

On the island of Koh Samui, in the Gulf of Thailand, is one of the most amazing fisheries I have been lucky enough to fish, and this is my story.....!



I met Simon Cruddace, the owner of TopCats of Koh Samui, a couple of years ago as he is passionate about water quality, as all good fishery owners should be, and he wanted to stop using any toxic lead weights and go solely with my natural Stonze fishing weights – yet another fishery to take this common sense route. This led to me arranging a week's fishing trip to this exotic location with several other Team Pallatrax members, our most tropical Fish-In to date!

Walking through the entrance to the fishery you go via the restaurant area to where there is a balcony overlooking the Arapaima swim and your breath is taken away seeing massive fish swimming such a short distance away and knowing that I would soon be fishing for these specimens. Things were set to get very interesting and, hand on heart, as we settled down within our on-site accommodation I never slept a wink all night long!

There are 40 known species of fish lurking in the depths of TopCats and I just wanted to get out there, but had to wait, impatiently, for the 8am start time before I could start fishing for species I had only ever seen in books or in film clips.

One of the many benefits at this venue is that you are accompanied by their professional guides who are on hand to assist you throughout your sessions. They go out of their way to get you amongst the fish and I was very fortunate to have the excellent 'Tadpole' for the week. This young girl, well I can't thank her enough and she definitely worked hard to help me in my quest to catch several different species, and her casting was nothing short of sensational.

Tactics wise it was like being at home though 'beefed up', with 5.5lb tc rods and Big Pit reels loaded with Gamma 0.53mm irradiated fishing lines. The Stonze System was set up as a Method Feeder and I was trialling a new hooklink



I could write several chapters on our adventures over the next few days as we just kept on landing fish after fish – Arapaima, Alligator Gar, Siamese Catfish, Amazon Redtails, Asian Redtails, Giant Mekong, Gourami, Pacu and Juliens, to name but a few! There are so many highlights that I should mention, but cherry picking the one capture that stood out for me, my first of three Mekong catfish, was an absolute beast of 120lb plus and took me 20 minutes to land. I really was a sweating mess and have never known such a solid fight. There was absolutely nothing I could do than hang on and enjoy the ride. Up and down and then I would gain a few feet but off the fish would go again, stripping all the Gamma I had gained and taking more! When landed the fish was absolutely stunning and holding her aloft in such a memory making place was something that is now forever etched within my angling journey.

It really was such an amazing trip and with some wonderful friends it made things even more memorable as we all caught lots and were able to share such fun together.



Last, but by no means least, I have to mention the Elephants! With such gruelling fishing we did take some time out to sample the local delights and one will be something impossible to ever forget. It is sad to see that Elephants are still kept in captivity in this supposedly enlightened day and age, but there is a small sanctuary on the island which seeks to buy elephants and look after them in a 'not for profit' environment. Here we met four incredible creatures that had been saved from the abuse of man and what gentle and amazing creatures they are. We fed them by hand, rubbed mud into their flanks and washed them in the local river. It was such an emotional time spent with these huge animals and in many ways made our trip. Something we will probably never ever get the chance to do again, something so wonderful. As mentioned, I could go on and on, but in ending, I cannot praise Simon, Tadpole and the rest of the Team at TopCats enough for their hospitality. The fishing was out of this world and I know I bang on about life being about creating wonderful memories, well this is right up there and I will definitely be going back chasing that elusive Ripsaw Catfish that I hope to catch one day. Until next time etc.

Simon 'Pom' Pomeroy

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