

### **Project Update: March 2008**

Since May 2007 we are following closely every month the nursery-grown coral colonies that were transplanted onto the two denuded knolls of the degraded zone of Eilat's reef.

The first question asked was if coral colonies that were maintained under ideal conditions in the nursery, can adapt to the harsh conditions in the natural reef (the transplanted area is located in front of a busy diving center, and there is fish and coral-predators activity at the natural reef). We therefore decided to look very closely on survivorship, detachment, bleaching and the general health of transplanted colonies during the first 4 months following their transplantation.

This analyze revealed a very low mortality rate of the new transplants (less than 5%) during those months. This survivorship is similar to the natural colonies monitored at the site, serving as controls. In addition, soon after the transplantation the colonies, especially the *Acropora* ones, started spreading on the knolls. These results indicate that the transfer from the nursery back to the reef does not lead to a severe stress (likely to cause a massive mortality) and the colonies are adapting to the new environmental conditions.

