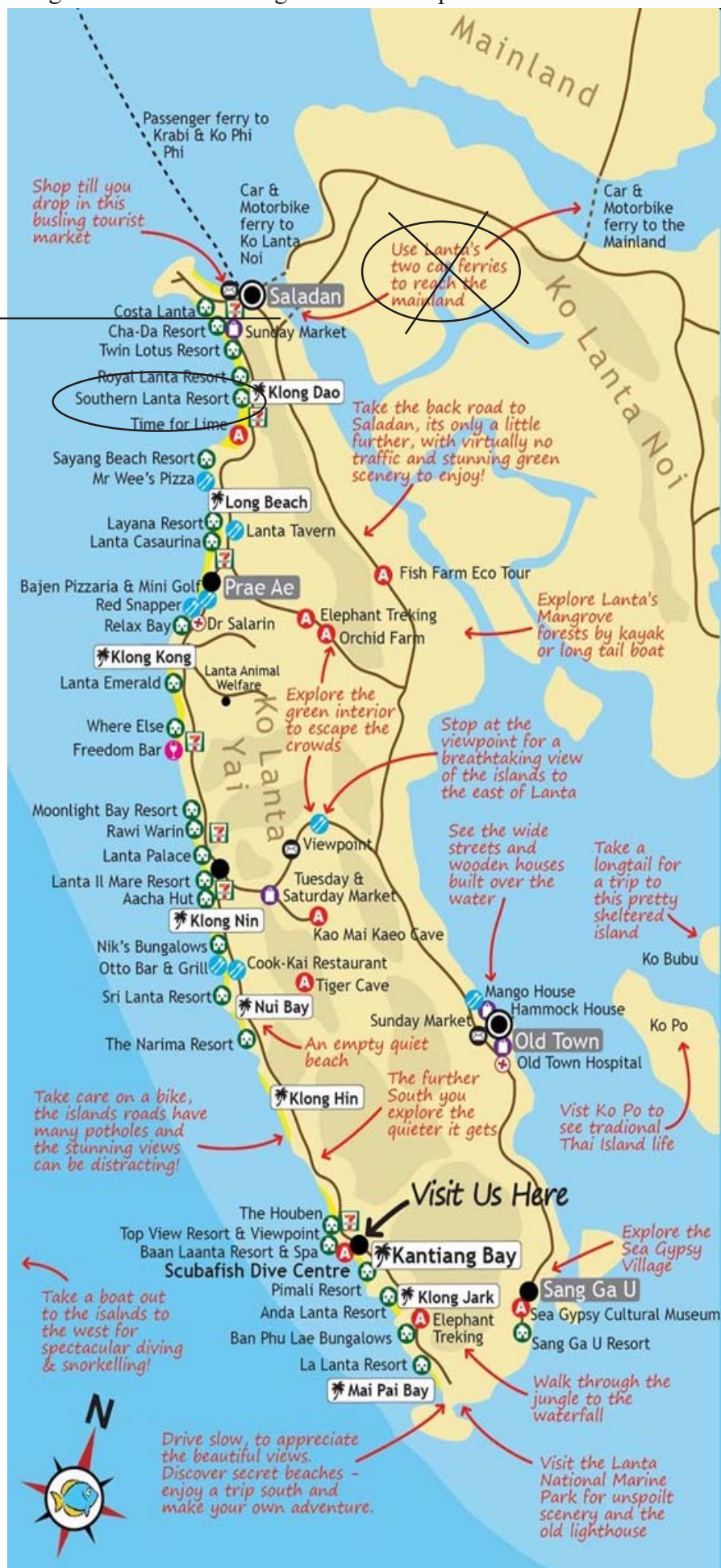


Dave in Thailand ...

Koh Ha - Rok December 2020





- used Agoda and google, and made a good decision, a very nice resort, nice location, and good prices - two nights for about 2800 baht



My EXCELLENT bungalow was right about here, completely clear view to the beach maybe 50 yards from the small seawall in front of the beach





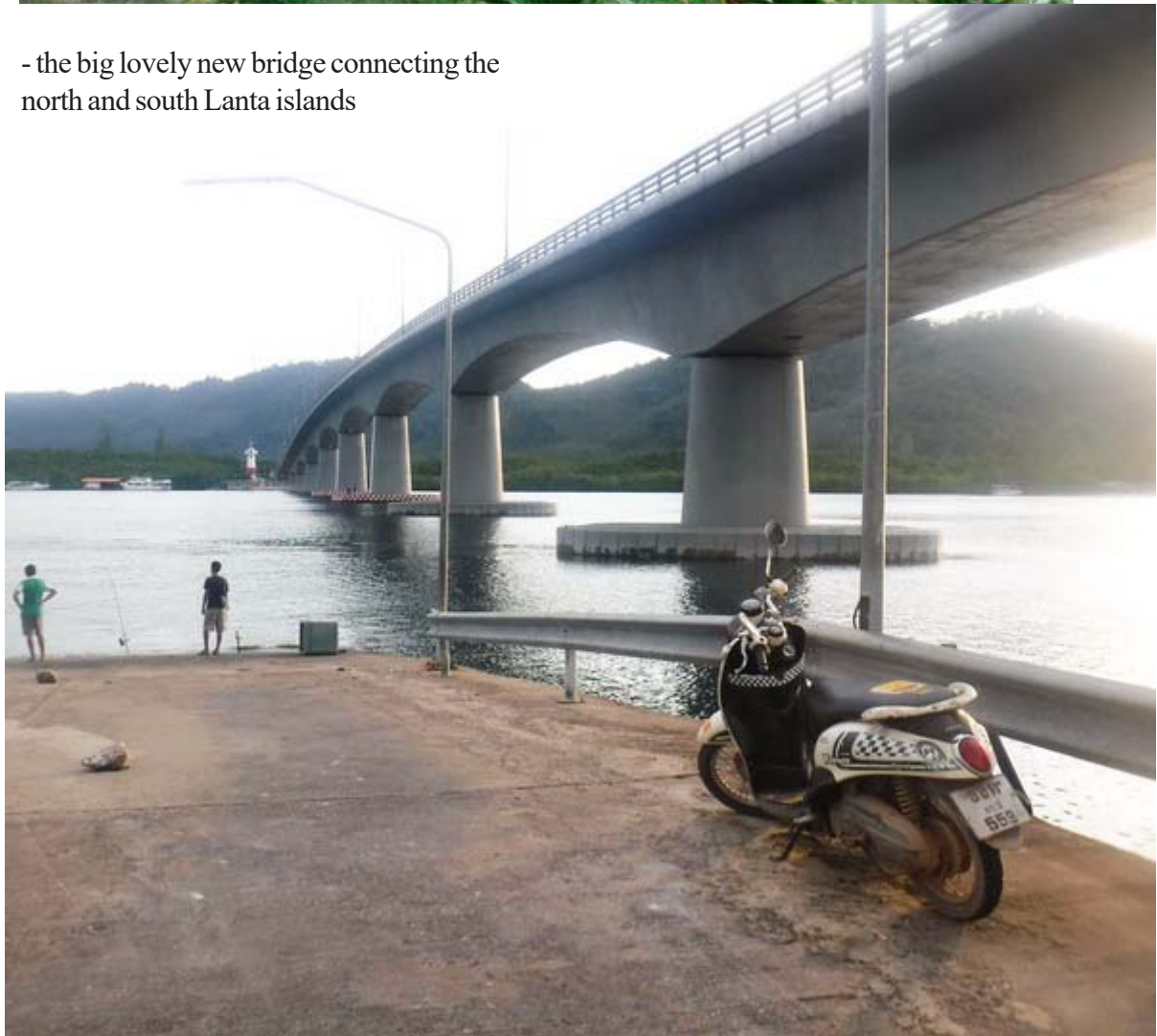
- garden bungalows, very nice and well kept place - and Mrs Riem (I think)
below, very friendly manager ...



- time for a bit of a tour around Saladan, pick up a few supplies ...



- the big lovely new bridge connecting the north and south Lanta islands



- always beautiful sunsets on the west coast of any of the Andaman islands ...



- next morning early
our boat awaits,
under the big bridge
-

- and I am lucky to
get on early and get
the front seat where
you can see what is
happening, rather
than being packed
in the back - and
an uneventful ride
for about an hour,
and we arrive at
Koh Rok for our
first snorkeling ...



First 3 stops at Koh Rok -



[this is an OLD google maps pic - there is a long dock made from plastic blocks of some kind out into the water now, as here -



aerial pic from the park, good idea of all the coral

- some pics from the first snorkel - from the amazing Nikon coolpix - within seconds after getting into the water I knew I was in for a good snorkel, good healthy coral everywhere, lots of fish - just a few highlights -



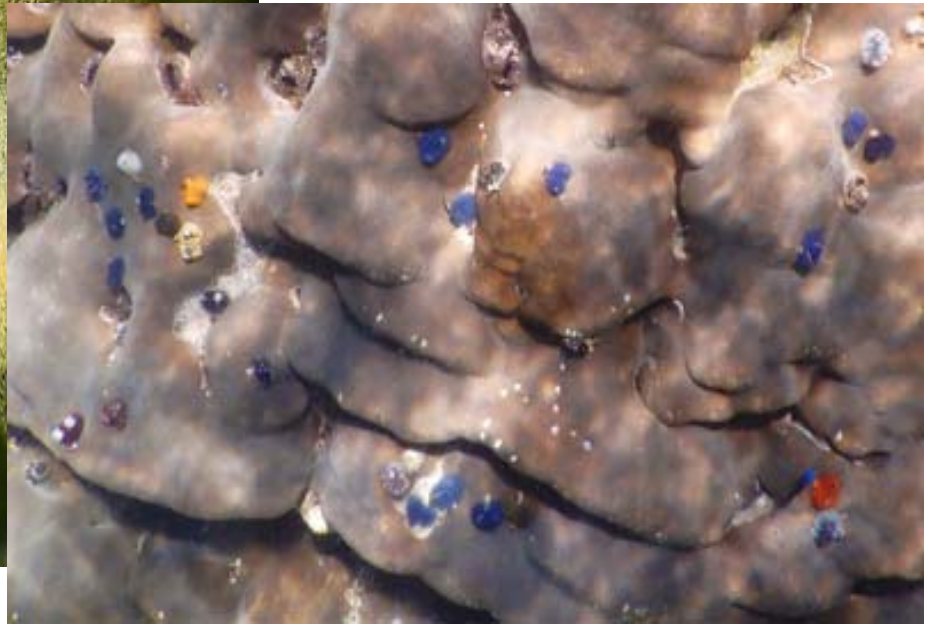
- nice healthy table (blue) and rock / boulder coral - and note the little blue thing top right - a 'christmas tree worm' - haven't seen these in a long time - all over the place here! more later

common pink starfish -
haven't seen many of
these lately (yes they
usually have 5 arms,
this guy missing one)





closeup of some xmas tree worms - they come in many many colors and groupings



- golden rabbitfish and java rabbitfish



- some kind of knobby brown coral, nice and healthy - this stuff is really hard to identify ..



as common as the 'nemo' clownfish or anemonefish in many places, this is the skunk anemonefish - named for long white stripe along its back like a skunk



longtail bannerfish,
quite common -
longer tail and usually
a bit bigger than the
Moorish idol which
otherwise looks
about the same



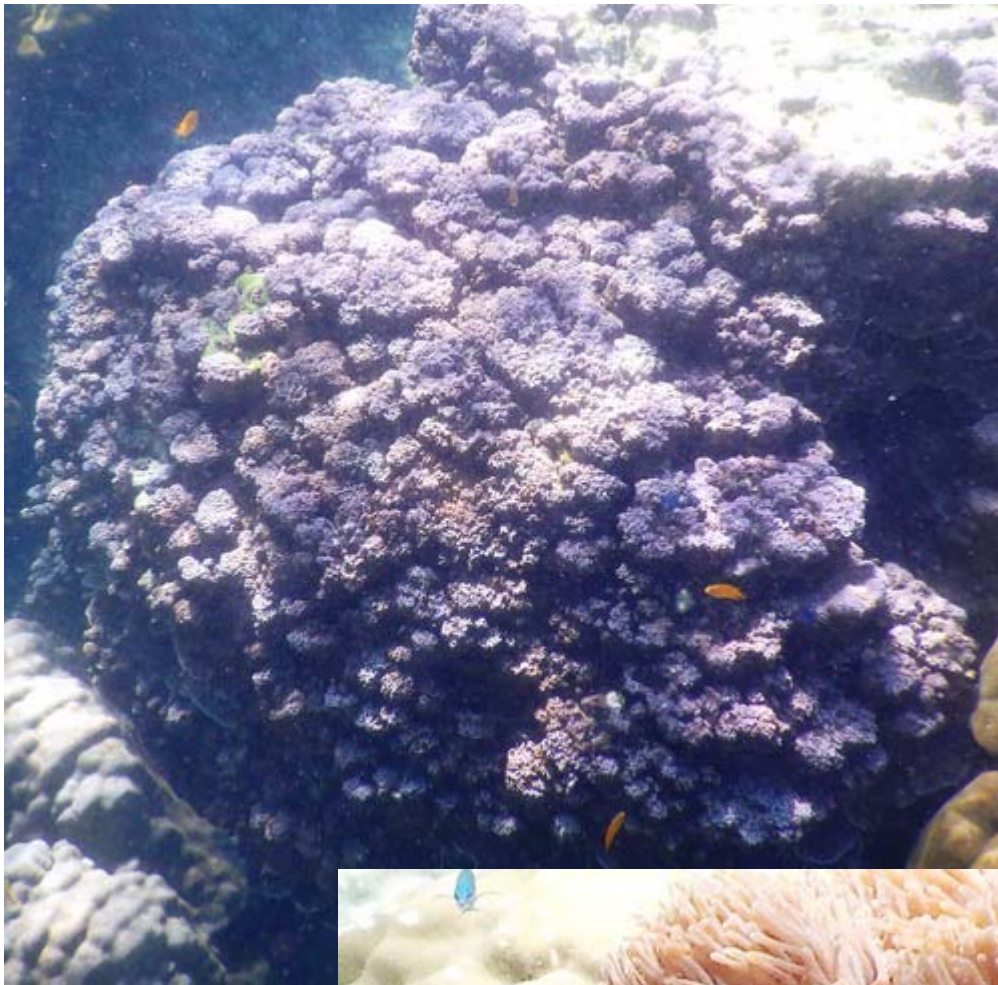
nice big healthy table coral



nice Acropora coral in some hard coral - note little yellow fish swimming inside for protection (and the amazing ability of the Nikon!!)



- some big purple coral, no idea what it is, but healthy, more little yellow fish swimming around



a few more nemos
everyone seems excited
about - quite common
around Koh Rok, you
see some most places
but not everywhere





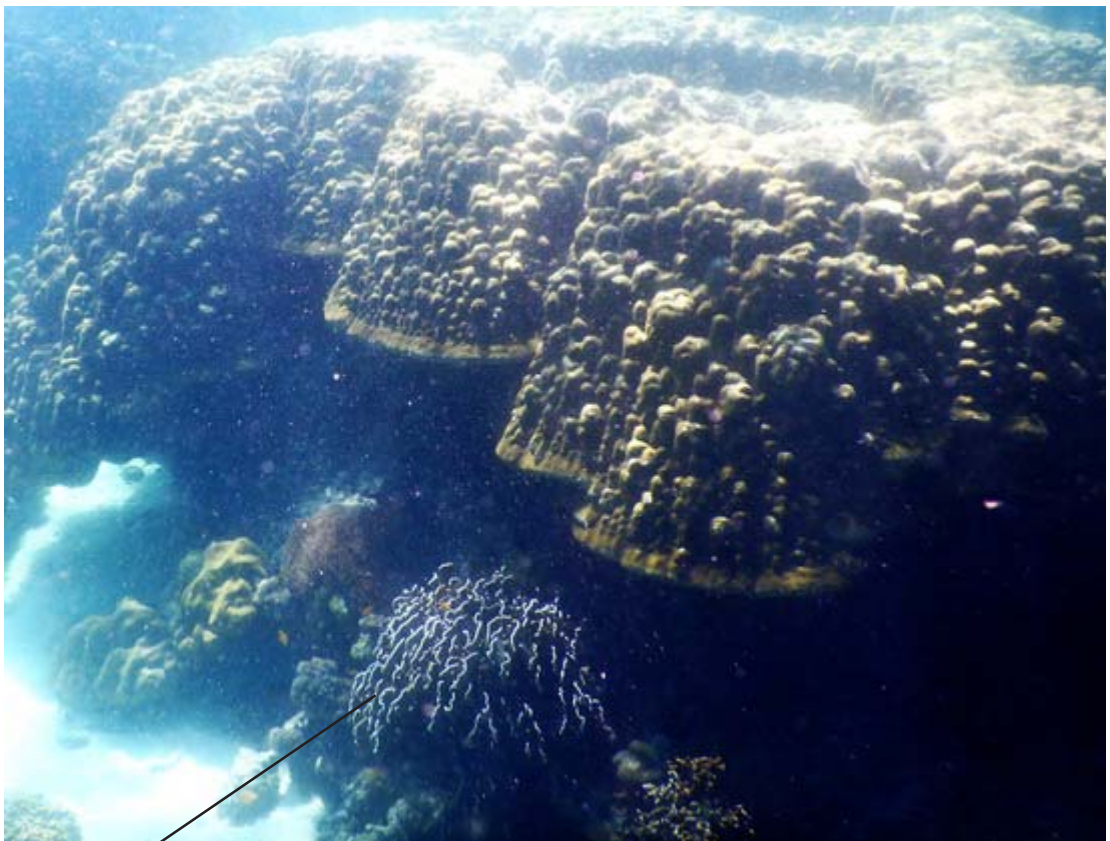
some form of star coral,
quite common

Montastrea coral



oops strayed a bit far from the boat in this beautiful coral garden, and time to head back, I'm usually the last one back to the boat ...

Turbinaria mesenterina - disc coral



- a bit of fire coral (common some places, not here) under a big beautiful big healthy bit of rock coral



- and the first snorkel over - but very nice, very impressed -



MOVING TO SECOND STOP - NEXT PICS WITH THE FUJI



and hardly in the water,
just swimming away from
the crowd around the
boat, and looked around
- and there it was - the
crown of thorns starfish,
said to be very dangerous
for eating a lot of coral,
but they are very rare in
my experience around the
Andaman, first I've seen
in many years

- and more nice healthy rock coral, a bunch of the very common 'sargeant major' fish
swimming along - the ones who swim around people giving them bread or something



and another
crown of thorns!
- a bit deep, so
hard to get a
good pic .. the
Fuji is not as
good as the
Nikon with the
color manage-
ment at deeper
depths (over a
meter or so)



- nice piece of Plate and pillar coral (*Porites monticulosa*) - again very healthy etc





spadefish, or batfish, another pretty rare thing for me, so watched for awhile - a bit far away so pics not great ..

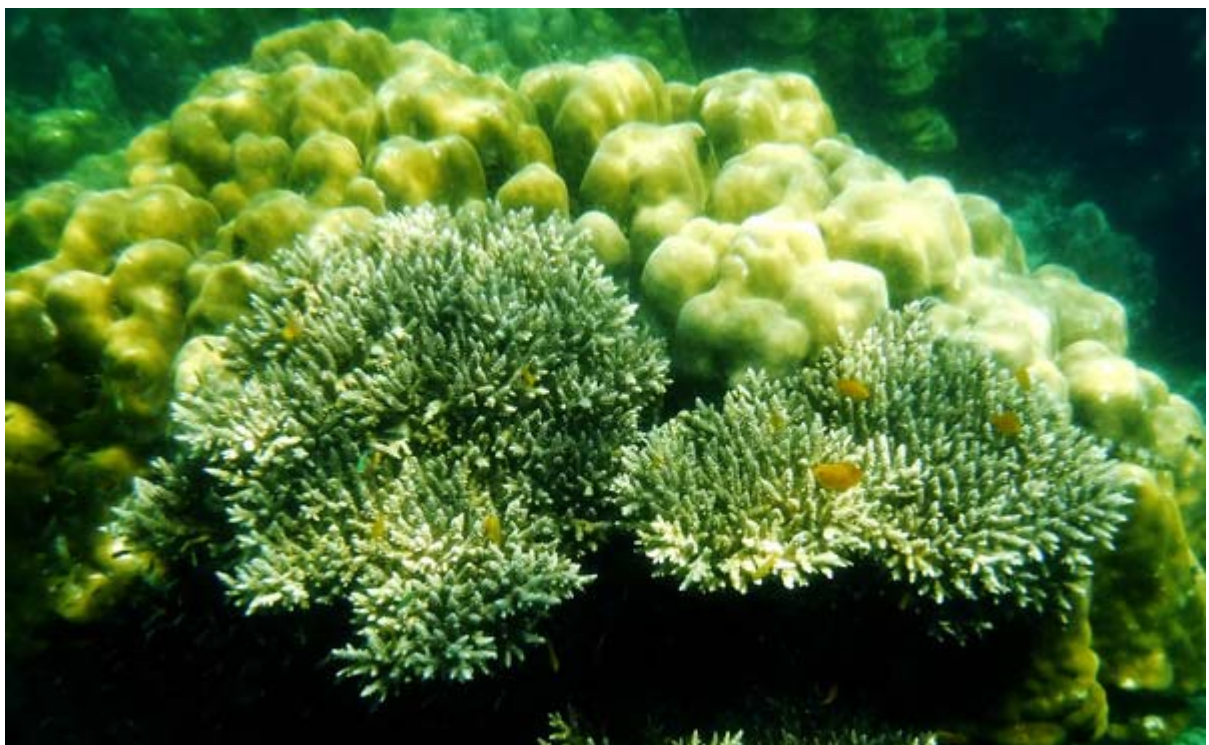
a green acropora with some fish - and showing how lovely the pics from the underwater Fuji can be at lesser depths



striped surgeonfish - not too common most places I've been



nice scene, healthy green acropora and rock coral, little fishes swimming around



- time to go again, time goes so fast when you are over a healthy reef looking at an endless variety of amazing things



- and coming ashore at the park ranger station, where we were having lunch and a break



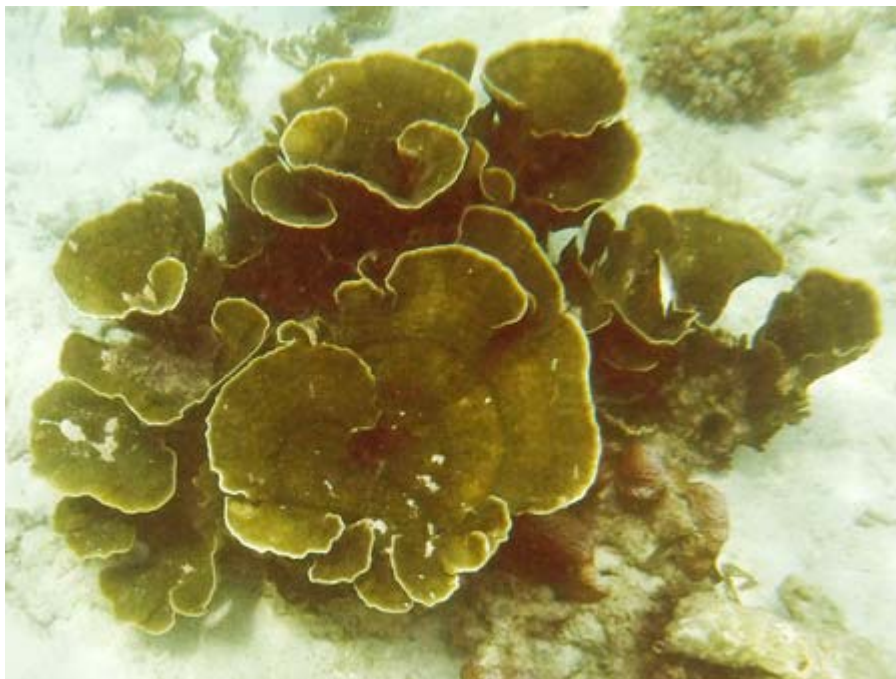
lunch - the guy on the left is the trip
guide - nice guy



monitor wandering around
checking things out - not
too big, a meter or so - I
did not move, and he
almost walked right over
my foot - interesting
creatures, and very brave,
I guess they are protected
here, which is good of
course

- 3rd trip at Koh Rok, in front of park, starting from the end of the dock

- and only in the water a few seconds before this barracuda swims by!!! not ready - a quick pic as he is heading for deeper water (thus the not great quality) - so many things happen like this when snorkeling, when least expected something interesting happens -

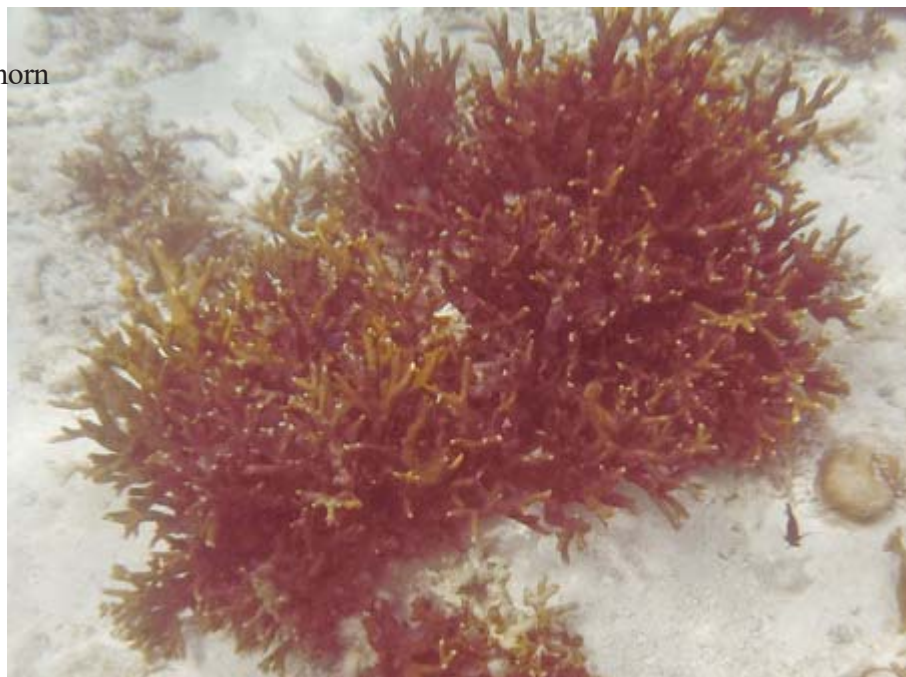


a lot of this 'turbalaria' disc coral out in front, pretty stuff, many many shapes and patterns it is found in - and healthy, like everything here -



- I think the 'elkhorn' coral, thicker than staghorn - but not sure, some of this stuff is VERY hard to identify

some patches of staghorn also out front ...



more turbinaria with a (I think) couple of redfin butterfly fish



redfin butterfly in detail - these underwater cameras are very amazing, I always find things looking at the pictures after I never saw, or saw only faintly

a lot of these black 'sea cucumbers' everywhere





yellowback fusellier over some
green staghorn



checkered snappers in disc coral,
rock coral, staghorn ...

Antho dichotoma

https://www.reeflex.net/tiere/1555_Demospongiae_sp.htm



quite a bit of this around Rok
- a kind of sponge I have
never seen before

moon wrasse, fairly
common reef fish



nice big turbinaria patch





nemo scene, with rock coral and staghorn, the endless variety of the way these things mingle together is one of the great beauties of reefs

the amazing detail these underwater cameras have ..

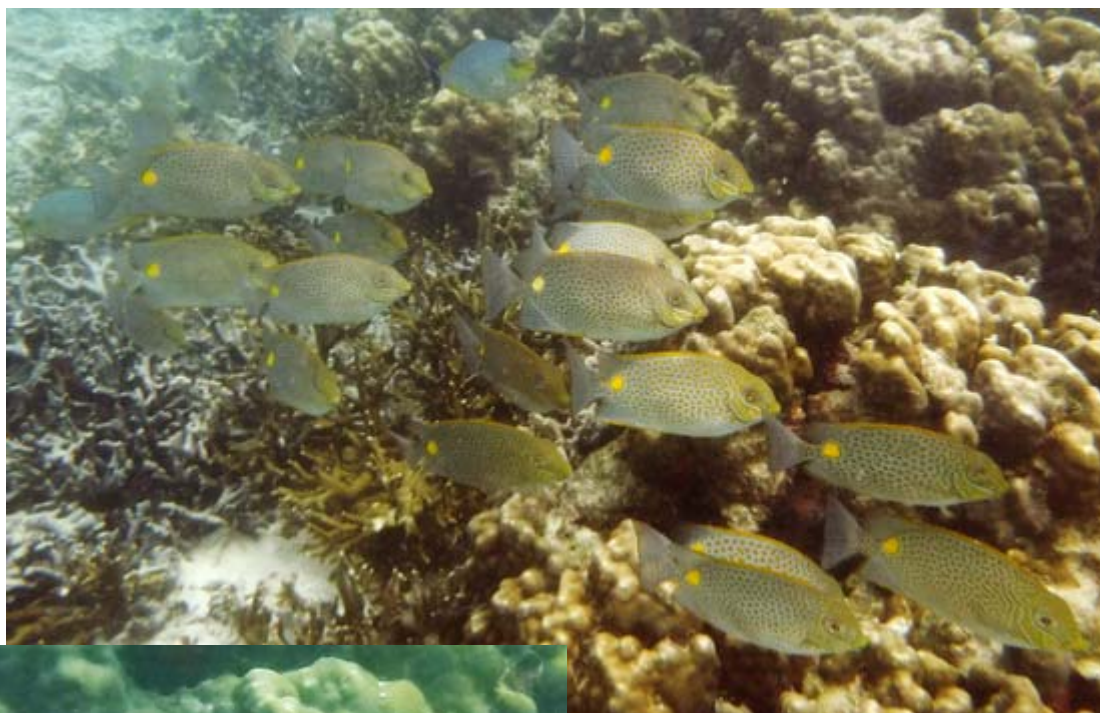


some staghorn growing out of some turbinaria ...



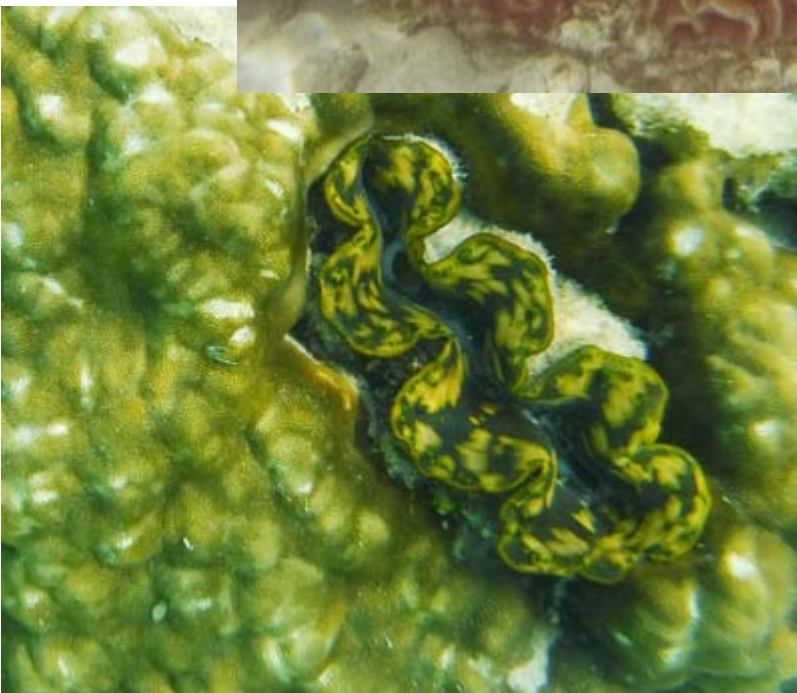
- more fish







3rd Crown of Thorns in one day!!



giant clam



bit of fire coral

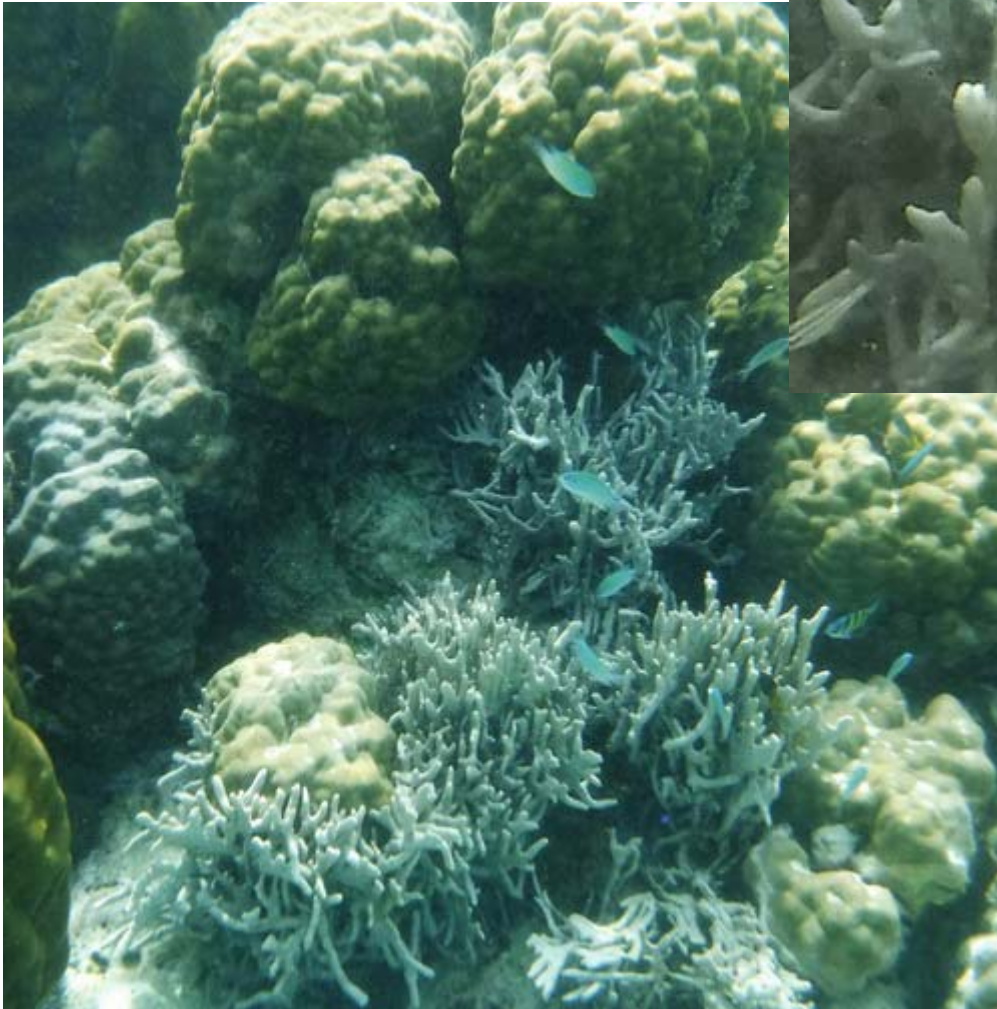


dash and dot goatfish



more nemos

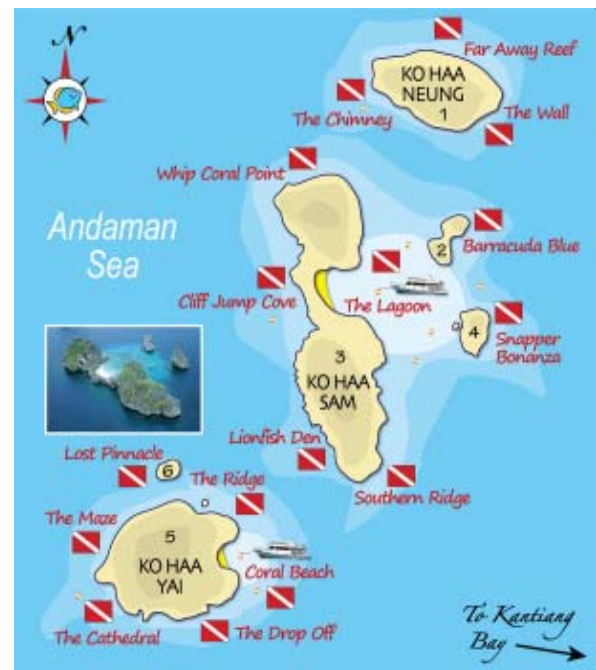
- little blue reef fish swimming around as they do, here in a patch of that new sponge



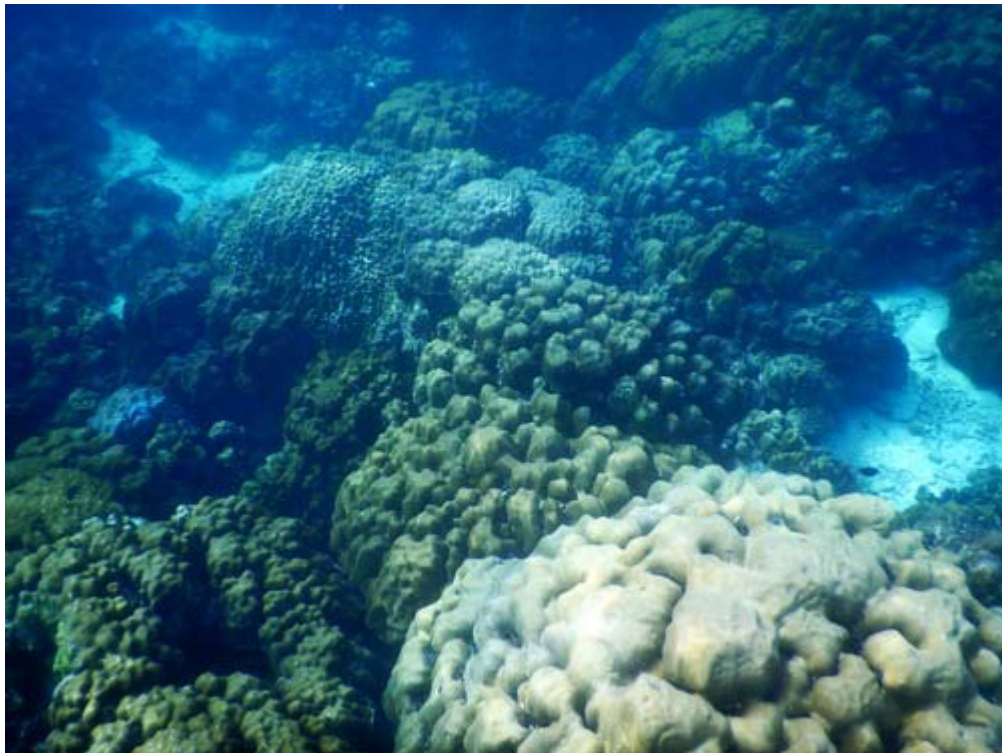
and a little common puffer fish, quite a few of these today



- and so ended the third and final snorkel around Koh Rok, overall very impressed with the place, and lots of reef left there to see so will be going back soon to see more - and then on to Koh Haa - 'haa' means 5 of course in the Thai language, and to the right is a pic of all 5 islands - but the lagoon created by islands 2, 3 and 4 is the main place for snorkeling, as below



- and once again into the water, and immediately clear another healthy reef - very nice



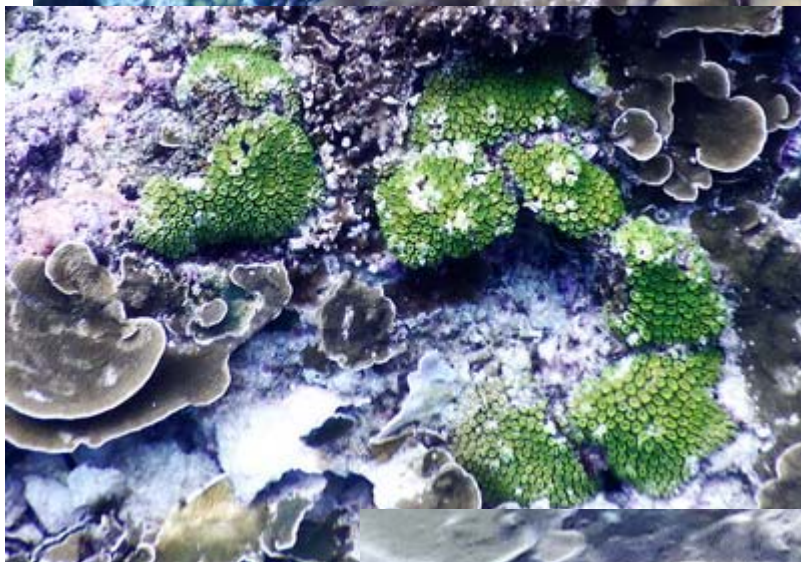
- healthy, but not all that exciting for a trip booklet, mostly the rock or boulder coral like this, with patches of other things and a few fish -





- a few blue and pink stars





the Nikon Coolpix again
showing what lovely pics it can
take -







- so many nice scenes, these with the powder blue surgeon fish and longtail bannerfish

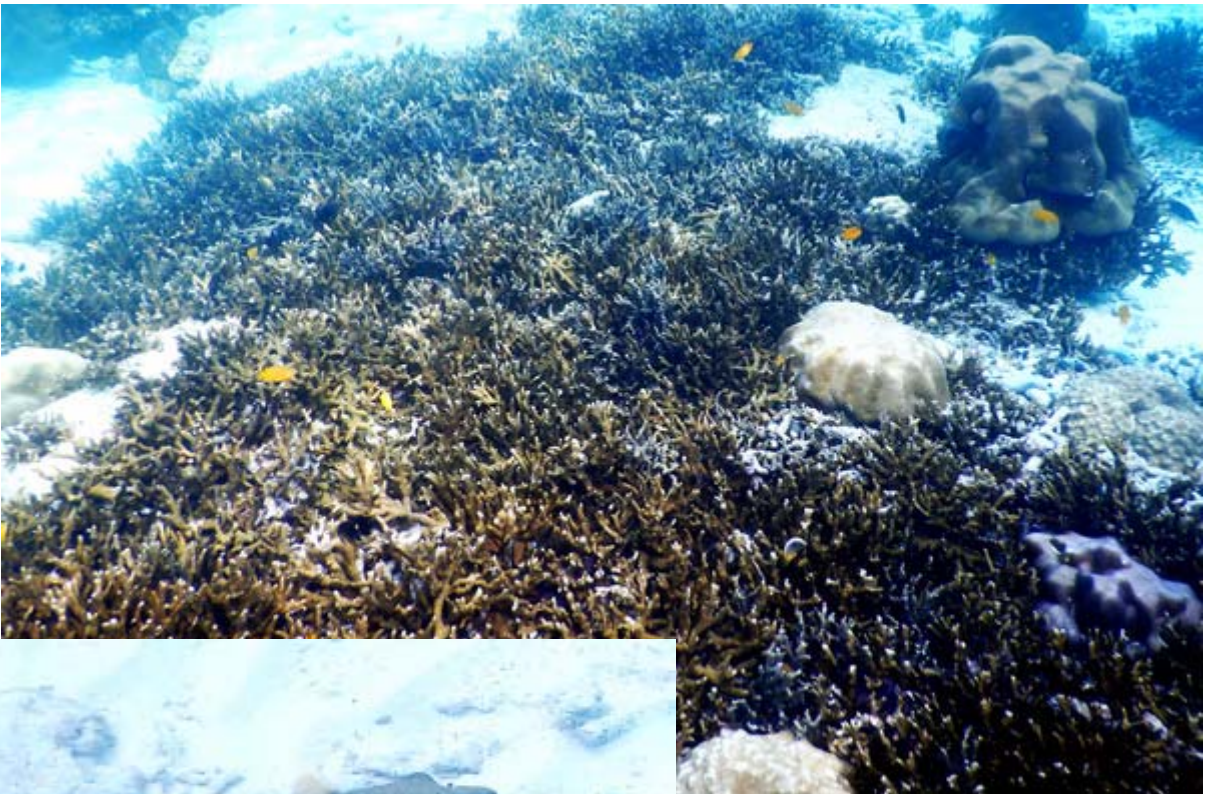






- some variety of parrotfish above by the seastar - quite a few of these around, did not get any good pics
- another puffer to the right there -





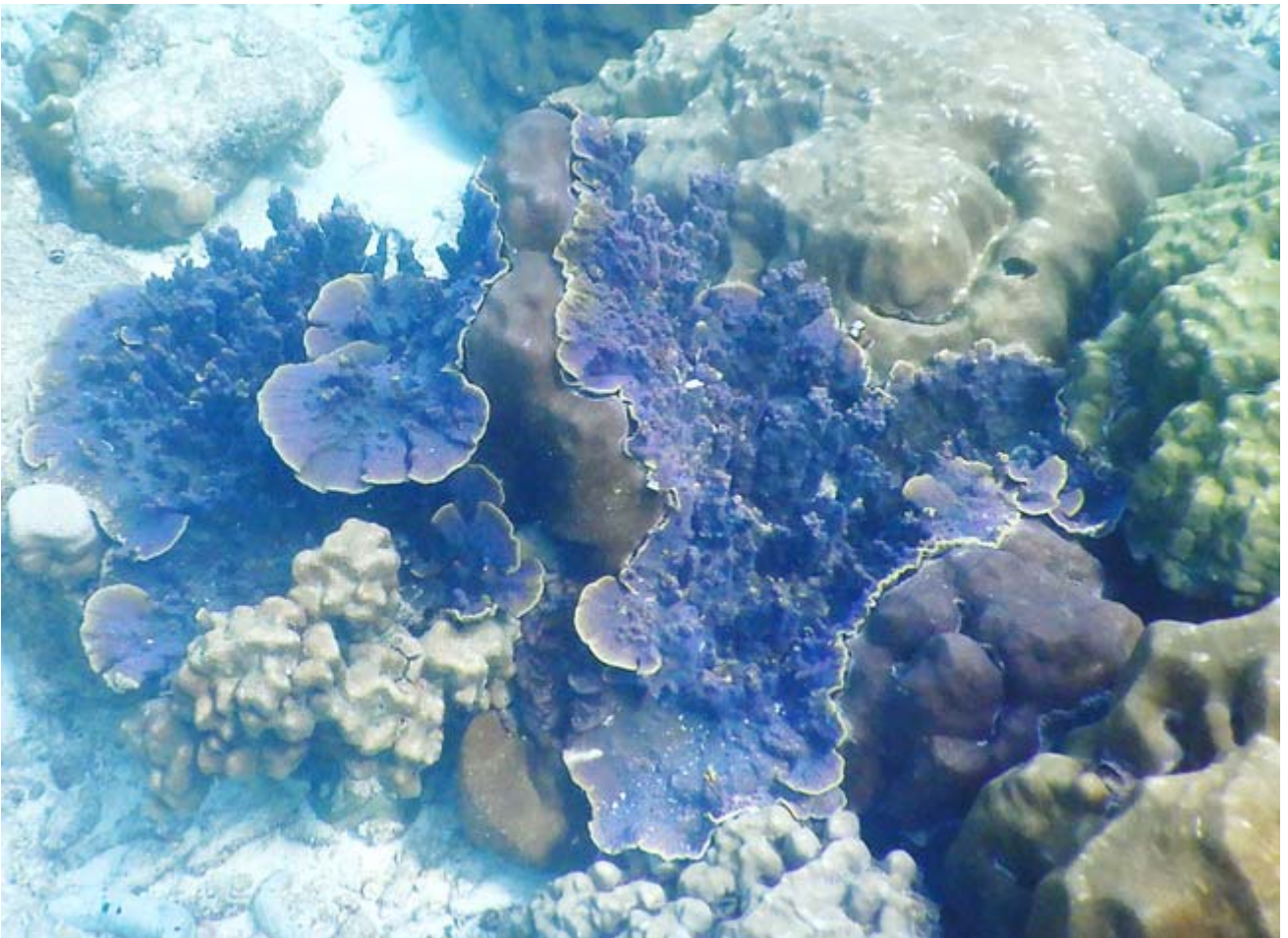
- nice big field of staghorn scene



little puffer and a
grey sea cucumber
...

- more of the big hump or
boulder or rock coral -





nice big patch of purple encrusting something, again hard to identify clearly ...



- a porcupine fish, not as common as the puffer fish I first thought it was, until I saw it raising its spines for which it is named and had the 'aha!!' moment ...



- trigger fish, see them quite often but they are usually shy and in deeper water, although they can be aggressive - these guys were medium size, 30 cm or so ...



- and done again!! - time to go, as always, I HATE getting out of the water! - but it's too far to swim to Saladan



bye nice coral and fishes, had a great time, will be back soon ...



- and dinner at the Black Coral, right beside the resort on the beach - a PERFECT steak in a very nice meal, nice and rare, one of my best meals ever - I HIGHLY recommend this place if you get a chance!

(this is how a rare steak should look - delicious!!!!)



- too good a meal not to finish with a nice glass of red, a very lovely end to a very lovely day and trip

...

- and with a word of appreciation to ... two very nice cameras ...



- and a very good photoediting program -



- for making all of this possible ...

