



NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE.

Conservation Education Department
Pier 3, 501 East Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Fast Facts

Key Terms

- Anaconda— a large snake that lives both on land and in the water
- Camouflage— when an animal can blend into its environment because of its color
- Dwarf Caiman- a reptile in the Crocodile family. Typically smaller in size than Crocodiles and Alligators
- Giant Amazon River Turtle— a large turtle from South America that spends much of its life in the water
- Omnivore— an animal that eats both plants and animals
- Piranha— a small fish with sharp teeth

Ask the Aquarium

Fact Sheets from the
Conservation Education Department

Amazon Rainforest: River Animals

THE AMAZON RIVER

The Amazon River is a long river in Brazil. In fact, the Amazon is one of the largest river in the world. This river is more than 4,000 miles long. The Amazon Rain Forest has two seasons: the rainy season and the dry season. In the dry season, the Amazon River can be up to 7 miles wide. During the rainy season, the river bank floods and gets wider. In the rainy season, the river can be up to 25 miles wide. Many animals live in the river. Some of the animals in the river are piranhas, dwarf caimans, turtles, and anacondas.



Red Bellied Piranha

PIRANHAS

The piranha is a small fish with very large teeth. Piranhas can be grey, blue, or even black. Piranhas can be anywhere from 6 inches up to 18 inches. Most piranhas live in warm, fresh water. Piranhas are omnivores. That means they eat both plants and animals. They also eat fruits and berries that fall from the trees above. Piranhas hunt in large groups called shoals, or packs. When the tooth of a piranha is broken, a new one will grow in. Other piranhas, caimans, snakes, turtles, and birds all eat piranhas.

DWARF CAIMAN

The Dwarf Caiman is a member of the Crocodile family. Caiman live mostly in fresh water. Sometimes you cannot see the caiman when it is in the water. The caiman's eyes are above the water but the rest of its body is under water. They look like logs floating in the water. This is called camouflage. This is the way that caimans make sure their food or prey does not know they are there. The caiman has hard scales on its body to protect it from predators. Caimans eat fish, crabs, and shrimp.



Caiman.

ANACONDA

The Anaconda is one of the largest snakes in the world. This snake can grow up to 30 feet long. It is dark green or brown. The color helps the anaconda blend into the area where it lives. This snake lives on land near the edge of the water. Anacondas also spend some time in the water. The eyes and nostrils of an anaconda are on the top of their head. This is so the snake can see and breathe when most of its body is underwater.

Anacondas are constrictors. This means that they wrap around their prey and squeeze tightly until their prey cannot breathe. Anacondas are very strong. Anacondas eat large rodents, small mammals, frogs, and fish. Snakes grow by molting, or shedding their skin. Anacondas are so big that they have to shed their skin in pieces. Snakes, like the Anaconda, are cold blooded, which means that they cannot control their body temperature. They bask in the sun on a hot rock to warm themselves and rest in the water or damp mud to cool themselves down.



Green Anaconda



Giant Amazon River Turtle

GIANT AMAZON RIVER TURTLE

The Giant Amazon River turtle is one of the largest freshwater turtles in the world. These turtles are very good swimmers. Amazon river turtles stay in the water for most of their lives. Usually only the female leaves the water. This is so she can lay her eggs. The Giant Amazon River turtle eats fruits, leaves, plants, and insects. Female turtles of these species can be up to 200 pounds. Many animals, like the black vulture, eat baby Amazon River turtles. The adult Giant Amazon River turtle is so big that it does not have many predators. Jaguars and Black Caimans are the only animals big enough to eat the Amazon River Turtle.