
The present status of marine sponges in Had Khanom-Mu Ko Thale Tai National Park, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, southern Thailand

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The species diversity and distribution of demosponges dwelling in the coral reefs of Had Khanom–Mu Ko Thale Tai National Park, the southern Gulf of Thailand was investigated with field surveys undertaken at 14 sites in November 2006 and May 2007 using SCUBA and random observations. 47 species of demosponges from 10 orders, 24 families and 34 genera were recorded. The order Haplosclerida had the most species, with 15, followed by Poecilosclerida with 9 species and Dictyoceratida with 6 species. The massive sponge was the most dominant growth form of the study area. The most abundant and common sponges in this area were *Oceanapia sagittaria*, *Neopetrosia* sp. “blue”, *Xestospongia testudinaria* and *Haliclona (Gellius) cymaeformis*. Most species were common representatives of the Indo-Pacific fauna found throughout the Gulf of Thailand.