



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 Redtail Catfish

Scientific Classification

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| Kingdom: | Animalia |
| Phylum: | Chordata |
| Class: | Actinopterygii |
| Order: | Siluriformes |
| Family: | Pimelodidae |
| Genus: | Phractocephalus |
| Species: | P. hemiliopterus |

P. hemiliopterus is native to the Amazon, Orinoco, and Essequibo river basins of South America, in Ecuador, Venezuela, Guyana, Colombia, Peru, Suriname, Bolivia and Brazil, and is found only in fresh water, inhabiting larger rivers, streams and lakes. *P. hemiliopterus*, is a pimelodid (long-whiskered) catfish which In Venezuela it is known as *cajaro* and in Brazil, as the *pirarara*. There is no mistaking these fish, they have a brownish back, with yellow sides, a pale to white abdomen and the characteristic orange-red dorsal fin and caudal fin (hence the common name). It has a pair of barbels on the upper jaw and two pairs on the lower jaw. They also have a hard bone-like plate extending from the front of their dorsal fin to their head.

These features make them one of the most striking of the catfish species. Reaching weights way in excess of 100lb, the current IGFA all tackle record sits at 123 lb 7 oz, Rio Amazonas, Brazil in 2010, But we know they get much bigger than that!!



Redtails have very few habitat limitations and are just as content living in acidic blackwater lowland streams as they are in alkaline highlands rivers. They are extremely powerful fighters and are known for their incredible line stripping runs and determination to seek out the safety of structure. Generally, once the initial run has ended, and they are snag-free, the retrieval is much smoother. Once landed, Redtails are easy to manage and show little resistance, making for perfect photo opportunities. They are probably the most voracious catfish species in the Amazon and are able to consume large amounts of prey in a single sitting.

Catching Redtails



'live' or 'dead' bait' are equally effective and proven techniques. For both, don't be put off by the size of bait you will need (appears large) but these catfish have huge mouths. . You will need to get the bait down as quickly as possible and then hold it there. General tackle, a good 30lb-60lb boat rod (6ft 6in – 7ft 6in), coupled with either a heavy-duty multiplier or 12000 series baitrunner. Ensure you have at least 250yds of 100lb min braid spooled up. Splice a 10ft-15ft length of 100lb mono/fluoro to the braid (FG knot perfect). A running lead system works well, with a 4oz-5oz lead on a run ring which should pass easily over any knots between the braid and leader.

At the business end, a 6/0 to 10/0 'J' hook or even better a 'circle' hook. If piranhas are a problem, use 100lb single strand wire for the hooklink (haywire twist perfect). If no piranha, you may want to use braid, if so, nothing less than 200lb. Make sure your hooks are strong and of high quality, along with swivels, which should be rated at 120lb – 150lb. Basically, treat this as you would for catfishing in the UK or EU, but on steroids!! (Check out our Catfish 'Tackle Tips' publication for more detail).