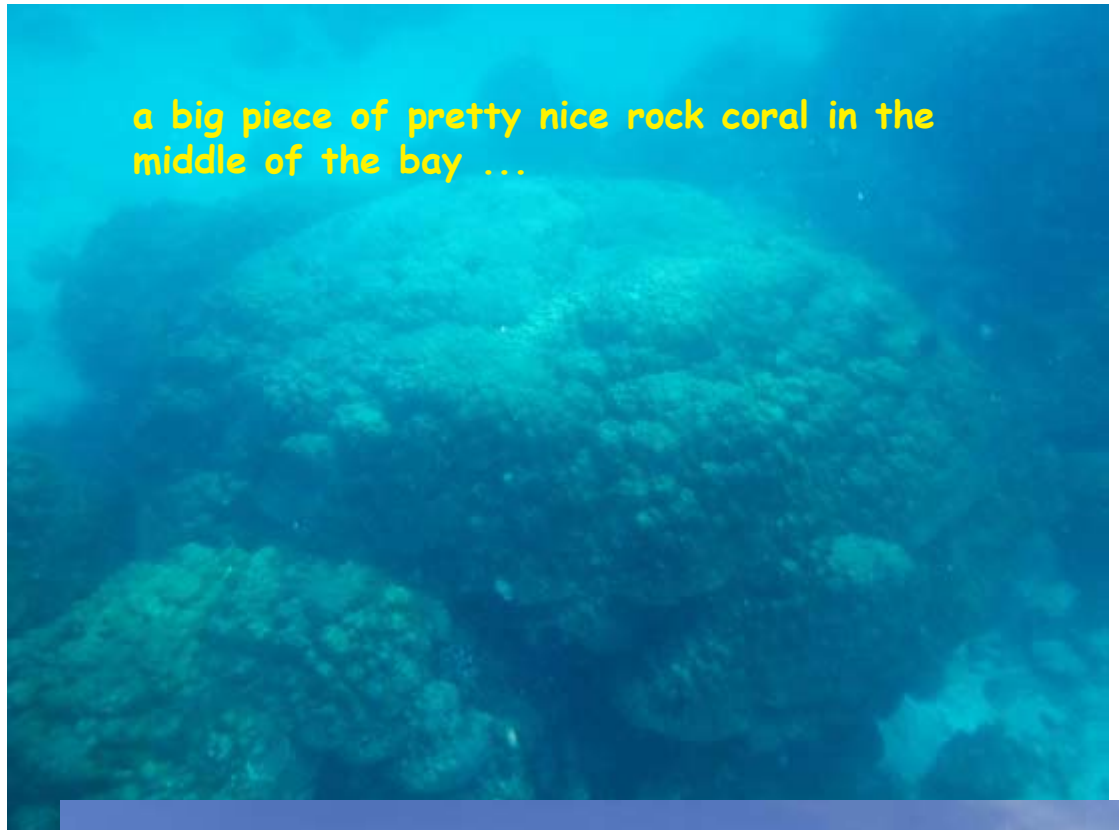
and first coral - as with Kata, just small bits on rock, not impressive



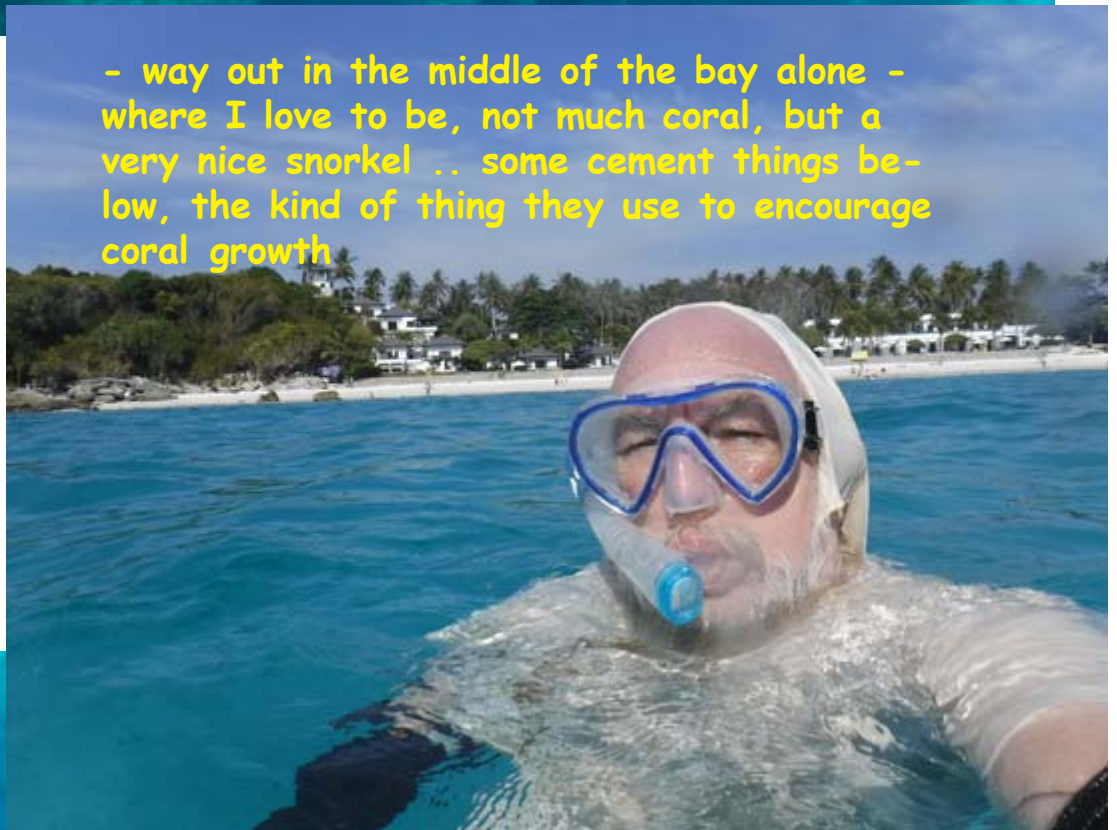
- this is all rock substrate, not just degraded dead coral like many places in the south Andaman



a big piece of pretty nice rock coral in the middle of the bay ...



- way out in the middle of the bay alone - where I love to be, not much coral, but a very nice snorkel .. some cement things below, the kind of thing they use to encourage coral growth



- on the south-central area of the bay, a nice large field of some kind of lettuce coral





- time goes way too fast, back ashore again

...



the tour master told us not to bother the people at the expensive resort covering most of the beach, so I headed to this little resort on the north shore where the people were friendlier for a Tiger ...





- and then home
to Two Chefs
again - tried the
Enchilada for
supper, very
tasty



Day 3 - motorcyccke tour and snorkel at Ya Nui



- the only helmet they had that would fit me - the plan was a drive around checking out snorkelling possibilities in the morning, and then going there in the afternoon ...



first big 'viewpoint' looking back over Kata, the lower of the two big bays behind me





below - Ya Nui bay where I will return to later - looks like a great possibility for snorkelling, and lots of places say the snorkelling is great here





- back at Kata, try a bowl of noodles at a local shop before heading for the afternoon snorkel ..



- head out on the highway ...



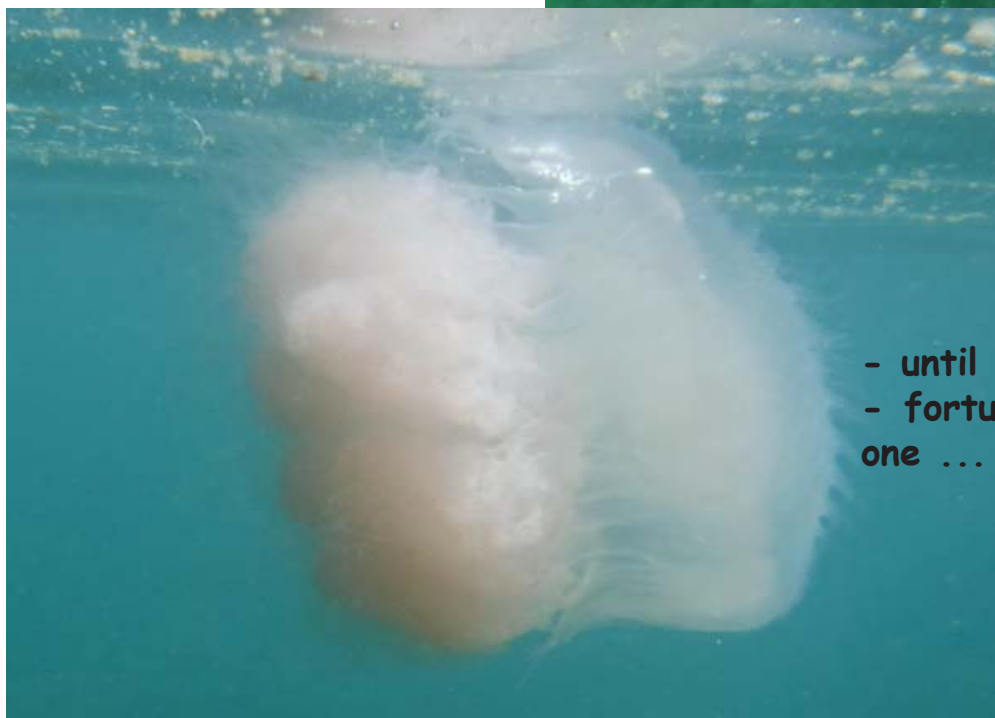
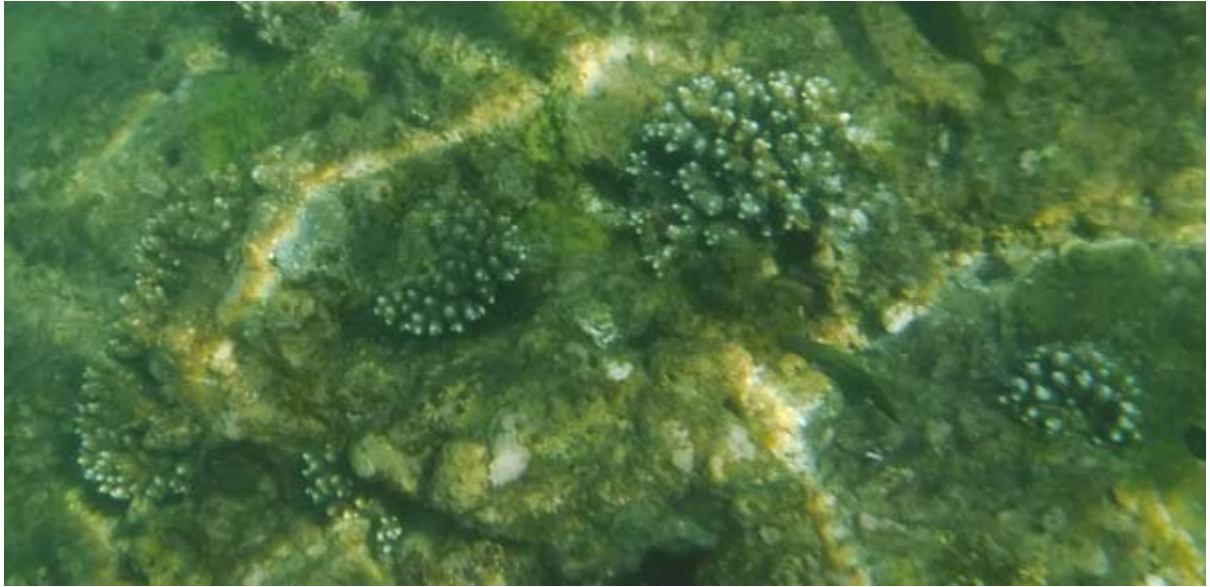
- so the famous Ya Nui - quite a few people, the sea quite calm it appears - decide to get in the water on the far side of the small spit to the island and swim around and see what there is to see ...



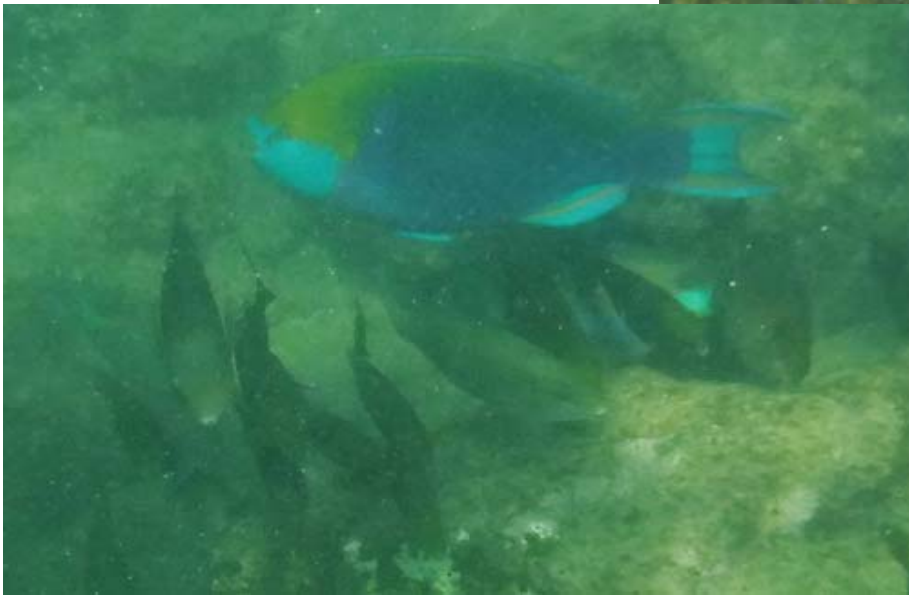
- as it turns out - not too much different from where I have been, nothing like a reef, a few bits of coral growing on rock, a few fish swimming around ...

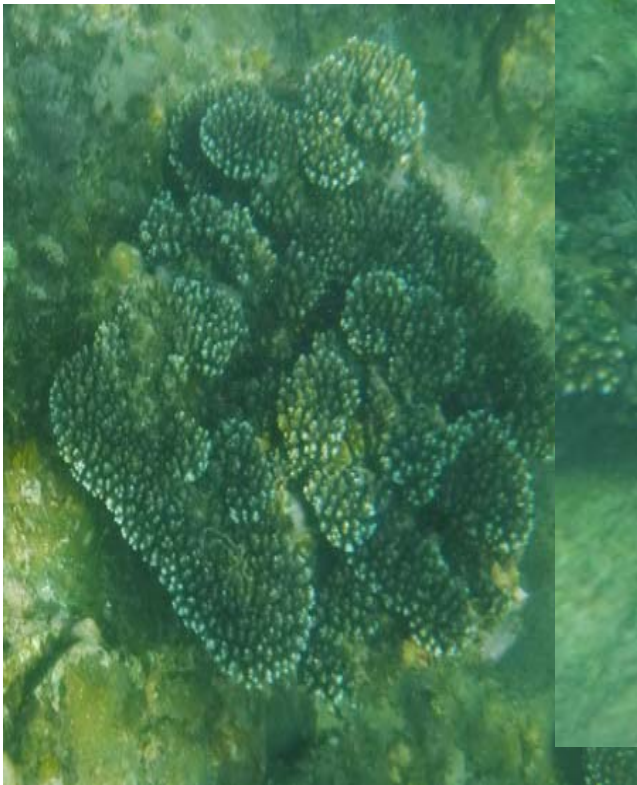
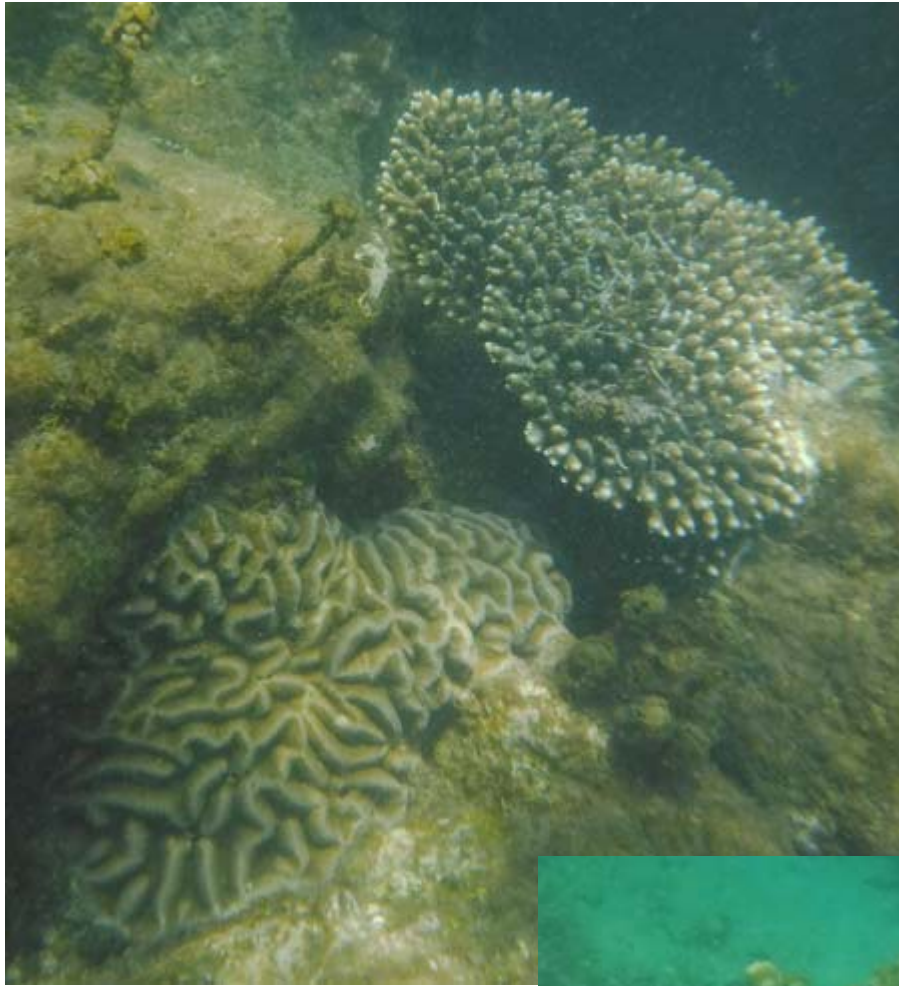






- until this guy shows up
- fortunately only the
one ...







- and so back around to the north side ...





- stopped for a snack at the 'viewpoint restaurant' on the way back, for a final look at the views - expensive like everywhere here, 50 baht for that plate of rice that would cost 5-10 baht in a normal Thai place





- last supper at Two Chef's, excellent restaurant and not too badly overpriced, all you could eat surf and turn, but the one plate was enough - that rib eye was a good beef as I've ever had ...

- leaving the next day - nice views again
from the air -



- especially liked this even better view of Phi Phi, with the two nearby islands - top of my list for next trip - there ****has!!**** to be coral here!!!



- and the plane circled Hat Yai on its way to the airport - Koh Hong Mountain to the left, Hat Yai to the right - very nice view

