



The ultimate in 'hosted' angling adventures throughout the Amazon.

UK Agent and Promotional Management for Amazon-Angler.com

Contact: Facebook @amazon-connect.co.uk, Web: www.amazon-connect.co.uk & info@amazon-connect.co.uk

## JAGUAR EXPLORER CAMP - GUYANA SPECIES WATCH

### THE FISHING

Throughout the season, anglers can enjoy a diverse and exciting range of fishing landscapes including enticing sand bars, wild rapids, extensive rock gardens, deep holes, and secluded lagoons, each providing a differing angling opportunity. The river accommodates the experienced sport angler and novice alike and incredible results can be gained across a wide range of fishing methods and techniques including the fly, lure and live or deadbait.

### THE FISH

The Essequibo River is home to some of the Amazon's most amazing species, but four **BIG** fish make up the grand slam:

#### ***Piraiba, Jau, Redtail and Arapaima.***

Whilst these species have been publicised extensively on recent TV programmes, they make up just a small number of the total species that can be caught in the Essequibo, currently thought to exceed 300, with 60 being endemic.

This could however be an under-estimate as many parts of the Essequibo basin are poorly known or un-charted and is further complicated by the headwaters of the Branco River (*a part of the Amazon basin*) and those of the Essequibo often being connected during the rainy season, allowing fish to exchange between the two systems.

Whilst all species can be caught throughout the year, seasonal variations do influence both the ability to fish and the movement of species. This explains we try to avoid the 'rainy season' and run the camps between Sept and April.

For us, the management of the environment is vital to ensure the sustainability of the fishing for future generations and fish care is of paramount importance.

Consequently, we operate a strict '**Catch & Release**' policy other than those fish taken either for food or bait. It should be noted that as Peacock Bass are our main sportfish, none are to be taken for either bait or food – **No exceptions.**

In addition, we mandate the use of barbless 'circle' hooks when fishing for Arapaima, and post catch fish management will be closely supervised by our guides to ensure the best in fish welfare.

The following pages identify **some** of the main species you can catch as well as the current camp record weights.

### THE LOCATION

The Essequibo is the largest river in Guyana, and also the largest river between the Orinoco and Amazon. Rising in the Acarai Mountains near the Brazil / Guyana border, the Essequibo flows to the north for approximately 630 miles through forest and savanna into the Atlantic Ocean.





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## Arapaima

This prehistoric leviathan is the fabled giant of the Amazon. They can reach huge sizes with the average here at 100lb to 300lb+. They are found generally in the lakes, lagoons and slower moving reaches of the river and require stealth and patience to stalk them, precise casting to entice them, and physical strength to bring them in. Despite their size, they are susceptible to damage, so barbless circle hooks only and take the advice from our guides, who are used to managing these incredible fish.



## Jau (Amarillo) Catfish

These monster 'Sumo wrestlers' of the Amazon are every bit as tough as their cousins, the Piraiba and Redtail Cats. They tend to live in well-oxygenated water around rocky areas below falls and rapids. They usually come out of their caves, take the bait, and instantly make a run back to their rocky haunts, often cutting lines on the sharp rocks. They can reach over 180lbs in some rivers, and average 80lbs

## Piraiba (Lau) Catfish

Also known as the 'Lau Lau' or 'Freshwater Shark' of the Amazon, with its tall and prominent dorsal fin and long shark-like body, this beast is the largest Catfish in South America. These river monsters will strip line in blistering runs and you will need heavy gear to be able to land them. These streamlined Cats average 120lbs+ but can reach over 400lbs. Better get the boat engine started if you hook into one of these, we have routinely caught these at weights of over 250lb.



## Redtail Catfish

The Redtail Catfish is easily distinguished by its bright orange/red tail and caudal fins. It has a pair of barbels on its upper jaw, and two pairs on its lower jaw. Here, a big Redtail is 80-90lbs, and will average 50-70lbs. The Redtail is endemic to the Essequibo river and it is their brutal strength and indefatigable characteristics which drive anglers to pursue this trophy species. Watch out though, Redtails are also very cunning and just love 'structure' so will try and take you into the rocks & snags in a bid to break free. As with the Piraiba and Jau, strong tackle is vital.

Cats are caught with heavy tackle, min 100lb braided mainline with 10ft - 15ft of min 100lb mono-leader. A sliding sinker 2-6oz with a min 120lb swivel, 12in -18in of 100lb wire leader or 200lb braid, with an 8/0 - 10/0 J /circle hook with fish bait.

For Arapaima, we use the same set-up, but remove the wire leader, swivel and lead sinker and attach an 8/0 or 10/0 barbless circle hook to the mono leader. Live and dead baits are cast to rolling fish.

## BUT .... IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT BIG CATS AND ARAPAIMA

Whilst many anglers will want to target these larger species, there are many other great species of equal 'trophy' value to be caught, using lures, flies, jigs, worms, fruits, seeds and even pieces of potato!!



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## Peacock Bass

Peacock Bass are members of the Cichla genus and are the incredibly colourful 'bully boys' of the Amazon, providing some of the most explosive sport fishing action imaginable. They are stocky, solid fish with a bucket mouth and a seriously bad attitude. Once hooked, they will scream off to the nearest 'snag' and will wrap up even the most experienced angler in a heartbeat, but they are amazing sport and are one of our main target species. With 16 known species throughout the whole of the Amazon, Guyana has 2 main species: the 'Yellow' Peacock Bass that can reach 17lbs, and the smaller 'Butterfly' Peacock Bass getting up to 8-9lbs. Both will take top and sub-surface lures along with jigs, flies, small minnow lures, plastics, and jerk/glide baits. **(Mandatory Catch & Release – No Exceptions).**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE: Hop over to our website: [www.amazon-connect.co.uk](http://www.amazon-connect.co.uk) and check out 'Fish Species'.

## Payara (Vampire Fish)

There are two species of Payara in these waters, the Silver Payara to 30lbs+ and the rarer Orange/Pink-tailed Payara of 8 - 10lbs. They favour deep runs below rapids and falls but also above rapids in the smoother water. Whilst most Payara are taken with 5"-8" deep diving lures, they also take shallow minnow and jerk baits, jigs, flies, and plastics close to the surface, as well as top water prop and walk-the-dog baits. Success can also be had on live and dead baits. They are fierce and acrobatic fighters with immense strength. Care needs to be taken when working with them out of the water!!



## Bicuda

This is an aggressive fast water fish and is one of the most acrobatic and fastest species in the river, reaching a max of around 14lbs. They will hit top water lures in a flash and make reel-stripping runs, jumping and somersaulting. Often found behind obstacles such as fallen logs or rocks they are caught on minnows, jerk baits, top water lures, spoons, jigs, and flies.

## Black Piranha

The stuff that nightmares are made of!! Black Piranha often reach up to 10lb and can be taken throughout the water column & differing environments on a wide variety of lures, dead baits, jigs, and flies. With a bite of over 30 times its body weight, a 7lb Black Piranha will have 210 PSI (Pounds per square inch) of bite, and will cut clean through a standard treble hook, so come prepared!!



**SOME GENERAL ADVICE:** So many of the species found within the Amazon have teeth, with some, like those of the Piranha being surgically sharp, and which will go through a finger like it was butter. Some species also have other less visible tricks up their sleeve, with sharps on their pectoral fins, dorsal fins, or lateral lines. Make sure you have a good set of lip grippers i.e., BogaGrips and if in any doubt, ask your guide / host for advice.



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## Arowana (Monkey Fish)

A prehistoric-looking fish with an elongated body, tiny tail (*Same family as the Arapaima*), huge scales and bony mouth, they reach up to 14lbs. Great shallow water species to target with top water lures, even plastic frogs.... They will take all sorts of lures and are very acrobatic, even swimming backwards when needed. Interestingly, their 'tongue' is equipped with teeth that bite against teeth on the roof of the mouth, they are also facultative air breathers. Often called 'Monkey Fish' as they will leap out of the water to take prey from overhanging branches.

## Wolfish (Aimara, Hymara or Trairão)

Wolfish are ambush predators with a fearsome reputation, with reports of some species reaching up to 80lb at over 1.2m in length. Here, they are generally taken below 30lb, but beware, even at this size they have immense power and once landed need care with handling to avoid those huge canine teeth. Wolfish will attack almost anything that looks like food, and are terrific fun on surface lures, particularly walking stick baits equipped with extra strong hooks (4X). As ambush predators, they love structure so good tight casts are more likely to bring a strike.



## Surubim Catfish

These beautiful hieroglyphically marked species come in a few shapes and sizes. But the one we catch most reaches around 50lbs and are one of the fastest catfish in the Amazon. Normally found in sandy stretches and shallower beaches and troughs, once hooked, it roars off into deeper water. These species are great sport fish on medium strength tackle and can be caught on bait and lures.

## Pescada (Silver Drum)

Pescada or Corvina (*Plagioscion squamosissimus*) is also known as The Freshwater Croaker and is a close relation to the American Redfish. These solid, hard fighting and brightly coloured fish live in the depths and can reach weights of up to 14lb+. They can be caught jiggging plastic shads and minnow baits as well as small metal deep jigs towards the bottom. They are often called 'Silver Drum'.



## Mantrixã (Couti)

These little bruisers get to 10lbs + and are some of the strongest-fighting and most acrobatic fish for their size in the Amazon. They are normally shoal fish, and each will fight with the others to be the one to get to your lure first! They are generally found in the shade of big trees that hang over the river in fast current. A well-placed small popper, walk-the-dog lure or fly cast under the trees works well for these silver ballistic missiles. They can also be caught on sweetcorn, grasshoppers, snails, beetles, small plastic beads, fruits and spinners and even small pieces of fish and worms.

**FOR ADDED INTEREST:** Many fish species like Mantrixã can be caught on naturally occurring baits, so ask your guide to dig some out for you. With fish around this size, smaller hooks and light tackle can provide incredible fun, and even these smaller species can put up one heck of a scrap...



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## Pacu

(Red, Black & Silver). Most species of Pacu will take small lures and fruits. The bigger, brightly coloured red and black Pacu regularly reach 15lb+. In late March - April, you will often see small groups of 2-3 fish chasing fruit as it drifts downstream. With a deep body profile, Pacu are powerful fish and use their large surface area in fast waters to their advantage, providing great sport. Take some smaller hooks with you i.e., sizes 2, 1 & 1/0 for light tackle fun. By the way, Pacu ribs are one of the tastiest foods out there, simply delicious!!



## Jacunda

Without doubt, these are some of the prettiest little fish in the Amazon, with their beautiful full spikey dorsal fin running all the way down to their tail. There are many species, with few reaching more than 1lb - 1 1/2lbs. Try using small minnow lures and spinners, but be prepared, they always put up a great scrap.

## Leporinus sp

There are many species of these pretty little fish including: three spot and banded Leporinus. Reaching a maximum of 3lb to 4lb they are terrific fun to catch when fishing with a jungle 'wand' with a line tied to the end, using worms, snails, meat, fruit, or even sweetcorn as bait.



## Electric Eel

While obviously not wanting to handle a river monster that can shoot a 600+ volt shock up your arms, plenty of anglers want to say, 'I caught an electric eel'!

These slimy 3ft to 6ft fish are NOT eels, but members of the knife fish family and will often take small in-line bladed spinners like 'Mepps', and weighted tail-blade lures such as 'Little Georges'. You need to take extreme care with these especially when landed and being unhooked!!!

## Freshwater Stingray

This is NOT a fish you want to stand on or bump into!!! The local Amerindians call them '*man cry all day*' and for incredibly good reason. The barb has a poisonous mucus containing venom that is left after the barb has been pulled out which causes excruciating pain and possible skin necrosis. As they are relatively harmless until disturbed, just remember, when in the water, shuffle your feet rather than walk!!



## Dogfish

These fish look just like mini freshwater barracuda and are pack hunters that will readily take flies, small minnows, and spinnerbaits. Averaging around 1/2lb to 1lb they are great fighters on ultralight tackle and have a mouth packed with canine teeth. Take extra care when handling these especially when unhooking. Hang onto these, they do make exceptionally good 'whole fish' sized bait for the larger catfish.





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## SOME MORE CATFISH

### Striped Raphael Catfish

A quite nasty little catfish that gets up to between 3lb to 4lb. This critter has a **painful trick up its sleeve!!!** Never grab this fish behind the gills and pectorals as it will clamp down and lock your fingers against its spikey fins and lateral spines....It is easily caught on worms and small pieces of chopped fish.



### Duckbilled Catfish

This is one weird looking fish with an overlapping top lip!! Taken on worms and small pieces of chopped fish, it provides a good fight, but man, it just looks so odd!!! Apparently, it makes particularly good eating and at a weight up to around 8lb would make a good meal, although we have never tried it.

### Driftwood Catfish

A crazy looking catfish but with no whiskers. It has a distinct, pointed dorsal fin on its huge head and can reach weights of over 20lb. It has a cavernous mouth and extremely low set eyes. Large Piraiba catfish often take them in mid-water, whilst anglers are bringing them up to the surface.



### Porthole Surubim Catfish

Named for the row of spots that decorate their flanks. Porthole Cats are a pretty little 'shovel-nosed' catfish which can be caught on worms and small cut baits. They fight well on medium/light tackle and generally have average weights of 3 1/2lb - 4lb. Generally, the back is light brown as are the flanks, and the belly is brownish white. The body is marked irregularly with dark brown spots. The rays of the fins are light brown.

### Ripsaw Catfish

A member of the 'thorny' Catfish family, native to the Amazon. Possibly one of the ugliest and certainly most unusual of the Amazonian catfish. The Ripsaw or 'Niger' catfish has a line of savage, bony saws / thorns running down its lateral line, hence the name 'Ripsaw'. These can reach over 25lb and they can often be seen in pairs at night cruising the shallows.



### Jundia Catfish

One of the most perfectly shaped and coloured catfish in the Amazon. It has incredibly long whiskers but rarely reaches more than 25lb. Great fun to catch using worms and small pieces of cut bait. Like the Driftwood catfish, small ones provide bite-size morsels for the bigger catfish such as Piraiba and Redtails. Body colour generally olive, with gold-edged marbling on sides. Abdomen pale to white with reddish fins.

### Flat Whiskered Catfish

These are a medium sized catfish, generally averaging 5-10lbs and are great fun to play with on lighter tackle. These crazy-looking fish are called flat-whiskered for a good reason as their whiskers are like long ribbons. Out of the water, they move these ribbons like an alien searching out prey. They are grey in colour with an interesting body-length dorsal fin.





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## JAGUAR CAMP

### THE ESSEQUIBO RIVER, GUYANA

In October 2019, the Amazon-Angler team hosted **Jaguar Camp** for a group of US & Canadian guests. The camp locations were on new waters, with the trip serving as an 'exploratory', helping us form the model for future camps. When we 'closed the account' at the end of the seven days of angling the results were incredible, having collectively caught more than 1,200 fish at over 27 species, including one as a potential new species of Cichla (*now formally confirmed*).

Whilst there can never be a catch guarantee, these stretches of the river are without doubt some of the most.

**'pristine and fish prolific waters'** available to the sport fisherman and continue to be highly productive.

*"The waters of the Essequibo river continue to amaze. From the main river to the thousands of tributaries and lagoons, there is a never-ending set of new angling opportunities and challenges. Always, in the back of an angler's mind is the possibility that the next fish will be a new species for the camp, or indeed one currently undiscovered / unclassified as was the case for Cichla Cataractae, in 2020".*

### FULL CATCH LIST AND CURRENT CAMP RECORD

1.	Piraiba	300lbs+	26.	Smooth Stingray	25lbs
2.	Jau	145lbs+	27.	Short-tailed Stingray	30lbs
3.	Redtail	100lbs+	28.	Elephant-nosed Knifefish	4lbs
4.	Arapaima	350lbs+	29.	Electric Ghost Knifefish	2lbs
5.	'Yellow' Peacock Bass	17lbs	30.	Dogfish	2lbs
6.	Butterfly Peacocks	8lbs	31.	Striped Raphael/Humbug catfish	4lbs
7.	Payara	26lbs	32.	Duck-billed Catfish	4lbs
8.	Red-tailed Payara	8lbs	33.	Mandobé or driftwood Catfish	17lbs
9.	Bicuda	12lbs	34.	Surubim/Shovel-nosed Catfish	40lbs
10.	Arowana	14lbs	35.	Porthole/Spotted Surubim Catfish	5lbs
11.	Black Piranha	9lbs	36.	Ripsaw Catfish	12lbs
12.	Yellow Piranha	5lbs	37.	Jundia Catfish	26lbs
13.	Hymara/Wolf Fish	20lbs+	38.	Piramatuba/Laulau Catfish	80lbs
14.	Traira/Wolf Fish sp.	5lbs	39.	Mandi/Squeaker Catfish	3lbs
15.	Pescada/Silver Drum	12lbs	40.	Blinker/Flat-Whiskered Catfish	26lbs
16.	Jacunda	2lbs	41.	Granulated Catfish	12lbs
17.	Red Pacu	16lbs	42.	Plecostomus Armoured Catfish	2lbs
18.	Black Pacu	14lbs	43.	Pink-tailed Chalceus	1lb
19.	Silver Pacu	7lbs	44.	Sharp-tooth Characin	1/4lb
20.	Red Hook Pacu	2lbs	45.	Cara Cichlid	1lb
21.	Couti/Matrinxã	5lbs	46.	Hatchet Fish/Sardine	1/4lb
22.	Leporinus Aracu	3lbs	47.	Yakatu	5lbs
23.	Banded Leporinus	2lbs			
24.	Lipstick Leporinus	1lb			
25.	Electric Eel	25lbs			