

WA Seakayaker



Paul Cooper and Rod Coogan near John Point, rescue training. – Photo by Alan Hale

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SEA KAYAK CLUB WA INC. – Issue No. 68 November 2007

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



2007 has been an interesting year. It began with one of our members, **Sandy Robson**, beginning her round Australia odyssey from Victoria. She was attempting to travel as far as possible around the coastline in one year. She had a website updated continually and it was with pleasure we read of her amazing exploits. She was helped in her journey by members of the Victorian and New South Wales Sea kayak clubs in particular. It was a trip she did totally unsupported by any vehicle or group of people. Unfortunately, she was attacked by a crocodile in the northern waters and aborted her trip across the top of Australia. She continued her journey from Broome and has since covered other sections of coastline. We are extremely proud of her as she has covered well over 3000 kms. She has had some amazing experiences, meeting great people and seeing pristine environments and rarely seen marine life.

We were devastated to hear of the death of kayak adventurer **Andrew McCauley** and couldn't believe the news of his disappearance, when he was so close to shore. Every day some of us had followed his updates with interest, so it was like losing a close friend.

Talking of losing close friends, we were slightly worried when some other members of our club embarked on the journey of a lifetime. **Martin Burgoyne** (our resident 5star white water pom) decided to take our treasurer **Rod Coogan** on a trip down the Sunkhosi River in Nepal which has level 3 and 4 rapids and big, big water. That sounds fine for all the experienced white water experts but Rod only had a 14 week crash course in WA rivers which aren't that fast flowing. Anyway, they all survived the big waters and it is interesting talking to Rod and hearing his description of the first big drop he came upon.—something to do with ----his pants.

Our committee had been expanded to the maximum eight members which has lightened the load considerably, plus meetings were dropped to the compulsory six per year as per the constitution. We felt that extra communication could be done by e-mail or telephone. We did have general meetings during the year but they were on a more social format. We had a Xmas breakfast, a Kings park barbecue and a mid-year Indian dinner organized by **Sue Harrington** which were well attended. Sue's partner, **Russ Hobbs** has done a great job with our new website and we are gradually entering more and more info., photos and trip articles. Russ has also helped me in a big way by formatting the club newsletter every couple of months.

The paddling programme has been shared around with a number of members taking turns to fill out a 2 month programme. **John Radovich**, **Rod Coogan**, **Roger Lloyd** and I have had input. We had the big trip to Dirk Hartog, ably led by one of our instructors, **Kevin Piper**, who led us through some very difficult conditions for 3 of the days. Other trips through the year included Bunker Bay, Augusta and Jurien Bay with **Rod Coogan** as sea leader and Lancelin with **Phil Evans** as the leader.

Phil Evans has been in charge of the club training this year and has done a thorough and all encompassing course with a small group of paddlers who are going for their Sea Skills Award and training for Sea Leader. They have been working through winter in a variety of conditions and have their assessment this coming weekend. Phil has been ably assisted by the other instructors, Rod, Roger and Kevin.

I would also like to thank **Les Allen** for his assistance in so many ways, on the water with training and off the water advice and help with kayaks.

Our 'Safety Guidelines and Operating Procedures' was ably put together by **Roger Lloyd** and is available to everyone on the web site. As it is a 47 page document it is not practical to print off for everyone although members did receive one last year(2006). It is important that all members familiarize themselves with the content such as visual signals used on the water and are well versed in equipment needed in different situations. The participant list used by sea leaders will be updated from time to time.

Kevin Piper has put together a document on kayak launching and landing which will be included in the next newsletter which should be out in a couple of weeks. These are the procedures that are expected of members when in the surf zone.

Thanks to the other sea leaders **John Radovich, Wayne Stocker, Dave Oakley, Graeme Lee** and **Judy Blight** for their help in leading trips in winter, when we have a number of river trips to keep our fitness up and just to appreciate the variety of bird and animal life that is around us in WA.

Thanks to **Wayne Stocker** for his work as secretary. Unfortunately, he found he had work commitments away from Perth for a lot of the year and so he will be standing down as a committee member, but he will remain as a club member." The glass off will remain with us forever". Thanks to **Rod Coogan** for his work as treasurer. He has been thorough with his organization and has wonderful membership lists printed off and updated regularly. Thanks also to **Phil Evans** for his work as vice president as he is always willing to give a helping hand and look at things in an objective way.

Club membership is strong with all members except a few rejoining. The three members not rejoining are doing so for personal reasons and not for dissatisfaction with the club. This is promising as we have already received membership and interest from a number of other quarters. Our membership is 34 at the moment with prospects of reaching 40 in the near future. We have been looking at trying to streamline the joining process as new members have to be assessed on their ability by an instructor before proceeding with any paddles. Then they may take part in paddles on the ocean if an instructor is present. All paddles are not available to members until they have their Sea Skills Award which at the moment is assessed by Les Allen. At this stage the training in the club is done on a voluntary basis and a suitable time sometimes cannot be found immediately. The basic skills assessment is done fairly quickly but the other award will take time.

The club library is situated here and people can borrow books and DVD's on a variety of topics to do with sea kayaking. I usually carry the bag of DVD.s to other functions

so that people have access. A list of available books and DVD's will be sent to members in the next month as a word document.

Thankyou to everyone in the club for all their efforts in helping with so many aspects. **Steve Foreman** is always ready with a camera and sending charts to members so please keep the photos rolling in to me and to **Russ Hobbs** . This club is only as strong as the membership and if we all feel ownership we can move a long way. Please continue to support the club in whatever way you can as it certainly gives us all a lot of pleasure to be able to paddle in the wonderful environments we find here.

Judy Blight

Welcome to the following new members:

Peter Henley A former club member -1997/98. Lives in Warwick and is keen to start again.

Rob MacCracken An American with experience river paddling; from South Perth area.

Faryar Gorjy Very keen, has had lessons with Sandy already and has been practising rolling at the pool. Was a little upset when his 18 year old son learnt to roll at his first attempt! Lives in the Applecross area.

Tania Churchman Attended AGM and joined straight away. Already a member of Ascot Kayak Club and lives in Swan View.

Helen and Alan Morbey Both members of Ascot Kayak Club. Alan has to have a specially fitted boat because his legs are even longer than Les Allen's.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OFFICE BEARERS – 2007/08

President	Judy Blight	9438 2778	carita@iinet.net.au
Vice President	Phil Evans	9383 7190	pevans_2@bigpond.net.au
Treasurer	Rod Coogan	9535 4515	rodneycogan@optusnet.com.au
Secretary	Sue Harrington	9335 5182	sueandruss@bigpond.com
Programme	Kevin Piper	9447 8623	dolphin66@nscom.net.au
Programme	Martin Burgoyne	9525 9280	madburg@westnet.com.au
Programme	Steve Foreman	9368 6804	sfandlm@iinet.net.au
Training	Phil Evans	9383 7190	pevans_2@bigpond.net.au
Web Site	Russell Hobbs	9335 5182	sueandruss@bigpond.com
Newsletter	Judy Blight	9433 3719	carita@iinet.net.au
Social	Sue Harrington	9335 5182	sueandruss@bigpond.com
Committee	Dave Oakley	9331 8446	daveoakley54@gmail.com

NOTICEBOARD

Commiserations

Bart Huntley Unfortunately, at sea kayak skills training, after rolling perfectly, he dislocated his shoulder while executing a not so perfect brace. He is having an MRI soon and may be going under the knife. From all accounts he was very brave during rescue and controlled in his manner.-----as opposed to **Kevin Piper**, who, made a right old noise and carry on when acting as the mock patient earlier in the day! We look forward to Bart returning to us soon. We need all the young guys we can get.

Training with West Coast Kayaks

Les Allen has put out an e-mail to say that he will be doing Saturday morning training again in 2008.

It will be on every second Saturday from the 5th January. Venue to be announced by email later.

Christmas Breakfast

On Sunday 16th December at Chidley Point at 9am, there will be a Club social function. Please contact Sue Harrington (9335 5182 or sueandruss@bigpond.com).

New Zealand Coastbusters 2008

Sea Kayak Symposium
Milford (Auckland) & Sullivans Bay
29 February to 2 March 2008

Coastbusters is a great weekend, full of fun, knowledge, demonstrations, and on-the-water adventures. From novice to expert in experience, you can enjoy interaction with New Zealand's best sea kayakers and some of the world's finest who we've flown in to add some a little extra flavour.

The last event filled up quickly so please don't delay in booking.

See: www.coastbusters.org.nz

Guest Presenters include:

Sandy Robson who gave herself a year to get round Australia - solo. An outdoor pursuits educator from West Australia, she's already completed an amazing amount of the 14,000 km journey since launching away from Queenscliff in January 2007. After 166 days, nearing the northernmost tip of the continent, her courage met its sternest challenge. A 5m crocodile attack on her kayak stern caused Sandy to postpone her trip in North Queensland. So, she's skipped to the wild coast of Western Australia. Sandy has a wealth of experiences to draw on for her after-dinner talk. Take a look at:

<https://netstorage.penrhos.wa.edu.au/slap/index.html>

Paul Caffyn should need no introduction. Amongst other achievements, it's his footsteps that Sandy is treading as she attempts to circumnavigate Australia - a feat Paul pioneered exactly 25 years ago. Fresh from his latest expedition along Greenland's icy, exposed east coast in August, Paul will continue to inspire and inform.

Mark Jones is one of the Adventure Philosophy trio who have set themselves mighty challenges - Antarctica, Tierra del Fuego and South Georgia. Mark will tempt us to stretch our horizons.

John Kirk-Anderson - one of our regular and most popular speakers - returns with another thought provoking and amusing workshop. John is not only a kayaker of great skill and experience, but he is New Zealand's highest qualified instructor.

New Zealand experts on a host of topics. Get ready for some hard choices, as you won't fit them all in!

Trips and Expeditions - local & esoteric - why & how, Technology for fun and safety, History & Tradition, Yak Maintenance, Be-Kind-to-Your-Body Physio, Foodie Frenzies - sensible and extreme, make your own kayak - would you enjoy the challenge? A return of DoC, for an update on their plans for kayaking resources. Keep an eye on the Coastbusters website for updates.

Display of Cedar-Strip, Stitch & Glue and Fabric-on-Frame kayaks - examine these interesting and beautiful boats and discuss them with their builders. You'll get an opportunity to try one out on Sunday afternoon.

Sunday morning's justly famous, on-the-water, 'pod' session - don't leave your boat at home!

Sunday's BBQ, Saturday's lunch and buffet dinner are included in the price. You look after fine wine & camping / accommodation (see website for suggestions).

Sunday afternoon on-the-water workshops - a range of try it activities - and hands-on-the-water experiences.

Plus - this year we're continuing the fun for the weekdays - to link into the New Zealand Kayak Builder's Get-Together on the Rotorua Lakes. Shift to Martin's Bay Camp (just north of Sullivan's) on Sunday evening and use that as a laid-back base. Day & night paddles, special events and sessions will allow local paddlers to extend their CB experience and help introduce overseas visitors to some of NZ's finest waters. At the end of the week, pack up and head down to the Blue Lake camp for the NZKBGT's lazy weekend of paddles on the lakes, sharing tips and kayaks and socialising.

How could you better spend 10 days? www.coastbusters.org.nz

Kayak Surfing

The thing I love about daylight savings is the time you have to do cool stuff in the evenings. Such as heading to Port Beach after a stressful day at work and joining Phil Evans for a few hours of surfing.

Although many see this only as part of the tasks of launching and landing, surfing is one of the great thrills of kayaking. The pleasure of surfing a kayak is no less fulfilling than board or body surfing. The Tuesday afternoon surf sessions last summer were a great way to learn to get the most out of the surf, and they will be on again this summer.

Regardless of the conditions, there is always some way of enjoying yourself. From catching the back of the larger dumpers to carving across the rollers, even messing about in the little stuff at the very shore can be surprisingly enjoyable. Phil discovered a little game to play when the conditions were nearly flat. He would position the kayak so the stern was nearly touching beach and punch out through the little breakers and back-surf the next one back in. It might not sound like a great challenge, but it happens to be an excellent balancing exercise. Repeating this exercise was surprisingly absorbing. I found myself doing these little moves for hours, almost to the point of complete exhaustion. It wasn't long before I found I was very comfortable with balancing, not only the mild conditions of the beach but also in much rougher and choppy conditions.

As one of the least experienced members of the Club, I can vouch for the value of these sessions as not only as a stress reliever but also as one of the best training exercises that can be practiced.

Steve Foreman



Steve and Paul at Leighton Beach - Photo by Russ Hobbs

Sea Rescue Contacts in WA

Rod Coogan compiled this useful list of emergency radio and telephone numbers for locations around the coast of WA.

Group	Call Sign	27MHZ	UHF	VHF	HF	EMERGENCY PHONE
Albany Sea Rescue Squad	VMR610	90	Yes	Yes		0419 923 557
Augusta Sea Rescue	VMR625	88		Yes		9758 1575
Bremer Bay Sea Rescue	VMR607	88	Yes	Yes	Yes	0427 374 062
Broome Sea Rescue	VMR650	88 & 91	Yes	Yes	Yes	9193 5935
Bunbury Sea Rescue	VMR634	88		Yes	Yes	0418 926 442
Busselton Sea Rescue	VMR640	88 & 91	Yes	Yes		0407 755 715
Carnarvon Sea Rescue	VMR676	91		Yes	Yes	9941 3613
Cockburn Sea Rescue	VH6CL	88 & 91	Yes	Yes	Yes	0409 103 029
Coral Bay Sea Rescue	VMR679	90	Yes	Yes		0429 886 800
Denmark Sea Rescue	VMR613	96	Yes	Yes	Yes	9848 1311
Derby Sea Rescue	VMR694	88		Yes	Yes	0419 959 376
East Kimberley Marine Rescue	VMR699	88	Yes			9161 1305
Esperance Sea Rescue	VMR601	88	Yes	Yes	Yes	0419 869 655
Exmouth Sea Rescue	VMR682	90	Yes	Yes	Yes	0418 186 416
Fremantle Sea Rescue	VN6DI	88 & 91	Yes	Yes	Yes	9335 1332
Geraldton Sea Rescue	VMR670	88 & 91	Yes	Yes	Yes	9964 3543
Hopetoun Sea Rescue	VMR604	88		Yes	Yes	9838 3207
Jurien Bay Sea Rescue	VMR661	91	Yes	Yes	Yes	9652 1950
Kalbarri Sea Rescue	VMR673	90	Yes	Yes	Yes	9937 2112
Lancelin Sea Rescue	VMR688	91	Yes	Yes	Yes	9655 1289
Leeman Sea Rescue	VMR664	91		Yes	Yes	9953 1164
Mandurah Water Rescue	VMR611	88 & 91	Yes	Yes	Yes	0409 081 801
Margaret River Sea Rescue	VMR628	88 & 91		Yes		9755 5579
Naturalist Sea Rescue	VMR631	89 & 91	Yes	Yes	Yes	9781 3030
Onslow Volunteer Marine Rescue	VMR683	88		Yes		0429 688 714
Peaceful Bay Sea Rescue	VMR616	88 & 96	Yes	Yes	Yes	9840 8108
Port Denison Sea Rescue	VMR667	88 & 91		Yes	Yes	0417 924 818
Port Hedland Sea Rescue	VMR691	88		Yes	Yes	9173 3055
Port Walcott Sea Rescue	VMR689	88,94,96		Yes		0439 870 995
Rockingham Sea Rescue	VN6KC	90	Yes	Yes	Yes	9528 2222
Shark Bay Volunteer Marine Rescue	VMR675	88 & 90		Yes		9948 1202
Two Rocks Sea Rescue	VMR677	88 & 91		Yes	Yes	0418 942 439
Walpole Sea Rescue	VMR619	88	Yes	Yes		9840 1527
West Pilbara Sea Rescue	VMR685	86		Yes	Yes	9183 1144
Whitfords Sea Rescue	VJ6LQ	88 & 90	Yes	Yes	Yes	9401 3757
Windy Harbour Sea Rescue	VMR620	91	Yes		Yes	9776 1202

SUN KOSI – RIVER OF GOLD

October 2007

by Martin Burgoyne



It was going to be a reunion and a chance to meet up with my paddling friends from the UK. We discussed the idea of a Sun Kosi trip at my 'leaving-do', a mountain biking weekend in Wales back in May 2006. I would organize it and get the details out as usual, and they would pass it on to friends. It looked like there would be around 8 or 9 of us.

But in the end there were 17 of us. Friends had informed friends, and I had made new friends in WA so we became an international bunch of Pomies, Aussies, Canadians and Americans.

I had paddled quite a few rivers in Nepal over the years, but I always left the Sun Kosi for another year. While it is undoubtedly a classic, and to quote the guide book*'one of the ten best white water rafting trips in the world. Big rapids, warm water, beautiful scenery and great camping make this a classic multi day river trip. A great trip for intermediate and advanced kayakers. At its best in medium to high flows'*. I had always viewed it as possibly the most mellow and easiest of the big multi - day river trips that Nepal has to offer. We were not disappointed.



Val with Everest in background

I planned to go in mid October, around three weeks earlier than my previous trips, to try and ensure that we had higher water levels. It seemed we judged it just right, as the group that did the river the previous week had decided to unpack their rafts and portage everything around Hapur the notorious BIG class IV+ / V rapid.



Temple in Kathmandu

While 12 of the group flew straight into Katmandu, Val and I, together with Jim, my 70 year old long time American paddling 'buddy', started in Beijing. Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, and The Great Wall were highlights, before we flew to Xi'an and saw the Terracotta warriors. The next stop was Chengdu, and the Panda research centre, and then we caught the train to Lhasa. A couple of the Canadians joined us in Lhasa, and we then started the final leg of our epic journey to Nepal. A nine day Landcruiser trek, across Tibet via amazing Buddhist monasteries, 5000+ metre passes, a couple of nights at Everest Base Camp and down the road from hell into Nepal. The last few hours down the 'road from hell' had us driving down the Bhote Kosi valley, the main feeder for the Sun Kosi River. It was raining at this point – the monsoon had been late, and the river looked far too big and very ugly!

I had real concerns that I had organized the trip for too early in the season, and that the Sun Kosi would be 'humongous', and not a place for some virgin white water kayakers and rafters that we had on the trip. The concern



lasted a couple of hours as we descended the Bhote Kosi gorge. Then as we descended into Nepal, passing a section of the Bhote Kosi that I had paddled a couple of times before, I was really relieved to see that it looked only slightly higher than my previous trips – we would be OK!!

Once everyone had arrived in Kathmandu, minus the odd paddle bag, we were ready to start the river trip. Not content with a simple bus ride to our put-in, I had organized a mountain biking descent to the river. A 900 metre descent on a bitumen road sounded great, but unfortunately it was still raining. There were a few second thoughts as we arrived at our start point, Dhulikhel. By the time the support crew had finished breakfast, the rain had stopped and the apprehensions evaporated along with the rain. An exhilarating ride got us down to Dolalghat where our bus was waiting to take us on the final half hour ride to Sukute Beach. This is the permanent base camp for Equator Expeditions on the Upper Sun Kosi.

We all had a warm-up paddle that afternoon, on what turned out to be some of the most technical rapids of the whole trip. It provided me with an opportunity to assess everyone's skill levels. Were we up to the challenges

ahead? Thankfully, despite several swimmers, it really looked as though it was going to be OK and Rod had survived his first paddle on BIG white water!! With lessons learnt about lines and holes, and holding one's breath, his bandanna was intact, and he still had a smile on his face. Several of us repeated most of this section the following morning, while the gear was being loaded onto the rafts. This time I included a stop at the small Buddhist temple at the rivers confluence with the Balephi Kola, to make my offering to the River Gods! They must have been pleased, as we all made it to Chatra, nine days later. Wiser, older, greyer, and enriched by our interactions with nature, Nepal and its people - it would be a classic!



Martin places a prayer scarf to placate the Gods

Leaving Sukute Beach behind, we quickly got into our day's routine. "Breakfast-is-ready", "Grubs up!" and "Dinner is ready" summoned us for food. Our guides constantly amazed us with the quality and range of meals they served, given the lack of coolers and access to fresh stock. Although we did pick up some fresh supplies of bananas, potatoes and even a pig, to supplement the veggies and tinned stuff we had on board. To quench our thirst and revive us in the evenings, we did carry a modest amount of canned beer, cola, lemonade and rum.



Martin in full flight

Although thinking about it, perhaps not so modest, at around 600 cans of beer and other canned drinks, and 16 bottles of rum at a cost of 59,800 rupees!!

The river builds up over the first three days, giving every one a chance to hone skills and get accustomed to the volume of water. Rapids, in these early days included 'No Exit', Meat grinder', 'Punch and Judy', and 'High Anxiety'. We inspected one, but generally ran them on sight. Now we were all waiting for Hakapur - the 'hardest rapid on the river'. When we arrived at Hakapur, the rafts and kayaks beached, and we all wandered down the bank to have a look at what this notorious rapid was all about. A sheer rock wall down the right hand side, with half a dozen big, folding, exploding waves angling across the river and off the wall, together with a strange bus swallowing hollow, meant you needed to stay well to the left and out of their clutches. But, a big pour over, together with a rock and hole prevented a sneak route down the left from the top. So the line was to approach right of centre to miss the mess at the top, and then PLF to the left once clear of the pour over and rock, hoping that you had managed to get far enough over to clear the exploding waves. Given that the paddlers axiom is 'the longer you stand looking at a rapid, the longer you will get trashed in it', Bill

and I wandered back to our kayaks to give it a go. I was constantly looking over my shoulder to make sure that I had the approach line fixed in my mind. I pushed off leaving Bill to the call of nature. All the camera vultures were perched ready and waiting for the action, on their boulders.

I think I missed my ideal entry line, by being about a metre too far to the right. So, while missing the mess on the left at the top, it meant I just scraped the edges of the exploding waves and the big hollow. But I was safely down and landed to watch the rest of the action. It was spectacular!! Nearly all of the kayakers, who decided to run it, went too far right and were trashed in the exploding waves. Not surprisingly there were a few swimmers. It was then the turn of the rafts. With a change of crew on the paddle raft, including some kayakers giving it a second go, and some extra paddlers on the gear rafts, two out of the three made it down, intact. However, a gear raft had flipped in the exploding waves, and while all was OK, one of the crew ended up stranded on the rocky inaccessible right hand rock wall. It took three of us to piggy-back him, in turns, across the fast current, to the safety of the left bank.



What a lot of fun!! With bits and pieces gathered together, we all wondered what was next. Due to the number of swimmers, we were further down the left bank than we wanted to be, and so were now committed to running Hakapur 2, down the left, rather than the easier right hand channel. I decided to scout the dubious looking horizon line in front of us. A big, nasty looking, pour-over on the left to avoid, a few boulders in the middle to skirt around, and then a steep fast ramp down the middle, and on through a big train of haystack waves. I passed on the information to the kayakers who set off, while I waited for Rod. After a long wait, and no sign of him, I decided he must have gone down the right hand channel. Having joined the others at the bottom, I was just in time to see him paddling down close to the left bank on a course that would take him straight into the pour over! “Nothing we can do now” said Bill, “We’ll pick up the pieces at the bottom!” After some spectacular ends and impressive aerial moves, and in such a large kayak as well, we picked up Rod and his bits and pieces and put him back in his boat. With more lessons learnt about lines and holes, and holding his breath longer, and with his bandanna still intact, he still had a smile on his face!!

‘Dead Mans Eddy’ was the scene of our one

scary incident. The river came down a big bouncy rapid and then piled into a wall that was at right angles to the main flow. While most of the water shot off the wall to the right, a major part of the flow went left, creating a huge circular eddy of boiling, re-circulating water – not a good place for a swim. But a swimmer we had. Most kayakers and the paddle raft had bumped and scraped down a ‘chicken shoot’ the other side of a small island. The few of us that ran the left hand line into the wall, made sure we kept right of centre, so that we were washed off the wall to the right, and on down the main flow of the river, well away from the ugly eddy on the left. On his third run down, while we were waiting for the rest to join us, Steve rode the flow too close to the centre line, and got pushed left and forced into Dead Mans Eddy. His normal bomb-proof roll failed, and he was swimming. Round and round and round he went, but more seriously, he was being sucked down again, and again, and again, in the boils. It was a very shaken, but wiser kayaker that eventually followed me back across the river to the relief of the rest of the team.

A rest day, and an opportunity for a walk around a local river side village, had us ready for the ‘Jungle Corridor’ and, what I suspected would be, the most serious and continuous section of the river. It contained 6 long, big

bouncy rapids, over an exhilarating 10 km stretch of jungle. I suggested that we stay close together on this section. Rescuing swimmers would be difficult, as one rapid merged into the next, and large rocks lined the river banks making it difficult to land. We did have a few more swimmers, but some good team work by the kayakers, ensured that they were back in their boats with out the loss of any bits and pieces!



Rod in rare still water

The 'Big Dipper', a long rapid of huge standing waves, signaled the end of the major rapids. A few kilometers later, and the mighty Arun entered from its gorge on the left, and a few hundred metres downstream, the Tamur river entered. There can be few places in the world where three such mighty rivers meet. Swept on by the increased volume, and the strong current, our river had become the Sapta Kosi (seven rivers). We had a final stop at the Hindu Temple at Chhetra to test our strength and manhood by carrying a rather heavy boulder clockwise around a small temple. Chris came out tops for the Poms with 7 circuits - an extraordinary feat!

Back on the river, we floated along on the powerful current, as an upstream wind wafted the hot spicy fragrances of the Indian plain, up the valley. A suspension bridge swooped high above us and then rounding a corner, the hills, that we had been engulfed in, for so long, dramatically gave way to the totally flat, Terai plains. The river disappeared into the horizon leading south to the mighty Ganges, the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. One could have made one of those lifetime decisions and just kept paddling. But no, a quick turn left and we were on the irrigation canal and the final kilometer of flat water to our waiting bus at Chatra.

We had made it! No injuries, no sickness, new friends, new experiences, and I guess for some just the beginning of white water adventuring.



Rafting the Sun Kosi



KHAO SOK UP ON THE LAKE

March 2007

by Wayne Stocker

Imagine if you will a mountain valley, flooded by a dam to provide irrigation and hydro-electric and forming a mountain lake 165 square kilometres in size. Then picture the sides of the lake (once the sides of mountains) being too steep to have ever been farmed, built on or mined, but covered in original thick rainforest (actually, there are no rain forests in Thailand. This is monsoonal forest or tropical evergreen). While some sections of the shores of the lake are formed by vertical limestone cliffs called "karsts" one of which rises 1000 metres (yep one thousand metres) vertically. Continue your mental picture with tigers, elephants, monkeys, macaques, gibbons, snakes, lizards, wild jungle fowl, hornbills, otters, bears, tapirs, squirrels langurs, butterflies, fish... anyway now you have part of the picture.

Where is this place? Chieo Lan Lake in Khoa Sok National Park, Southern Thailand north of Phuket, south of Bangkok, west of Kho (Ko or Koh) Samui.

What has this got to do with Sea Kayaking?

The guy we go paddling with uses these sea kayaks. The whole time up on the lake is spent either paddling, living on the floating raft house, trekking up waterfalls/jungle streams, caving, paddling to very remote corners of the lake wildlife spotting.

How come we see so much wildlife?

The guy we paddle with takes us to the locations where he knows from experience the wildlife will be. We approach silently gliding over the still water in our kayaks and we listen for calls or movement. Then we look for movement and voila a troop of wild gibbons in the wild. Or sitting at the dinner table one night a 12 foot Python travels under water amongst the bamboo upon which the raft house floats. Or again sitting quietly one afternoon a family of Giant Squirrels clatters through the 50 foot bamboo on the banks opposite the raft houses. Or ghosting quietly across the water in our kayaks a dark shape is seen moving up a very



shaded little valley in one of the remote back waters, a Sun Bear fades away into the jungle. Or we hear the sounds of a rooster crowing? There are no farms or villages up here so what's going on? Then I remember the original chickens are jungle fowl from South East Asia. Sure enough when we see them scratching around the jungle on the lake's shoreline they look just like my chooks at home. This is the Red Junglefowl.

Where do we stay on the lake? Here:-



What does our room look like? This:-



Where do we brush our teeth, have a wash, have a swim, cool off? Here:-



Karen and I have been to this place twice once in August 2005 and again in March 2007. Both times we spent around 25 days away from home at an average of \$100 per day each. This covered all transport, accommodation and food from our front door here in Fremantle and back again. This included 4 days on the lake, a pricey hotel in Singapore and a hire car in Thailand. Driving in Thailand? The roads are in good condition. Everything is well sign posted. The drivers know how to blend and merge with each other. I always drive us around as I reckon it

is easier than driving here in West Oz. Plus we get off the beaten track and discover some amazing remote places with no one else around.

The name of the guy we see up there is Dave WILLIAMS. A keen paddler (30 years of paddling) and flora and fauna seeker who knows his stuff. His partner is a lady called "Moo" who makes sure everything happens smoothly while we are out and about. Then there is a guy named "Gai" he is a young Thai man who is being mentored. Gai has temporarily left PaddleAsia to study full-time to get a degree in tourism from a Phuket university. Their website is super comprehensive and is worth spending a lot of time exploring.

<http://www.paddleasia.com/index.htm>

Dave also has an ocean going trip, island hopping in Phang Nga area, the islands of Trang Province and Tarutao Marine National Park. I reckon it would be a great SKCWA trip. 6-7 days, 20 km per day staying in bungalows, all found. I would be happy to go up with a group and paddle there again anytime, anywhere.