

# Tripletail

*Lobotes surinamensis*



**DESCRIPTION:** The deep and somewhat rounded shape gives the Tripletail the appearance of an over-size freshwater panfish. Color varies but is usually brownish and mottled. Head is concave above the mouth. The name derives from the similarity and near juxtaposition of the dorsal, caudal and anal fins, resembling three tails.

**SIZE:** Usually 2-12 pounds, but it may exceed 30 pounds. World record 42 pounds, 5 ounces.

**FOOD VALUE:** One of the best.

**GAME QUALITIES:** Despite its clumsy looks, the Tripletail is a good gamefish in all respects. It willingly strikes artificial lures and its fight is characterized by short, frantic runs and startling jumps. Big ones in deep water are also good at bulldogging. Like Cobia—with which they frequently share the shade of a navigation structure—Tripletail are adept at fouling lines.

**TACKLE AND BAITS:** Casting tackle—fly, plug or spinning—provides the best and most spectacular sport with Tripletail, but saltwater outfits with lines up to 30-pound test are not out of place for big fish in tight places. Streamer flies, plastic and bucktail jigs and mirror plugs are among the pet lures. Best natural baits are live shrimp and small live fish. Strip baits and dead shrimp are also taken.

**FISHING SYSTEMS:** Still Fishing; Drifting; Casting.

**OTHER NAMES:**

**Drift Fish**  
**Leaf Fish**

**RANGE:** Entire Gulf, usually in coastal waters but also far off-shore.

**HABITAT:** The Tripletail is a true world traveler, drifting with ocean currents and often spotted by dolphin fishermen in weedlines or alongside floating debris. Many are found much closer to shore, however, in all Gulf states during warm months. Whether off the beaches or in the bays, Tripletail usually hang close to navigation markers and crab trap floats.