### Potential Invaders of Cape York and Torres Strait Islands

Centre for Tropical Water & Ecosystem Research (TropWATER): www.jcu.edu.au/TropWATER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Species</strong></th>
<th>Piaractus brachypomus (Cuvier, 1818)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common name</strong></td>
<td>pirapatinga; red belly or black pacu; tambaqui</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Order : Family</strong></td>
<td>Characiformes : Characidae</td>
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#### Impact summary
Large, hardy species; ecological impacts in its introduced range not documented; it has a broad diet, mainly plant material, but considered dangerous as it is known to cause serious bites from its powerful jaws and teeth; juveniles easily mistaken for red-bellied piranha

High establishment risk in northern mainland Australia if they are introduced. If found, report to QDPI Fisheries on 132523

#### Appearance & Size
Large species, round and thin body; broad head and gill covers without scales; base colour greenish to silvery grey or black on sides; with red-orange on belly and fins; tail fin broadly forked, powerful jaws with large well-developed teeth; grows to 85cm and 20kg

#### Native Range
Tropical/equatorial; 23°N – 11°S; Amazon and Orinoco River basins, and Argentina, South America

#### Habitat
Freshwater species; occurs in lowland rivers and lakes but migrates in large schools up tributary rivers into flooded forests; very powerful swimmer

#### Human Use
Minor commercial fishery; aquaculture and aquarium

#### Introduction History
Introduced to 20 countries (established in 3; 14 unknown status; 3 not established) Established in China and in the Sepik River floodplain, PNG and there are now recent reports of its occurrence along the southern PNG coast; status of the species in most countries is unknown. In the USA, it has been reported from many states, mainly as single specimens – probably from home aquaria releases or escapees from fish farms

#### Image