

# Saratoga Stocked In Cania Dam

Part 6 in our series on freshwater impoundments & rivers, written and photographed by Kim (and Steve) Bain

**T**he Cania Gorge area offers fantastic angling opportunities (especially for saratoga and bass), beautiful scenery for nature enthusiasts and great bushwalking.

Cania Dam is situated thirty-seven kilometres from the town of Monto in Queensland, and is approximately 500 kilometres north-west of Brisbane. In my experience you are talking about a six hour drive which makes it ideal for either a long weekend or an extended get away.

Cania Dam, a feature of the Gorge area, was built in 1982 as an irrigation facility. The dam makes up part of the 3000 hectare Cania Gorge National Park and along with the Three Moon Creek river system, has a capacity of 89,000ML. When at its full capacity, Lake Cania has a surface area of 720 hectares.

**Species** Cania Dam, could be considered until recently at least, to be one of Queensland's best kept secrets when it comes to inland impoundments. Stocked with several freshwater favourites like Australian bass, golden and silver perch, plus the aerial performing saratoga, a visit to Cania is a must for travelling anglers. Other species that inhabit the dam include spangled perch and catfish.

Originally, only 240 adult saratoga were stocked into the dam. However from that original small stocking, the



**Above:** The author with a solid Cania bass, when bass of this size hit surface lures such as this Rebel Pop-R your adrenalin goes into overdrive.

**Facing Page:** Kim Martin with a great Cania saratoga.

**Lower Right:** When the dam's capacity is down, the concrete ramp is left high and dry. However, a makeshift gravel ramp works just as well.

'togas have bred to make Cania one of the predominant saratoga impoundment fisheries in Queensland. Regardless of the seemingly abundant population, Cania Dam Fish Stocking Association has asked that all

saratoga continue to be released in an effort to build up the fishery even more. While I personally haven't tried eating them, I've heard that 'toga are shocking for the table. So have some fun with their aerial antics and put them back for next time.

**Fishing Techniques** Both trolling and casting tactics work well in Cania Dam. However, the species in Cania love structure and generally hold fairly close to it. In some cases it is not possible to troll these areas, so in order to optimise your time on the water, cast lures into those fish-holding tight spots.

The best times to target bass and saratoga with casting tactics are at dawn, dusk or on heavily overcast days. During these low light conditions bass and 'toga become most active and move closer to the water's surface. When they are on the surface, they are commonly caught buzzing spinnerbaits, shallow tuning minnows (jerkbaits) or on surface lures like Heddon Tiny Torpedos and Rebel Pop R's.

On one trip Mum worked a Rebel Pop-R for saratoga after saratoga in the late afternoon and again the next morning. She made the pertinent observation that nearly all of her saratoga strikes on her Rebel Pop-R came within the first three seconds of the lure's splashdown. Further to this, Mum pointed out that when she was working the surface lure around the



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