The blue coral *Heliopora coerulea* is a hermatypic octocoral that was classified as a threatened species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in October, 2008. Although it is widely distributed over the Indo- and Western Pacific, this species is rare, with only several large colonies reported, for example in the Gilbert and Marshall atolls etc. (Zann and Bolton 1985). On 31 July in 2008, we discovered a large aggregation of *Heliopora coerulea* at Akaishi Reef, northern Ishigaki Island in southwest Japan (24°32′N, 124°18′E). This is the third discovery of occurrence of a sizeable *H. coerulea* population in Japan, following Shiraho Reef and Ooura Bay populations (Fig. 1a). The Akaishi Reef population is 200 m NE-SW in length and 30 m NW-SE in width (Fig. 1b), developing nearly in parallel with the shore that is 60 to 80 m away. There is a channel crossing the fringing reef crest that exchanges sea water via tidal current approximately 400 m northeast away from the aggregated population. This population is comparable to the Shiraho population in having plate- or branch-shaped morphology and in forming microatolls due to exposure on the top at low tide (Fig. 1c). The water depth ranged 98–191 cm at low tide and thus *H. coerulea* colonies developed up to these height in Akaishi population. Although there is no river that directly discharges into Akaishi Reef, small streams are usually formed after rain and thereby turbidity increases inside the reef (Miyajima personal communication). As seen in the Marshall atolls (Zann and Bolton 1985), the densely-formed Akaishi population is in calm, shallow
(1–2 m at neap low tide) high temperature water. The water temperature around the *H. coerulea* population from August to September 2009 in Akaishi Reef was comparable with that of Shiraho. This reef is near the beach, differing from Shiraho (near the reef crest) and Ooura (at the reef-slope). Further investigation is needed to identify a conservation strategy for this reef.

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