

fisher wood catfish (*Trachelyopterus fisheri*)

The fisher wood catfish, also known as the *woodcat* or *marbled woodcat* (*Trachelyopterus fisheri*), is a species of catfish native to South America, particularly found in the Amazon and Orinoco river basins. Here's a detailed description:

Physical Characteristics:

1. *Size*:

- Relatively small compared to other catfish species, typically growing to about 6–8 inches (15–20 cm) in length.

2. *Coloration*:

- The body is usually a mottled or marbled pattern of brown, gray, and black, providing excellent camouflage against the riverbed.

- The underside is often lighter in color.

3. *Body Shape*:

- It has a slender, elongated body typical of many catfish species.
- The head is broad and flattened, with small eyes and long barbels (whisker-like sensory organs) around the mouth.

4. *Fins*:

- The dorsal and pectoral fins are equipped with sharp spines, which can be used for defense.
- The tail fin is forked, aiding in quick movements.

Behavior:

1. *Nocturnal*:

- Like many catfish, the fisher wood catfish is primarily nocturnal, becoming more active at night to hunt for food.

2. *Diet*:

- It is an omnivorous scavenger, feeding on small fish, insects, crustaceans, and plant matter.
- In aquariums, it accepts a variety of foods, including pellets, frozen foods, and live prey.

3. *Temperament*:

- Generally peaceful but can be territorial, especially with other bottom-dwelling fish.
- It may use its spines defensively if threatened.

Habitat:

1. *Natural Environment*:

- Found in slow-moving rivers, streams, and flooded forests with soft, sandy, or muddy substrates.
- Prefers areas with plenty of hiding spots, such as submerged logs, leaf litter, and vegetation.

2. *Water Conditions*:

- Thrives in warm, tropical waters with temperatures between 72–82°F (22–28°C).
- Prefers slightly acidic to neutral pH (6.0–7.5) and soft to moderately hard water.

***Aquarium Care*:**

1. *Tank Requirements*:

- A tank size of at least 30–40 gallons is recommended for a single fish, with larger tanks needed for groups.
- Provide plenty of hiding places using driftwood, rocks, and plants.

2. *Tank Mates*:

- Compatible with other peaceful, similarly sized fish that occupy different levels of the tank.
- Avoid keeping with aggressive or much larger species that may intimidate or prey on the woodcat.

3. *Lifespan*:

- With proper care, the fisher wood catfish can live for 8–10 years in captivity.

***Conservation*:**

- The fisher wood catfish is not currently considered endangered and is relatively common in its natural habitat. However, like many Amazonian species, it could be affected by habitat destruction and pollution.

This species is appreciated by aquarists for its unique appearance and interesting behavior, but it requires a well-maintained environment to thrive.