Photogallery

Focal white spots on *Porites* spp. from the north Andaman Sea, Western Thailand and the Wakatobi Marine National Park, Indonesia

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Keywords

Focal bleached spots are commonly recorded on *Porites*, *Montipora* and *Acropora* (Beeden et al. 2008). During a diving expedition in April 2010 to the pinnacle of Hin Daeng ("Red Rock") (7°9′1″N; 98°49′20″E), in the Andaman Sea off Western Thailand, we discovered a new type of focal white spots on a massive colony of *Porites lobata* Dana, 1846. We observed multifocal bleached spots scattered densely over the surface of a colony of *P. lobata* (Fig. 1a). A similar observation was made in November 2010 on a *Porites* sp. colony from the North side of Hoga Island situated in the Wakatobi Marine National Park, South-East Sulawesi, Indonesia (Fig. 1b). At both locations, the spots were round to ovoid and about 1 cm in diameter (Fig. 1c). They differed from *Porites* ulcerative white spot disease (PUWS), a disease previously documented both from the Philippines (Raymundo et al. 2003) and Indonesia (Haapkylä et al. 2009) in that they were larger (1 cm in diameter) than those in PUWS (3–5 mm) and encircled a central area with non-bleached, live tissue (Fig. 1c). No observations of invertebrates or fish being associated with the massive colonies were made. Similar observations of focal white spots have previously been made on *Turbinaria peltata* from Japan (Yamashiro and Fukuda 2009) where focal bleaching on other coral genera also has been documented (Kim and Yamashiro 2007; Asoh 2008). Additional research is urgently needed on the initiation of the focal white spots, their prevalence, change and possible growth in time, in order to characterize whether they represent a new Indo-Pacific coral disease.

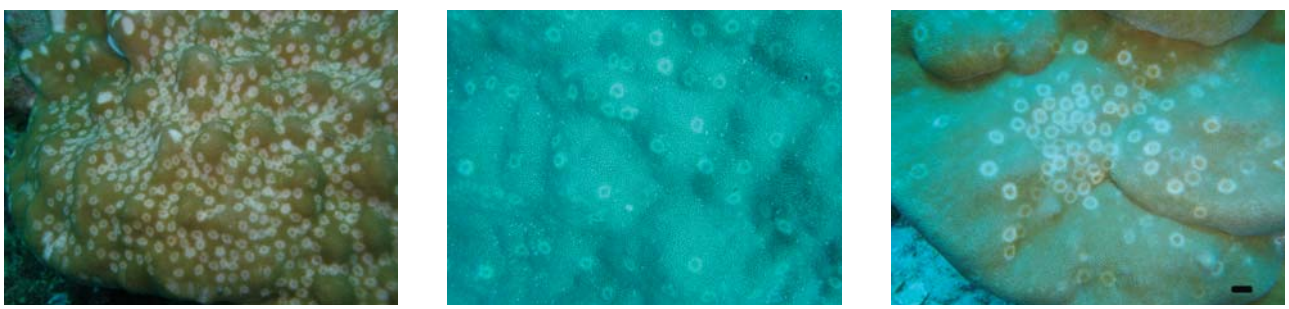

Fig. 1 **a** Focal white spots on the massive colony of *Porites lobata* from Thailand. **b** Focal white spots on *Porites* spp. from the Wakatobi Marine National Park, Indonesia. **c** Enlarged view of the spots (bar: 1 cm)

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