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# A hito famer's success story

Aquaculture Department, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center

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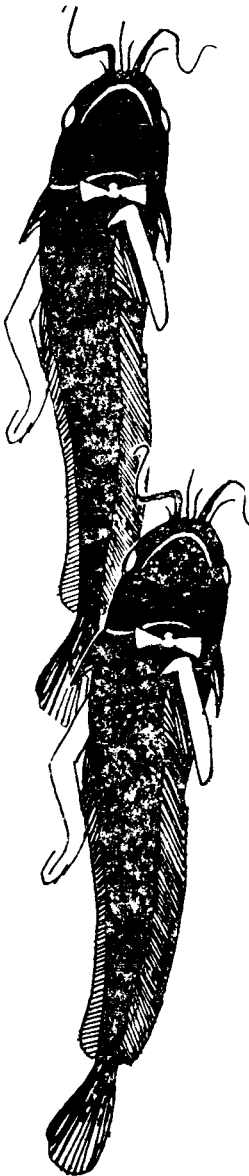
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# A hito farmer's success story

## Catfish 2000



Hector Rosario owns a hatchery for African catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*) in Cauayan, Isabela. He also maintains grow-out ponds. Hector says the African catfish is really a carnivore, requiring fish in the diet. But cheaper alternatives have been found. The golden apple snail (golden *kuhol*), which has been pestering rice plants, has become a cheap protein-rich feed for *hito*. Hector says he buys golden *kuhol* at P5 per can from the local rice farmers.

Apart from the sale of fry and fingerlings, Hector gets additional income from his *hito* harvest which sells at P80 per kg in Cauayan.

In constructing the pond, size, location, soil, water supply, and water depth must be considered. The pond must be 50 m<sup>2</sup> on low flat areas with clay or clay loam soil. There must be good fresh water supply. Water depth must be at least one meter and increased little by little as the catfish grow.

### Pond construction

Construct the pond like any other fish-pond. Firm up the inner side of the dikes so that the fish will not climb or burrow through them. Construct a fence or board on the dike around the pond to prevent the fish from escaping.

In concrete ponds, cover the bottom with at least six inches of good clay soil to provide a natural habitat for the fish.

### Stocking

Broadcast chicken dung and 16-20-0 fertilizer in the pond one week prior to stocking to let plankton grow. Stock late in the afternoon or early in the morning. Hector stocks fry at 10/m<sup>2</sup>. To culture tilapia and *hito* in one pond, stock four tilapia and five *hito* per square meter. Tilapia must be stocked at least one month ahead of *hito*. The tilapia should be big enough and have well developed scales before the carnivorous *hito* are stocked with them.

### Feeding

For two weeks after stocking, the catfish depend on plankton for food. Then, feed the *hito* protein-rich feeds. Give diced golden snail once a day and commercial feeds twice a week. Ground fresh trash fish, worms, insects, slaughterhouse by-products, freshwater shrimps (dried or fresh), fish offal and by-products of canning industries are other alternative feeds. Boiled broken rice (binlid) mixed with vegetables may also be given as feed. A light could also be provided over the pond to attract insects which may be eaten by the fish at night.

### Harvest

Harvest the catfish after four months when they weigh more than a kilogram each, or six months at 2 kg each.

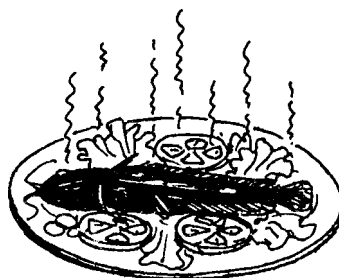
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salt. Combine crumbs and cheese. Dip fish in egg mixture and roll in crumb mixture. Place on a well-greased cookie sheet 39 x 30 cm. Sprinkle remaining crumb mixture over top of fish. Drizzle with fat. Bake in an extremely hot oven, 260°C for 15 to 20 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serves 6.

### **Hito with Cassava Tops**

2 pc *hito*, cut into serving pieces  
1 pc ginger, chopped  
2 cups cassava tops  
1 1/2 cups rice washing  
Red pepper for garnishing  
Salt to taste

Clean and slice fish. Place in a saucepan fish, rice washing, ginger, cassava tops and cook until done. Season with salt to taste. Four servings.



In rural Philippines, a common way of cooking *hito* is with pepper, vinegar, and coconut milk. In its compilation of selected recipes, **Fish Cookery**, the Philippines' Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has the following:

### **Adobong Hito**

1 kg *hito*  
2 cloves garlic  
2 cups water  
1/2 cup vinegar  
1/4 cup soysauce  
1 tsp pepper  
3 onions, sliced  
Salt to taste  
Cooking oil

Wash *hito* thoroughly and boil in a saucepan with water, vinegar, pepper, soysauce and salt to taste. Saute crushed garlic in pan. Add *hito* and onions and saute until slightly brown. Four to six servings.

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To harvest, partially or totally drain the pond. Use seine and scoop net to capture the fish.

Farmers who wish to raise African catfish can buy *hito* fry from Hector in Cauayan, Isabela at P2 each. To help interested *hito* raisers, Hector is planning to organize a cooperative. Interested farmer-members could get fry at only half the price and pay in full after harvest. Hector is confident that his plans would push through. Catfish farming, anyone?

Source: MR Dilay, *A prolific fish called hito*. **Aggie Trends**. Dept. of Agriculture, Diliman, Q.C. Sept. 1993.