



The ultimate in 'hosted' angling adventures throughout the Amazon

UK Agent and Promotional Management for Amazon-Angler.com

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Amazon Species Watch Payara

Scientific Classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Actinopterygii
Order:	Characiformes
Family:	Cynodontidae
Genus:	Hydrolycus
	<i>H. Armatus</i>
Species:	<i>H. tatauaia.</i>
	<i>H. scomberoides.</i>

H. armatus is a species of dogtooth characin found in the freshwaters of tropical South America. It is mostly known as the Payara [aka Vampire Fish] a name it shares with the related, but smaller *H. tatauaia* (Red tailed) & *H. scomberoides*. They are widely distributed within the Amazon, Orinoco and Essequibo basins and can be found in several different freshwater habitats, but predominantly in fast-flowing water.

Payara or Pirandirá as they are often called in Brazil, are a truly ferocious, fast water, migratory sportfish and are better described as silver missiles with an attitude. They literally hit any bait and keep running like an express train on steroids.

They have a salmon-like body, complete with an adipose fin, but a stronger demeanour and a face full of impressive daggers for teeth, in particular two huge fangs growing from their lower jaws that fit into conical nasal slots in their upper jaws.



Steve Townson with a great example of a Payara

H. armatus sport a uniform of bright silver colour along their flanks with an olive back and an orange and black tail. In predatory mode they normally impale their victims with their over-sized bottom canine teeth and streak away. Their usual prey is anything from a third to a half of their own length. They are found wherever there is current, either along a bank, off points, on the main rivers or even in submerged trees. As a species, they receive way less attention than other sportfish from the same waters, but they are truly underestimated. Their brute strength, stamina, screaming runs and acrobatic jumps make them a true adversary for any angler.

If you want to try fishing for Payara, huge trophy fish can be found in Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia, but some of the best places without doubt, are Lake Guri and its Rio La Paragua in Venezuela, in some of the highland rivers of the Guyana Shield in Brazil and in a few of the Southern Amazon watersheds. With the current record sitting at c.39lb, we know that the 40lb+ weight is not that far away.



Catching Payara

Subsurface: The Payara's excellent vision, combined with its lightning speed, enables it to capture prey in heavy rapids. Deep diving crankbaits work well i.e Rapala Magnum CD's [14 -22+], as well as the Rapala Sliver SL20 model. Other durable crankbaits that come in 6 and 9-inch models also work through a mix of colours. 1 to 2-ounce bucktail jigs can also be effective along with big heavy and flashy spoons. **Topwater:** Contrary to popular belief, Payara can be incited to strike topwater baits, adding to the excitement. Try using prop-baits [for Peacocks] but twitch them rather than 'rip' them, and let the fish take it before setting the hook. **Live baiting:** A proven technique for lentic environments where Payara shoal together. Freelining a baitfish, hooked at the back of the dorsal fin can be highly effective. **Fly Fishing:** Can't forget just how good Payara fishing is on the fly, suggest a 9/10 weight fast action rod, a reel that has good stopping power and a smooth drag coupled with full sink 350+ grain and flies that represent bait fish. For lure fishing, M/H action rods, 6ft 6in to 7ft 6in, a good baitcaster holding 200yds of 30-50lb braid and a quality steel leader between that and the lure.