



Avian Haven

A Thai Pagoda



MURLI MENON

NESTLED in majestic mountains and stunning emerald blue waters, the Sam Roi Yod Marine National Park in Thailand is a tropical oasis with mangrove swamps and lush greenery. You can almost touch the tranquility pervading this bird sanctuary within the confines of Thailand's most picturesque marine national park. The 10 km drive into the headquarters of Sam Roi Yod is over a dusty road along the banks of lagoons and mangrove swamps. Along the way you can sight several migratory herons, cranes and storks that begin to arrive by the end of December. Several large water birds including herons, egrets, robins and



The Flowers At Sam Roi Yod Marine National Park

maggies can be seen nestling on the branches of the mangroves.

After you enter the park, an innovative footboard over the water takes visitors to the interior of the forests over numerous small bridges. At some

Getting There

The nearest International airport to reach Sam Roi Yod National Park is at Bangkok. There are several options to get to Sam Roi Yod from Bangkok. By bus: The easiest and most popular way from Bangkok is by bus. Take the bus from Bangkok to Pranburi from the Southern Bus Terminal. This 250 km trip takes 200 minutes. The bus fare is 140 Baht for ordinary buses to 185 Baht for super-deluxe buses. Buses leave every half an hour. The first bus leaves at 6am and the last bus leaves at 6pm. From Pranburi motorbike taxis can be obtained to the main entrance of Sam Roi Yod National Park for 150 Baht. There is no entrance fee to the park.



Anchana Resort At Sam Roi Yod

THE Sam Roi Yod Marine National Park in Thailand is a veritable birdwatchers' paradise offering an unforgettable experience at very reasonable prices

islands it is possible to walk across to the other side before continuing further on the wooden pathway. At several junctures where the water level is uneven and deep, wooden planks have been strategically placed so that you can

tiptoe over them with minimum sound so as not to disturb the birds.

After a thirty minute trek you come across a forest road which winds its way through the mangroves. A leisurely walk through this path, flanked on one side

Buddha Statues In The Greens



Fact File

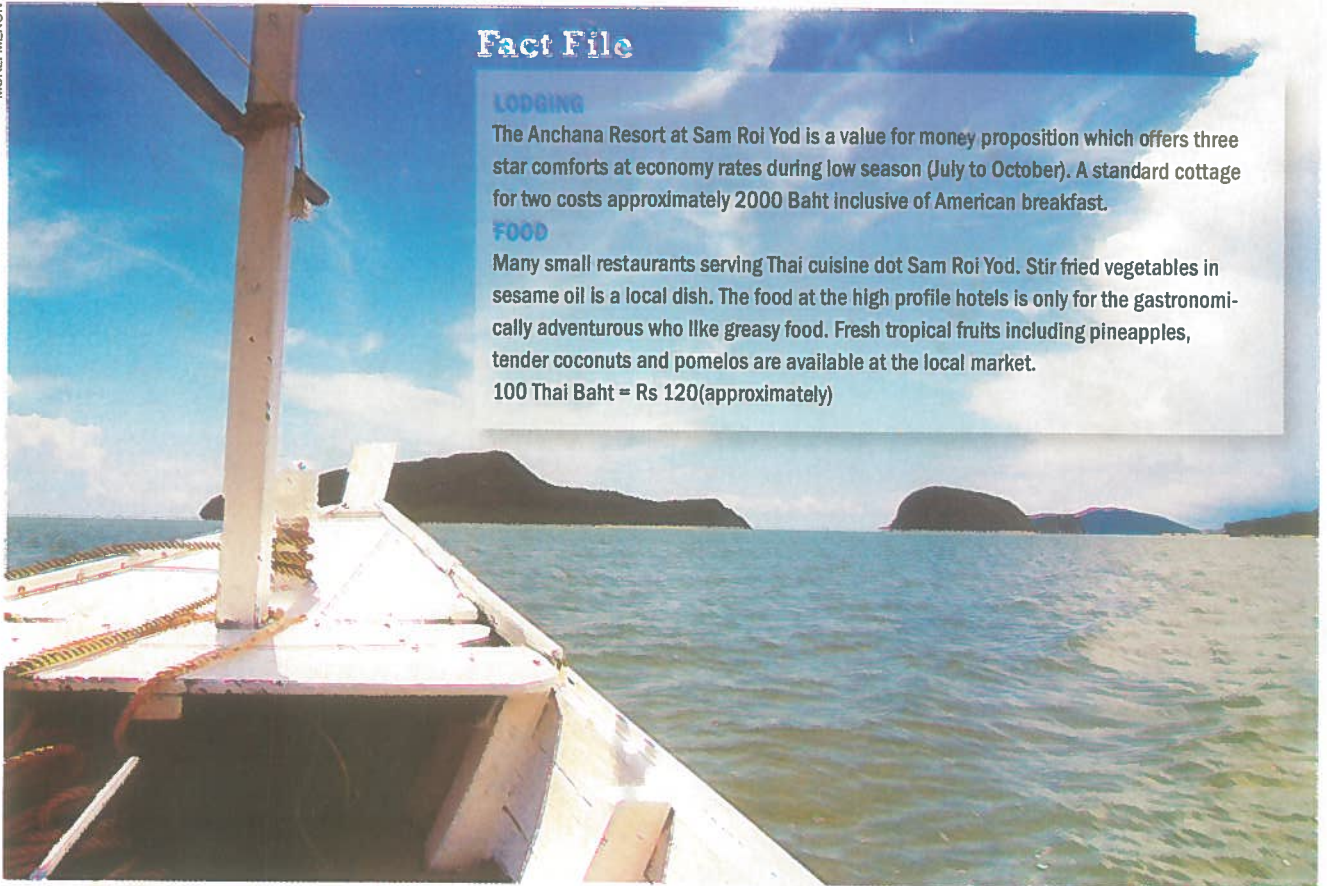
LODGING

The Anchana Resort at Sam Roi Yod is a value for money proposition which offers three star comforts at economy rates during low season (July to October). A standard cottage for two costs approximately 2000 Baht inclusive of American breakfast.

FOOD

Many small restaurants serving Thai cuisine dot Sam Roi Yod. Stir fried vegetables in sesame oil is a local dish. The food at the high profile hotels is only for the gastronomically adventurous who like greasy food. Fresh tropical fruits including pineapples, tender coconuts and pomelos are available at the local market.

100 Thai Baht = Rs 120 (approximately)



Enjoying A Boat Ride

THE climate, mangrove cover and lagoons and lakes make it an ideal sanctuary for birds to nest

by the giant hills of rock and granite and by shallow mangroves on the other, is all that is needed for close encounters with several species of the feathered kind. The bird species that can be found inside Sam Roi Yod include the bronze-winged jacana, purple heron, brahminy kite (red-backed sea-eagle), grand coucal, green-billed malpuha, great egret, oriental magpie robin, purple heron, Chinese pond heron, rufous woodpecker, blue-billed bee-eater, whiskered tern, great egret and stork billed kingfisher among hundreds of other migratory birds.

As mangrove swamps are a natural habitat for macaques, one can sight several species of macaques including the lion-tailed macaque, stump-tailed macaque and the pig-tailed macaque inside the mangrove swamps that dot Sam Roi Yod National Park. The unique feature about this park is that

the hills that surround it have trapped sea water to form an inland sea. The sea runs parallel to the road for around six kilometres and walking along the shore is a tryst with Nature.

The jewel in the crown are the migratory birds from northern China that fly down every winter to nest among the hundreds of miles of mangroves around Sam Roi Yod. The moderate climate, thick mangrove cover and numerous lakes and lagoons make it an ideal sanctuary for large water birds to nest. It also provides birdwatchers and tourists to observe the beauty of these winged creatures at close quarters.

Here Nature's bounty includes clear skies, a cool sea breeze and lush greenery on all sides. You can also venture deeper into the mangroves on small boats to spot the macaques swinging on the trees. Spotting a macaque inside the swamps is not easy since they scatter



away at the first sound of approaching humans. A more relaxed technique to spot these gentle creatures is to wait patiently alongside the reedy plants. However, Nature rewards patience. But feeding wild monkeys is neither advisable nor expected.

After you have waited patiently, one of the more adventurous macaque lands on the branches nearby. After keenly observing the scene it squeaks and signals his mate. Soon out of nowhere seven to eight long-tailed macaques land alongside and swing wildly from one branch to the other. You get to spot a mother feeding her new-born too. ◀