

**“Good Life along the Southern Border”**  
**Public Relations Office District 6 Songkhla**

**No. 1**

**Visiting Ta Phayao: Cruising along the lake and tasting jumping halfbeaks**  
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Hala-Bala Lake or Bala-Hala Lake is a natural wonder worthy of exploration for nature enthusiasts. The lake is surrounded by the largest tropical rainforest in the southern border provinces of Thailand. Its total area is approximately 800,000 rai (1,280 square kilometers), covering Bannang Sata, Than To, and Betong Districts in Yala Province, Sukhirin, Waeng, Chanae, and Si Sakhon Districts in Narathiwat Province, as well as the border with Malaysia.

For those who enjoy cruising for leisure, you may start by boarding a boat at Ta Phayao Pier, Than To District, Yala Province. In addition to learning firsthand about the way of life and the exquisite scenery along the lakeshore, one can also see a spectacular school of jumping halfbeaks leaping from the water, which is a rare phenomenon and a one of a kind experience, as the fish can only be found in Hala-Bala Lake. Moreover, one can listen to the history of Ban To, an ancient village submerged under Bang Lang Dam. The remnants of the village, including the temple and the mosque, can be seen when the water in the dam recedes, such as in 2016 when the water level dropped until Ban To became visible.

After cruising for about 20 minutes, one will arrive at Koh Tuad, a small freshwater island situated in the center of Hala-Bala Lake, where authorities will facilitate your visit. Prarom Slumseng, Deputy Village Chief of Ta Phayao, recommends visitors to check in at Ta Phayao Pier then visit the New Bridge or the Kho Yae Bridge. After that, one may visit the submerged village, or the former Ban To, before enjoying the cool water of Bor Hin Nai Waterfall. For Buddhists, there are Buddha statues and a shrine on the island for worshipping. As for those who like canoeing while gazing upon the beauty of nature, canoe rentals are provided by villagers at the rate of 100 baht for 2 hours.

Brimming with natural elegance, it is time to come ashore and enjoy lunchtime. Those who visit Ban Ta Phayao will be able to taste jumping halfbeaks, a locally renowned dish. Orapin Phromsak, Chairperson of Ban Ta Phayao's Processed Marine Animals Group, guarantees that there is no need to worry about food when visiting this area, as the food here is one of the best, especially the jumping halfbeak dishes prepared in rich varieties. These include turmeric jumping halfbeaks and Thai curries with jumping halfbeaks as the main ingredient, such as Kaeng Pa, Kaeng Som, and Tom Som. This fish has a unique flavour different from other fish. Meanwhile, dried jumping halfbeaks are used to mix with torch ginger for Thai spicy salads. Anyone who visits and does not taste this fish is considered to have gravely missed out.

After finishing the meal and before returning, dried jumping halfbeaks are available for sale at the price of 400 baht per kilogramme. Those interested in visiting Hala-Bala Lake can contact tel. 085-590 1495 for more information as the villagers warmly welcome everyone.

NBT Yala