



Golden Dorado are a spectacular gamefish that have received a lot of hype during the last few years. Many “hot spots” for these aggressive and beautiful finned creatures have cropped up and, as an independent fly fishing travel consultant, we can book them all.

We have chosen to center our Golden Dorado attention on an area of Corrientes in Northern Argentina, near the Paraguay border. Here flows the High Parana River, the second biggest (next to the Amazon) river system in South America. This watershed is a tailwater flowing out of the Itaipu Dam, the largest hydroelectric power station in the world. The reasons for our selection of this destination:

- First and foremost, client feedback. We’ve had two groups fish this operation (one in early February and the

other in late April) this year with outstanding reports.

- Floating lines – the guides we work with here have developed techniques using only floating lines – no dredging for these golden beauties.
- Hasn’t received a lot of publicity.
- Mostly clear water – you can see the fish coming.
- Both good numbers AND large fish.....the 20+ pound fish is not a rarity.
- Excellent guides who know the river system.
- Logistics – easy to access from Buenos Aires.

Tony Shanks (above left), Kurt Jensen, and George Coates (right) visited this fishery in late April and the following report was received from Tony:

The trip was fantastic. We flew into Buenos Aires, stayed at a nice place, had a great dinner, and flew to Corrientes the next day. The customs lines at EZE airport were a mess, but we eventually made it through. The Air Linnaeus computer system went down the next morning and all of their flights were three hours late, but we made it and Pinti was waiting to pick us up.

We drove to the lodge and got our gear ready and clothes changed, and I had my first Dorado about five minutes later. The fishing was fantastic, there were a few slow periods, but overall it was pretty steady action. The fish



seemed to like areas with a medium to strong current and some structure. Most of the fishing was along the main bank, or the bank of one of the many islands. The fish liked spots that had current and overhanging trees. There were a lot of dead trees and stumps in the water. I don’t know if it was from high water or shifting sand bars, but the fish liked the flooded trees. We had great weather the whole trip. It was clear, calm and temps were high 70’s to high 80’s, but it had rained for a week before we got there. The river was high and off color. Pinti says that the river is normally clear and showed us pictures where the river looked very clear, but the stained water did not seem to hurt the fishing, and we could still see the fish come up for the flies.

The casting was only tricky because of the flooded timber and current. A lot of the fish were back in the holes and the boat could not get too close. There were plenty of places where you had to fire a 60-70 foot cast into a



hole and strip it out before you got hung up on a tree while the boat was drifting past. I would not say that this was an expert only type trip, however, there were plenty of places where the guides could get the boat in to about 30-40 feet of the shore and there was plenty of time to cast. Kurt (left) had only fly-fished the Truckee River locally before this trip and he did fine. First of all, both Pinti and Robin are good instructors and had Kurt casting much better fairly rapidly, and secondly, they were able to get him close enough to enough good lies where it was not much of an issue. By the end of the trip he was single hauling and throwing nice long casts.



The Golden Dorado is a wonderful fly rod fish. They are fast, aggressive, strong, beautiful fish, and they jump like crazy. We caught fish from one pound to nearly twenty pounds and everything in between. I would say that most of the fish were 3-5 pounds, but we caught plenty that were bigger, and

all of us caught at least one really nice fish. The color and markings on the fish are incredible; bright yellow/gold scales with a kind of iridescent black tip or highlight and a beautiful red and black triangle on the fork of the tail. George lost his grip on one while taking a picture and swears that it bit him on the forearm on purpose. He has the blood and scars to prove it. When Pinti grabbed the fish to rescue George, it grabbed onto Pinti's shirt and tore a hole in his pocket. They are so much fun that even the small fish are a kick. The smaller fish would jump five and six times or more. The big fish would give a few jumps then take off for the middle of the river. Seeing the fish come flying out of nowhere to grab the fly, and the violence of the strike were incredible. Setting the hook was challenging at times, I found that waiting for the fish to turn and then strip striking hard worked best for me. We also caught a fair number of yellow and silver Pira Pita (left). They were pretty fish 3-10 pounds that fought very well.



Pinti and Robin are great guides. They are professional but friendly and informal. They had good equipment and knew the river well. Pinti is also a hunter and was eager to talk about the area and its hunting and fishing opportunities. Both guys were exceptional fly-casters and had to give our rods a try. Pinti apologized for his English and claimed that he was learning, but he actually speaks English quite well. Robin has been to school at Montana State and is fluent in English. The lodgings were nice, comfortable and right on the river. The cook did a great job and the food was excellent; lots of great beef, and some interesting local dishes. We got a recipe for a soup or stew from the cook that was fantastic.

We saw a lot of wildlife; monkeys, alligators, rheas and a lot of interesting birds such as Toucans and Caracaras. The weather was great. We put deet on in the evening just before coming ashore, but that was the only time mosquitoes were a problem. We went on to enjoy two days of decoyed pigeon hunting and two days of dove shooting. The whole trip was incredible, but the fishing was the most unique aspect of the trip, and if I were forced to choose, I would say the most fun as well.

Pat Patterson and Van Wood sent us another excellent report on their February trip which can be accessed through this link:

<http://flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/Dorado.pdf>

Season: September and October (closed for the spawning season in November and December), then January through May.

Price: 7 nights, 6 days fishing based on double occupancy and sharing a guide - \$3,830 pp. Single - \$5,630.

5 nights, 4 days fishing based on double occupancy and sharing a guide - \$2,630 pp. Single - \$3,830.



Availability: Most of September and October are full.....only open week is late October; some sporadic openings in January and February.....more availability in March through May.

South American optional tie-ins: Peacock Bass in the Amazon, Patagonia trout fishing, Tierra del Fuego giant sea run browns.

PHOTO CREDITS: (top to bottom) banner – Ricardo Pinto; GD's and blood – Tony Shanks, Kurt Jensen, and George Coates; sunset and pira pita – Ricardo Pinto.

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

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