

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

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RECORD OF THE HOODED MERGANSER (*LOPHODYTES CUCULLATUS*) IN “LOS PETENES”, NORTHWESTERN CAMPECHE, MÉXICO

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Registro del Pato mergo cresta blanca (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) en “Los Petenes”, noroeste de Campeche, México.

Key words: Hooded Merganser, *Lophodytes cucullatus*, new record, Mexico.

The Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) is an uncommon migratory species (Robbins *et al.* 1983) that breeds from southeastern Alaska, south through Canada to northeastern and northwestern United States (AOU 1998). In winter, it occurs along both coasts from southern Alaska and New England south to northern Mexico and in the northern Bahamas and Greater Antilles (recorded in Cuba, casually in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), irregularly in the interior from southern Canada south to northern Mexico (rare), casually farther (AOU 1998). Howell & Webb (1995) report it in Mexico as a rare but probably regular winter visitor to northern Baja California, rare and irregular in Coahuila, Chihuahua and Tamaulipas, south to the central Volcanic Belt and vagrant to southern Veracruz (Pashley 1987) and Quintana Roo (López-Ornat *et al.* 1989).

In the extreme north and northwestern part of the Mexican state of Campeche (located in the Yucatan Peninsula) exists an area named “Los Petenes”, characterised by large portions of semideciduous tropical forest isolated from each other by mangrove forest, marshland and swamps. On 19 November 1999, during the course of a regional inventory work in a locality situated 20 km by road west of Sodzil, Mun. de Hecelchacán (20°12.23'N, 90°23.97'W), we observed a group of approximately fifteen Hooded Mergansers. Most of them were females or juveniles, only two adults were determined as males based on their plumage. The birds were watched swimming on the edge of a so called “Petén”, although the vegetation was dominated mainly by mangrove. We collected one juvenile male (gonads 5.6 x 2.2 mm) with the plumage mainly brown,

weighing 500 g with low fat, no molt and skull 100% ossified. The specimen is deposited at the Museo de Zoología, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (cat. num. MZFC 14818).

Suitable habitats on the Yucatan Peninsula (see López-Ornat *et al.* 1989), particularly in the “Los Petenes” area in Campeche, should be considered as a possible winter range extension for the Hooded Merganser. Hence, this species can be considered at least as an uncommon winter visitor, if not as a regular migrant at low densities, instead of a vagrant as suggested by Howell & Webb (1995). This can be supported by the two other southern records by Pashely (1987) and López-Ornat *et al.* (1989) in Veracruz and Quintana Roo respectively.

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