

«Piranhas» or «caribes» as they are commonly known, are the most notorious living aquatic animals in South America. The great speculation, tales with nonsense and fantastic stories grown around them exceeds their scientific knowledge. Their high diversity and predatory habits make them an important part of our aquatic communities.

Historically, piranha attacks on live humans were based on over exaggerated stories of Spanish conquistadors being eaten alive by these fish. An examination of historical accounts reveals that the fish attacked the conquistadors because of their wearing red trousers and blood in the water. Tales of their being eaten alive was actually more realistically attributed to the soldiers drowning then later being skeletonized by piranhas (Myers 1972, Schulte 1988 and Schleser 1997).

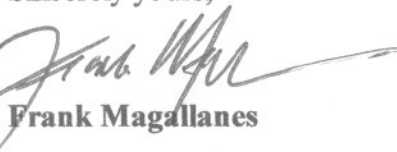
In conclusion

In Oregon during testimony House Natural Resources Committee hearings in 1995; Kay Brown, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife commented on HB2611 *The Department would prefer not to require a permit to own piranha, due to administrative costs.* She also stated when asked by Representative Wells; *if piranhas can survive in Oregon waters.* Kay Brown replied for the record; *Probably not the winters.* That statement acknowledges what I testified to and as stated above the research supported by laboratory studies of piranha and caribe cold intolerance.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife proposes in their Statute change that genera *Colossoma*, *Metynnis*, and *Myleus* be allowed because they are considered vegetarians and commonly called Silver Dollars or Pacus. ODFW is ignoring well published accounts that pacus in genera *Colossoma* and *Piaractus* are the species most often released because of their huge growth (up to 4 feet) and their strong resemblance to piranhas in genus *Pygocentrus*. This has led to false stories of piranhas being released in over 17 states including here in Oregon in 1990. There probably are more such reports but likely go unreported except in the media where they are misrepresented as piranhas.

It is my hope and desire that this Senate hearing disallows ODFW request to change the Statute ORS 498.242 and to allow hobbyists their piranhas and caribes as pets in the aquarium.

Sincerely yours,



Frank Magallanes

References:

- Roosevelt, Theodore, *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*, 1914
- House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Agriculture & Forestry, HB 2611, 1995.
- The American Fisheries Society, *TRANSACTIONS of the American Fisheries Society*. Volume 126:84-849, dated September 1997.
- Oral presentations - IX Meeting of the Neotropical Ichthyological Association, Antonio Machado-Allison and William L. Fink, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Museo de Biología, Apto Correos 47058, Caracas, 1041-A. Venezuela.

Please do not release unwanted pet fish