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THE DISTRIBUTION AND SPECIES COMPOSITION OF SEAGRASS BEDS ALONG THE ANDAMAN SEA COAST OF THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Seagrass beds in Thai coastal waters of the Andaman sea were surveyed from 1988 to 1992. Aerial photographs (scale 1:15,000) were used for identification of potential sites for ground surveys. Salinity, water transparency, depth profile, and sediment composition were analysed. A total of 10 species of seagrass were recorded at 25 study sites. Three types of seagrass beds were classified: 1) mangrove-associated beds, 2) beds on broad, shallow sand bottoms, and 3) beds associated with coral reefs. Seagrass beds on shallow sandy bottom were the most common. Effects of man-made perturbations such as push-net fishing and siltation are believed to be responsible for degradation of seagrass beds in many areas under investigation.