

# Redtail Catfish

**Scientific Name:** *Phractocephalus hemiliopterus*

**Class:** Actinopterygii

**Order:** Siluriformes

**Family:** Pimelodidae



The redbtail catfish is a pimelodid (long-whiskered) catfish. This catfish can reach to 5 feet 11 inches in length and weigh 180 pounds. These colorful large catfishes have a brownish back, with yellow sides and characteristic orange-red dorsal fin and caudal fin. There are a pair of barbels on the upper jaw and two pairs on the lower jaw. They are popular fish in Amazonian themed exhibits and are often housed with other large fish such as the pacu.

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## Range

The redbtail catfish is native to the Amazon, Orinoco, and Essequibo river basins of South America, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil.

## Habitat

It is found only in fresh water and inhabits larger rivers, streams and lakes.

## Gestation

The fry will hatch in about 4 to 5 days.

## Litter

Approximately 100 eggs.

## Behavior

Redtail catfish are territorial. If given enough room they are peaceful with the occupants with them in the area, but because of their size they will eat smaller fish.

## Reproduction

Catfish have an interesting breeding routine. After bumping the male on the vent, the female receives the sperm into her mouth. She then discharges a few eggs which she catches and clasps with her ventral fins. Then she deposits the sperm on the eggs at selected spots.

## Wild Diet

It feeds heavily on live and dead fishes and other meat. Even as a juvenile of only a few inches in length, they are able to swallow many of the more common aquarium fish such as tetras. They also will eat crabs and other crustaceans.