

Dave in Thailand ...

Koh Kradan

Feb 2023

Why I love Koh Kradan





- out of the flat very early, pack on back, MC to the bus station - getting up at 5 30am is not one of the reasons I love Kradan

- waiting for the van to get full, they work on a 'fill and go' system



- which is also not one of the reasons I love kradan ... waited almost an hour this morning ...

- moving too fast in Trang to get pics, but here arriving at the Kuan Tung Ku pair for the longtail to Kradan - first having to cross over this small ferry,



not unusual here to have to cross over other boats to get where you want to be - this is one of the reasons I love not only Kradan but all the Andaman Islands, I love the longtails ...



- loading the longtail after crossing over the ferry -

- practicing with my new Galaxy 'smart phone', does take nice pics, good with lighting ..



- a few minutes later, after a short stop at an island called Koh Mook, first view of Kradan over the nice calm sea -



- always so nice to be sitting in the front of a longtail, wind and sun and cool breeze -



- and coming in to the beach in front of the Kradan Beach Resort - been one of my favorite places since I first came here - very quiet most of the time, small, no motorcycles, not many people, lovely beach, coral right out in front -



- always some daytrippers in the middle of the day from Koh Lanta and Pak Meng, but they all are gone after 3 or so



- the beach in front of Kradan Beach Resort

- and the reception / office area



- down past the dining area

- looking the other way down past the front row of bungalows



- to mine for the next couple of nights - #35 this time -

- nothing special really, as a bungalow, about \$80 per night, but it's the location, just a few yards from the beach -



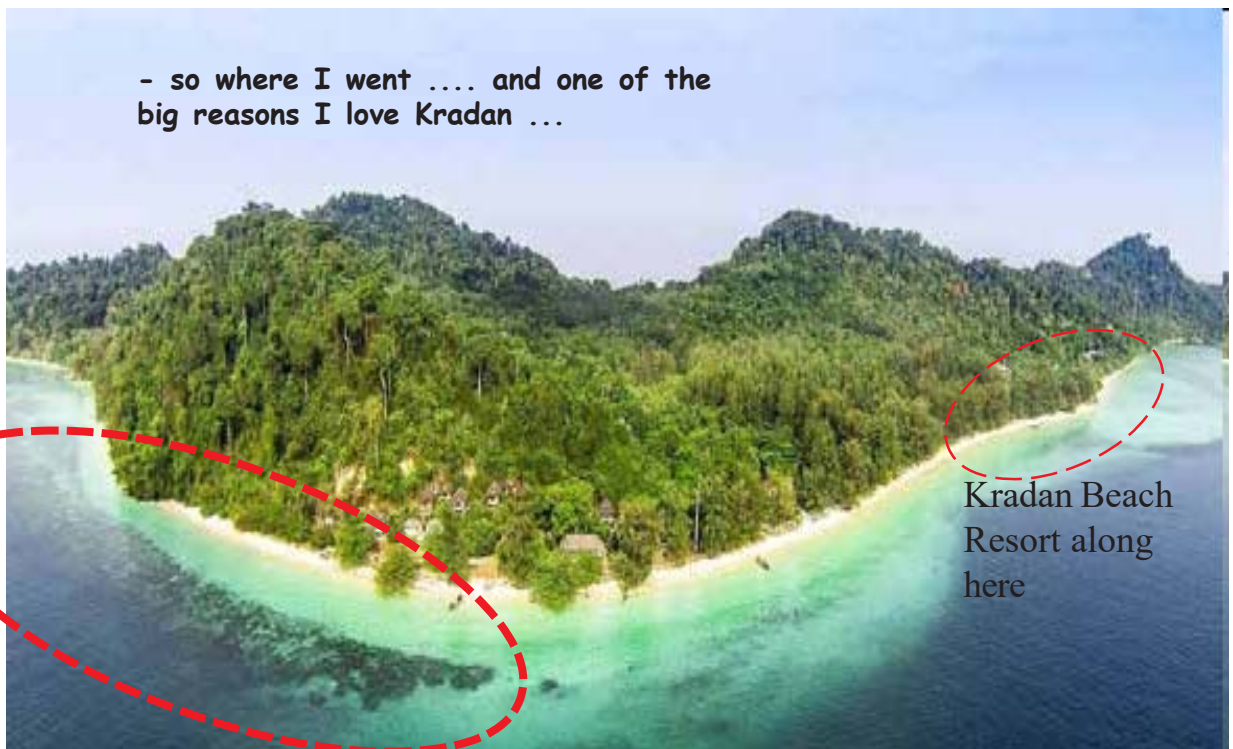


- not a great pic, sadly, sun too bright behind me, not thinking ...

- after getting settled and having a cold beer and a bit of lunch, out with the snorkeling gear and off to my favorite place on Kradan, the coral reef in front of the National Park HQ - with my almost new, never been seriously tested GoPro 9



- with which I was to be well pleased



- so where I went and one of the big reasons I love Kradan ...

Kradan Beach Resort along here

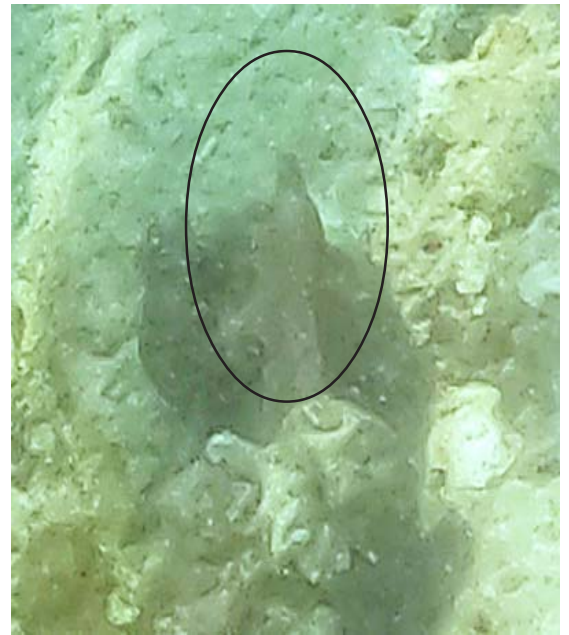
the national park reef, very nice, lots of healthy coral and fish in the past ... (this is a wide angle or fish eye or something pic, the curvature of the island here is nowhere near as pronounced as it appears



the reef out in front of Kradan Beach Resort - not great but it's nice to have something you can go snorkeling at without needing to hire a boat to go somewhere - and you never know when you're going to see something interesting at any reef - it extends a good deal further north, also (looking south here, around the bit of land sticking out is the national park HQ

[NOTE - clearly, this pic and the last one are from the air, and not mine - I'm thinking of getting a drone to see about getting pics from the air, would be very useful for finding coral, but not yet)

- so into the water, and first sightings, as I swam across the sandy bottom towards the reef - rabbitfish below, quite common



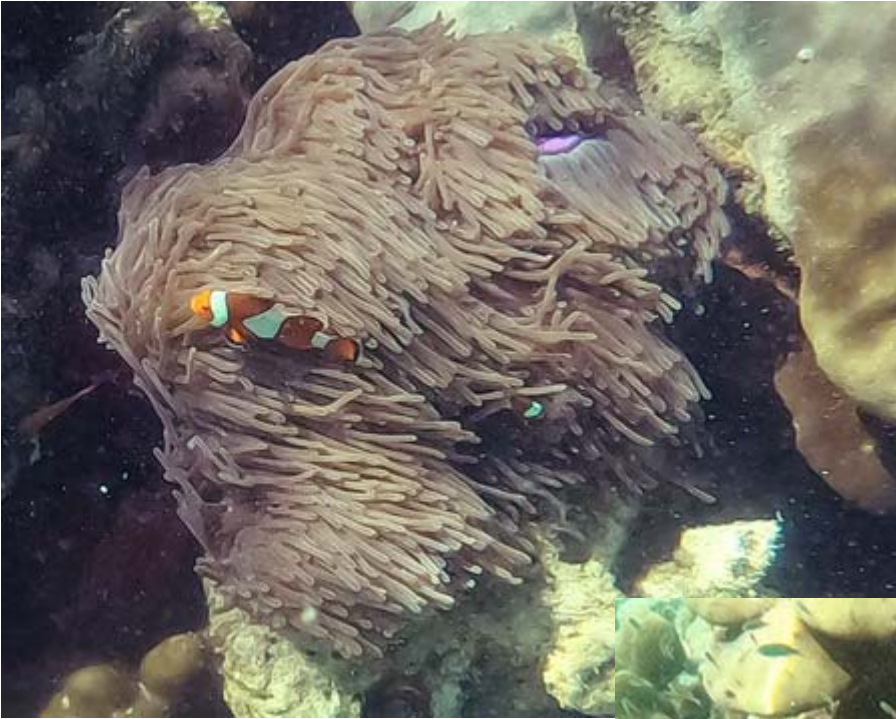
- and then kind of the sighting of the day, as I am just starting out, as often happens, a ray, purple spotted I think - again getting more rare in recent years anywhere there are tourists



- and then this Moray, far away and can only see it's head, but I include this as it's a bit rare seeing morays or any other big eels these days

- and finally to the reef itself, beginning with the very common big stony coral, Porites, comes in many sizes and shapes and colors -

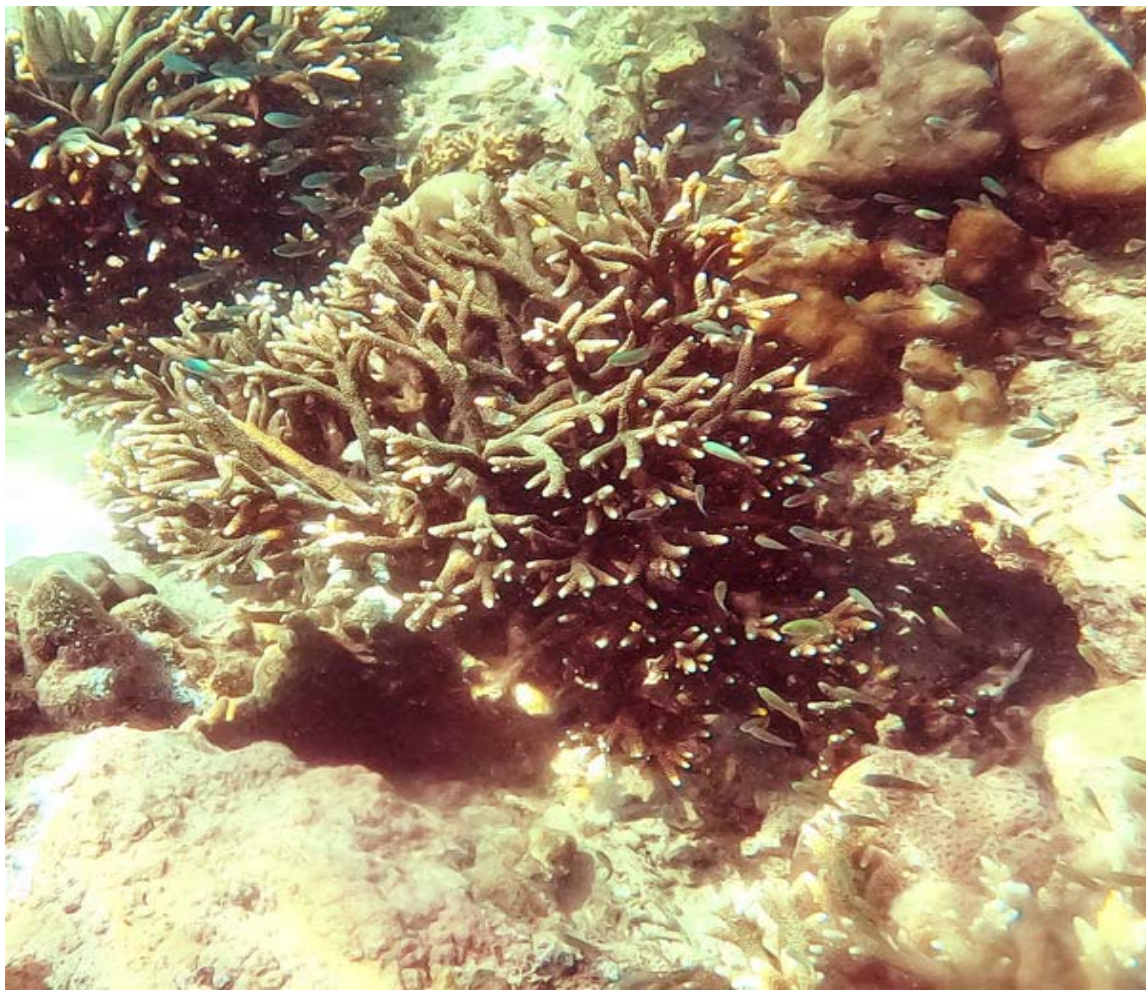




- a few clown damsel fish, or nemos, in their anemone - found in most reefs in greater or lesser numbers, not too many here

- and a bit of 'brain coral', with some small green fish swimming around it - and the nemo above and these green guys were the beginning of my later appreciating the very nice detail of the GoPro - these were all 2-3 meters deep, where the water is dimmer, but they enlarged with a lot of detail -





- and a bit of staghorn coral, quite common here, not everywhere - and again elargeable to see the little green guys - the detail on the GoPro pics is quite amazing ...





- another Porites variety, quite common



- and another larger bed of staghorn -



- some reef fish,
and more Porites



- another common coral, 'finger coral', a species of Acropora, related to the Staghorn, very common most places also, and the Table coral below, from the front reef on a different snorkel, water quite murky there so not great pics



- the table coral is very impressive, and common in some places, not here



- snorkeling on the reef in front of the long beach, pics with another good underwater camera, the Fuji XP





- more anemones, these with a different damsel fish, the 'skunk damsel', for the white stripe along its back, also common some places, not so much here (not great pics, but they were a LONG ways down, quite amazing to get something this good ..)



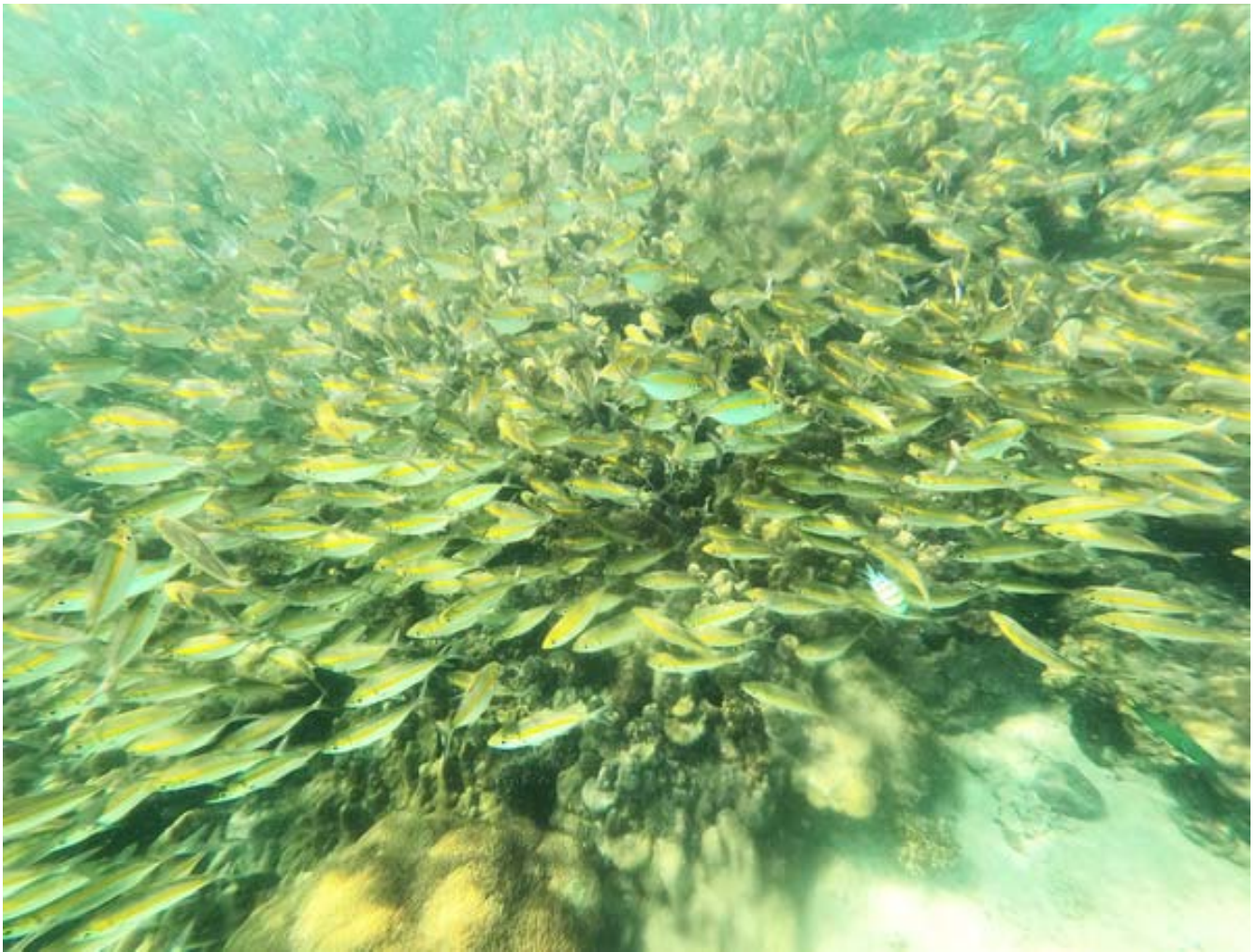
- and beside the finger corals, some 'millepora', or fire coral, also many related species with slightly different presentations, and thus like a lot of stuff on a reef very difficult to identify correctly or specifically

- another big porites, quite impressive to swim around and look at closely if low tide gets them near the surface, lots of stuff living and swimming around them



- another parrot fish, and below the colored one is a rabbit fish eating coral with a bunch of juvenile parrot fishes - you can hear the crunch crunch sound sometimes when there's a bunch of them feeding

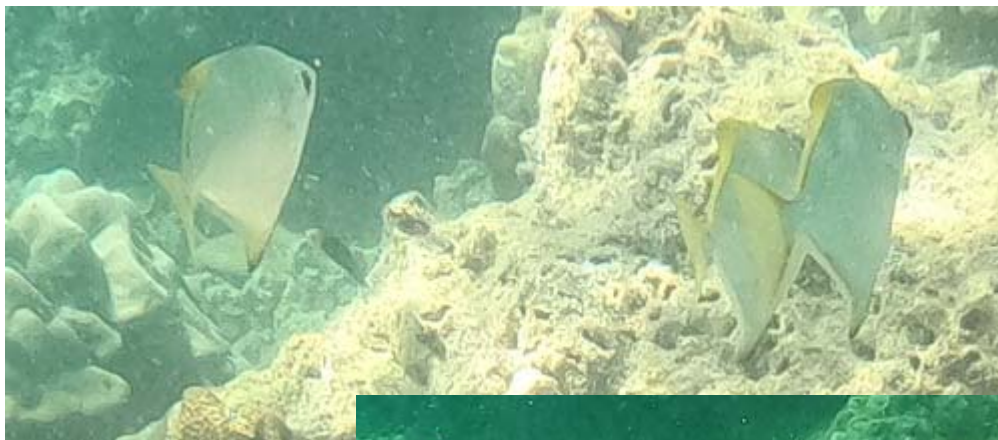




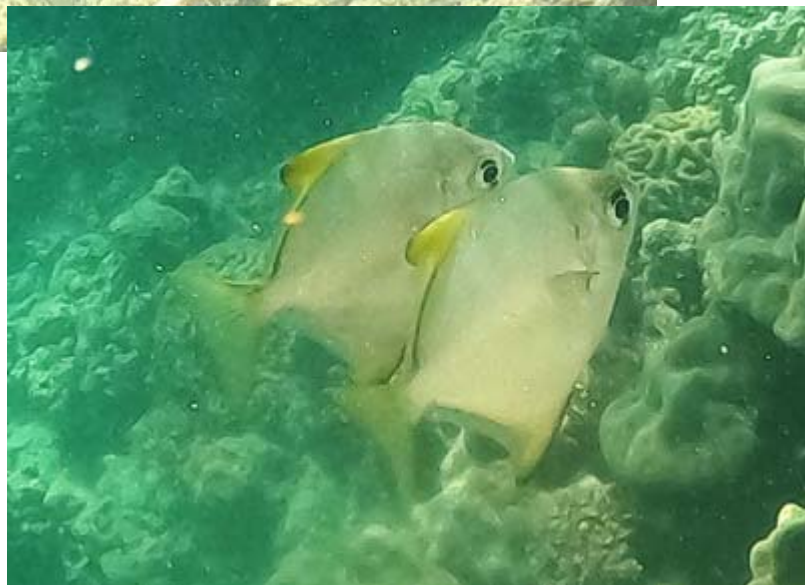
- this was interesting, huge school of fuseliers of some stripe (pun haha) swimming one way then all turning almost together the reverse, swirling around -

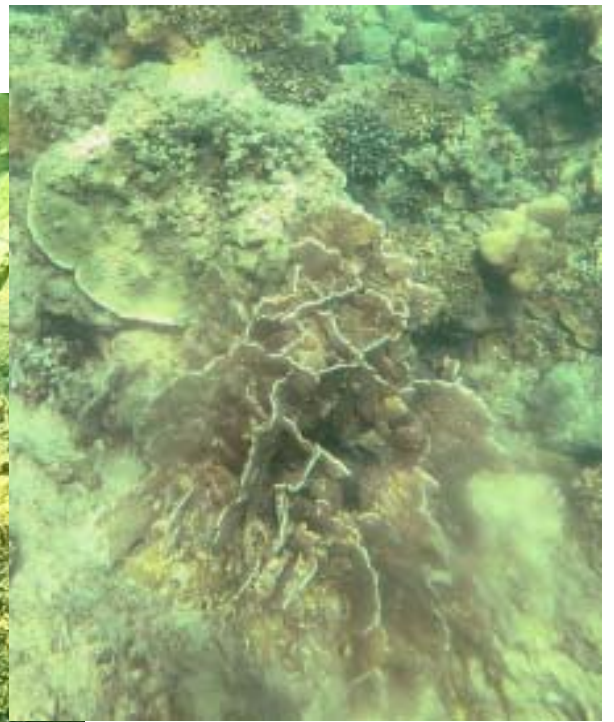


- another of the mysterious corals, see often in many shapes and colors, a five-star coral I think



- fish called 'moonies' for whatever reason, not all that common in my experience, 'Monodactylus sp'





- a nice find, the red 'fan coral', usually in deeper water - and more Millepora, fire coral

- and another big Porites growing another way, bit of brain coral at the bottom right





- mystery finding,
these 3 heart-shaped
cement things on the
bottom, too deep for
me to 'free dive' to get
a closer look, but
clearly some kind of
metal plaque on them,
heart shape indicates
lovey stuff





- couple of open giant clams, they are usually embedded in the coral somewhere, these would be 20-30 inches across
- 8-band butterfly fish below, very common small reef fish



- needle fish, fairly common swimming around the surface, a bit intimidating with long mouths full of sharp looking teeth open -

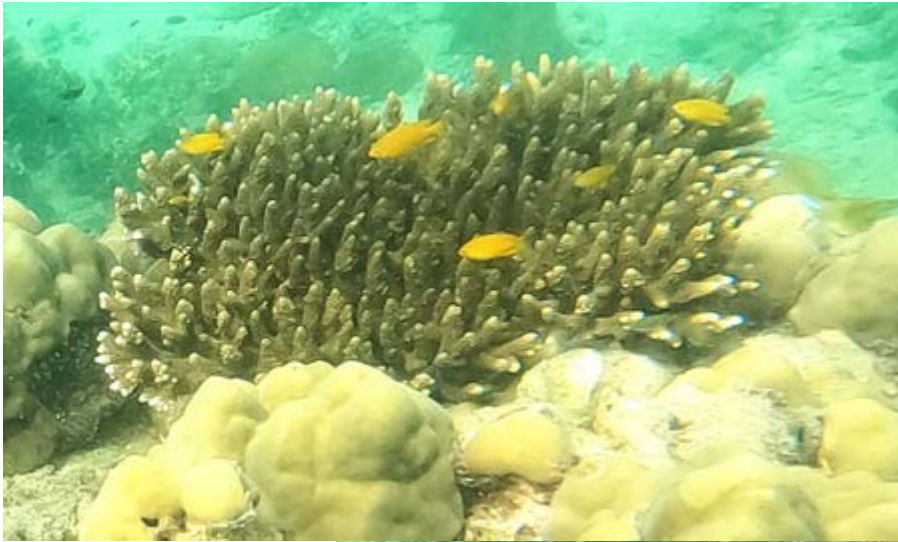




- another type of butterfly fish, a bunch very similar to this with different patterns of cross hatching so hard to identify, again this one was way down deep so not a clear pic - 8-band below of course



- and another big porites, they are just so impressive



- more finger coral, with some little yellow guys swimming around, quite a common coral, with lots of variety



- and another largish sea fan, largish for here, where they grow seriously they can be literally measure in meters



- and a little collection of mushroom corals, fairly common



- vase coral, turbinaria, very common some places, not so much here, but it comes in many different arrangements, quite lovely

- very common 'sargeant major' damsel fish, very not shy, lots where there are people feeding them



- nice sighting of copperband butterfly fish, not very common -



- and another
different
butterfly fish -



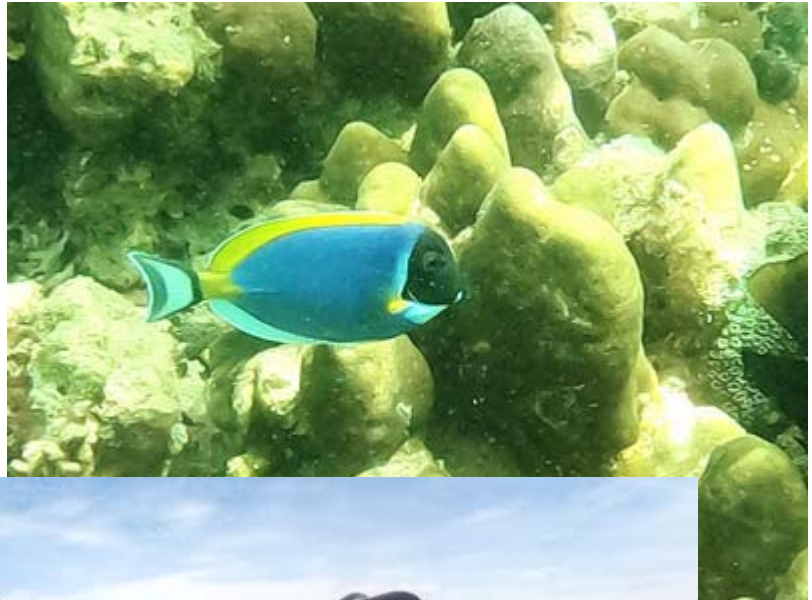
- and another
parrot fish -



- and the
snorkeler in
his favorite
place, all is
well in his
world



- a 'powder blue surgeon fish', common some places, only saw a couple here



- and not much else different, finally done after a couple hours, the GoPro still holding out - always hate getting out of the water, but it's been a good snorkel - reminding me again why this reef, beautiful and easy to get to, is one of my favorite places - warm clear water - not many people - and heading back past the dining area





- not carting around a tripod, and no way to do selfies from a distance, so we'll just have to imagine dave, after cleaning the gear and showering, relaxing in front of the quiet beautiful beach, looking across at Koh Mook, with a nice cold beer, at the end of the day, another reason I love Kradan so much - peaceful and beautiful





- looking across at Koh Mook, the beach you can see is called Charlie's beach, very lovely beach, clean white sand clear water, but no coral so I've only been there a couple times - below some herons fishing at the end of day in the falling tide ...





-and then when the sun is gone, not to mention another beer or two, off to the restaurant for a nice meal, then back to the quiet bungalow to let the sound of the soft surf take me to sleep.

A day that reminded me well why I love Koh Kradan so much.

