Surf Tourism & Resource Sustainability

Phuket, Thailand

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Surf Tourism and Resource Sustainability in Thailand

First... A few pictures

PART I – INTRO & HISTORY
PART II – GEOGRAPHY & METEOROLOGY
PART III – SURF CITY CULTURE
PART III – ISSUES IN SUSTAINABILITY

Kalim Reef

EduAbroadAsia.com
Thailand

EduAbroadAsia.org
Surfing In Phuket
Kalim Reef

Phuket
Chalong Tanus

The First Thai Surf Champion 1999
PART I

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY
“Instant Surf Tourism”
Just add waves!
The first ‘Surf Bar’ at Patong Beach  c. 1980

Photo: Paul King
Nai Harn Beach, Phuket
c. 1977

Photo: Nicky Martin
Relax Beach, Phuket  c.1987

The wave was permanently changed when Le Meridien Hotel relocated the mouth of the local stream
Chin was the “First-ever Thai surfer who truly embraced the heart and soul of surf culture in Phuket. He lived on the beach, surfed everyday, and shaped his own boards.”

Paul King

Kata Noi Beach, c.1996

Photos: Paul King

Thailand’s first backyard shaper
Thailand’s First Surfer Girl

“Everyone that knew her was touched by Gae’s zest for life, the surf, and love of everyone. Wish I could be more like her... Take each day and enjoy life.”

Kata Noi Beach, 1996

Gae

1972 – 1997

Photo: Paul King
COASTAL GEOGRAPHY & METEOROLOGY of the ANDAMAN Coast, Thailand
30+ Areas documented through exploratory research

60+ Areas currently documented

60+ Sites

739+ km and over 50 islands (6 provinces)

ANDAMAN COAST

GULF COAST

70+ Sites

1874+ km and over 50 islands (17 provinces)

Key areas to include:
Ko Samui/Ko Phangan & Ko Chang/Ko Kut

Surf Sites of Thailand
S. A. Martin (as of July, 2010)
A Brief Look at the Gulf of Thailand...
The Southwesterly Monsoon
May through October
Southwest – West Windswell

Indian Ocean Groundswell
Quality Waves
Potential To Arrive Year-round

Cyclonic activity
Depressions, Tropical Storms &
Cyclones
Potential for BIG
Bathymetry varies at different latitudes along Thailand’s Andaman Coast, affecting wave speeds and heights.

The Coastal Shelf

110 km wide in the north
Ranong and Phang Nga

25 km near Phuket
The deepest water on Thailand’s Andaman Coast

130 km in the south
Krabi, Trang & Satun
Key Surf Beaches of Phuket

(approximately 30 sites)

- Nai Yang Beaches & Reefs
- Surin Beach
- Bang Tao Beach
- Kamala Beach
- Kalim Reef
- Kata Yai Beach
- Kata Noi Beach
- Nai Harn Beach
PART III

PHUKET & THE DEVELOPING SURF CULTURE
PHUKET OFFERS THAILAND’s Best Surfing Areas

- 20 Surf Shops
- 15 Surf Lesson Businesses
- 25 Surfboard Rental Concessions
300 Thai Surfers
250 Expat Surfers

Surf Tourists
Australian
Japanese
USA & UK
‘Incidental’ Tourists
Phuket International Airport
JUNGCEYLON
The International Shopping and Leisure Destination in Patong, Phuket
5th Anniversary

Amusea World!
30 March – 8 April 2012

Beyond the Beach
Welcome to a Paradise of Fashion, Food, and Fun!
The Big names are all here: Armani, A/W, Calvin Klein Jeans, DKNY, Nautica, Lacoste, Nike, and after you've found your favorites, enjoy some of the best foods the island has to offer, all found at Central Festival Phuket.
With more than 250 shops offering an undeniable selection of international and local brands, you'll be spoilt for choice.
Do not miss the Department Store, the best shopping destination in Phuket that offers 5% discount as well as 7% VAT refund on top of a host of attractive promotional prizes.
Sports enthusiasts will love the range of goods at Super Sports, the biggest Sports of its kind in Phuket.
Savour the authentic foods the island has to offer when you dine at one of 30 restaurants in the complex... Simply delicious!

Enjoy Your Lifestyle in Phuket

Central Festival Phuket

the irresistible shopping destination

5 - 70% Discount PLUS
7% Tax Refund and other privileges

See more terms and conditions at Tourist Information Counter
International Surfing Competitions

Is that Jake ‘the Snake’ Patterson? :)
The **2011** Phuket International Surfing Contest, Patong Beach

The First Phuket Surfing Contest was in **1999** at Kata Beach
Domestic Surf Tourism

Thai Movie Stars from Bangkok Try Surfing for the First Time
IN RECENT years Phuket beaches have been plagued by drownings, which remain a leading cause of death among tourists, especially those from abroad.

Lifeguard services have been precarious in recent years. Simply put, sometimes there are lifeguards, sometimes not. Throughout the current high season which began last November and which is now drawing to a close, there have been no lifeguards on the island’s beaches, although the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization is expected to announce a new service provider by the time this issue is published.

But even with new lifeguards patrolling beaches, it seems inevitable that the death toll will continue to rise until something is done to address the dangerous combination of factors that lead so many foreign tourists into treacherous surf with fatal results.

One man’s study
In a recent study conducted by Phuket resident Steven Martin, he cites unfamiliarity with local beaches, poor swimming skills, language barriers and the disorientation of being in a foreign environment as part of the deadly equation – one made even worse when tourists enter the surf after consuming alcohol.

Several physical factors make Phuket’s west coast beaches more dangerous than they may appear to the layman during the monsoon season that runs from May to October, said Mr Martin.

Monsoon season surf in Phuket is characterized by a wave phenomenon known as “short-period swell”, which means that waves arrive relatively close together and propagate proportionately strong currents – including rip tides – even if the waves themselves don’t appear particularly large or dangerous.

Short-period swells allow swimmers and surfers very little time to recover between waves. For example, a swell period of six...
BEACH & OCEAN SAFETY are NOT to international safety standards.
Do you want the Silver, Gold or Platinum Rescue Package?
PART IV

KEY ISSUES IN SURF RESOURCE SUSTAINABILITY
The 5Ts of SURF SITE DEGRADATION in PHUKET

- **TIN MINING**
  - Reef destruction and mine tailings
- **TRASH**
  - Beach litter & Marine debris
- **TOURISM**
  - Tourist impacts, construction, pollution
- **TEMPERATURE**
  - Coral Bleaching
- **TSUNAMI**
  - Coral destruction and salt invasion
TIN MINING

Over 6,000 boats in operation in 1988

Maritime tin mining was invented in Phuket in 1903

Suction Boat

Bucket Dredge
1960s Bucket dredge operating at 22-meters depth in Phuket
Sediment plumes from intensive coastal dredging

Figure 2. Landsat photo taken January 1979 showing Andaman Sea coast of Thailand. The sediment plumes were generated by intensive dredging activities within a depth of 20 meters along the Phang-nga coast. More limited plume distribution on northern parts of the west coast of Phuket Island was also detected. Suspended loads from land-based mines are visible as turbid streams (white lines on land) discharging into the coastal waters. Photo: NASA.
SURIN BEACH, PHUKET

Marine Debris
### Analysis of 1,127 Plastic Food Rappers

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Potential country of origin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74%</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>Bahasa/others</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>Malay/others</td>
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<tr>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>12.5%</td>
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Coral Bleaching in Thailand in 2010


In 2010, sea surface temperature (SST) rose rapidly in Thai waters in both the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. These elevated temperatures caused extensive coral bleaching from the last week of April onwards, with SST reaching 31°C in the first week of April. The putative threshold temperature of coral bleaching in the Andaman Sea was estimated as 30.1°C (blue line) which is about 1°C above maximum SST in this area (Brown 1997) though light levels may of course modify these thresholds.

Phuket Marine Biological Center is responsible for the study of the impact of coral bleaching on coral reefs in the Andaman Sea, while the Marine and Coastal Research Centers in the Gulf of Thailand take responsibility for coral reefs in the Gulf. Additional surveys by diving tourists and dive operators also contributed to the database. Roughly, 80% of corals bleached on each reef throughout every province along the Andaman Sea and the Gulf. Mortality rates of between 5 - 40% were already reported at the end of May.

Conclusions from these preliminary surveys are as follows:

1. In areas where environmental factors are good and coral diversity is high, with large numbers of colonies, corals are usually partial bleached. Some normally coloured colonies are found at these sites.
2. In the beginning, bleaching is more prevalent on shallow zones of the reef compared to the reef slopes. However later on bleaching spread down to lower slope (30 m).
3. In the Andaman Sea, the reefs on the east coast of the islands are more impacted than on the west. On the west sides of islands, which are subject to internal waves and generally stronger wave action, the reefs may show partial bleaching (or slight paling)
4. In turbid areas where the water flow is high, many coral colonies can resist bleaching. This is probably due to the acclimatization and adaptation of corals to extreme environmental conditions. Also, light penetration through the water column is decreased at these sites thus reducing the combined temperature/light stresses that induce bleaching.
5. The reefs which have been subject to human disturbance show more extensive bleaching than those which are less disturbed.
6. Very few coral species have been found which resist bleaching, e.g. Pavona decussata, Diploastrea heliopora and Leptastrea transversa. Porites lutea colonies frequently show partial bleaching (with apical surfaces being normally coloured while the sides are bleached).

The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Phuket is developing rapidly and surf tourism is a significant new market during the southwest monsoon season.

Key Areas of Concern

- **Beach & Water Quality**
  - Develop a lifesaving culture
- **Beach & Ocean Safety**
- **Surf Site Sustainability & Conservation**
  - Adopt the *Surfing Reserve* approach
Research Articles Available at San Diego State University
Center for Surf Research
http://csr.sdsu.edu/2012/11/14/steven-martin/

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