

*Serrasalmus* spp., *Rosseveltiella* spp., *Pygocentrus* spp.

# Piranhas

Serrasalmidae, the serrated salmon family



## Diagnostic Characteristics

- Deep and laterally compressed body
- Commonly grow 12 inches in length and weigh less than 2 pounds
- High variability between species in color and size; depends on location of origin
- All have short powerful jaws lined with sharp incisor-like teeth; used for biting and tearing prey

## Background

- Native to tropical regions in South America; possible introductions from aquarium releases
- Can tolerate temperatures as low as 50°F
- Opportunistic behavior allows for adaptation in various habitats
- Feed on other fish, mammals, amphibians, insects, and other aquatic species as well as some plant material
- Aggressive predator that lurks in vegetation to ambush and chase prey

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