



The ultimate in 'hosted' angling adventures throughout the Amazon

UK Agent and Promotional Management for Amazon-Angler.com

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JAGUAR CAMP - Guyana PREDOMINANT FISH SPECIES

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.

The **Piraiba**, **Jau**, **Redtail** and the **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 uncharted, 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 is why we try to avoid the 'rainy season' and run 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 taken for either bait or food – **No exceptions**.

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

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

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 approx 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 advice from our guides.



Jau

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 run back to their rocky haunts, often cutting lines on the sharp rocks. They can reach over 180lbs in some rivers, and average 80lbs here.

Piraiba

Also known as the 'Lau Lau' or 'Freshwater Shark' of the Amazon, with its tall, proud 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 need heavy gear to be able to land them. These streamlined Cats average 120lbs+ and can reach over 400lbs. Better get the boat engine started if you hook into one of these!!



Redtail

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.

Cats are caught with heavy tackle, min 100lbs braided mainline with 10ft - 15ft of min 100lbs mono-leader. A sliding sinker 2-6oz with a min 120lb swivel, 12in -18in of 100lbs 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 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 potatoes!



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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).**

Payara

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. 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 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.

Arowana

A prehistoric-looking fish with an elongated body, tiny tail (family of 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.



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!!





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Wolf Fish

The bigger Wolf Fish above 10lbs (they can reach 30lbs+) are more difficult to find and are caught mainly with cut bait but the smaller ones – *Wolfies* will hit top water poppers and spook-type lures and sub-surface flies, minnow baits and spinnerbaits. These prehistoric fish are tough, acrobatic bullies.

Surubim Catfish

These beautiful hieroglyphically-marked species come in a few shapes and sizes. But the one we catch most reaches around 50lbs and is 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

These solid, hard fighting and brightly coloured fish live in the depths and can reach weights of up to 14lb+. They can be caught jigging plastic shads and minnow baits as well as small metal deep jigs towards the bottom. They are often called 'Silver Drum'.

Jacunda

These have to be 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. Caught on all small minnow lures and spinners, they always put up a great scrap.



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 provide great sport. Take some smaller hooks with you i.e. sizes 2, 1 & 1/0 for light tackle fun.

Couti

The Couti, or as it is sometimes known, the Manrixã. These are one of the hardest fighting and acrobatic fish we have in the Amazon. They can be caught on sweetcorn, grasshoppers, small plastic beads, fruits, and spinnerbaits. Also, small poppers and 'walk-the dog' lures cast into fast water under trees works really well for these silver ballistic missiles.





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Leporinus

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 sweetcorn as bait.

Electric Eel

While obviously not wanting to handle a river monster that can shoot a 900 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 very 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!!

Knife fish

One crazy looking fish that has only been caught a few times, mainly on worms, small spinners and even 1/2oz jigs. We have two species, the 'electric ghost' and the slightly larger 'elephant-nosed' with the latter generally averaging no more than 4lb. These granite coloured fish are almost invisible in the water when settled within the rocks.



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 very good eating and at a weight up to around 8lb would make a good meal, although we have never tried it.





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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. They do make exceptionally good 'whole fish' sized bait for the larger catfish.



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 very 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

Without doubt 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

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 clients. 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 in excess of 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			