

## First records of the Silvery Grebe *Podiceps occipitalis* Garnot, 1826 in Brazil

Marcos Ricardo Bornschein<sup>1</sup>, Giovanni Nachtigall Maurício<sup>2</sup> and Raphael Luiz Moura Sobânia<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Comitê Brasileiro de Registros Ornitológicos and Liga Ambiental. Rua Olga de Araújo Espíndola 1400, conj. res. Paiquerê II, bl. N, ap. 31, 81050-280 Curitiba, PR, Brasil. E-mail: mbr@bbs2.sul.com.br

<sup>2</sup> Comitê Brasileiro de Registros Ornitológicos and Laboratório de Ornitologia, Museu de Ciências e Tecnologia – PUCRS. Av. Ipiranga 6681, Caixa Postal 1.429, 90619-000 Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil. E-mail: gnmauricio@wnet.com.br

<sup>3</sup> Ninho do Pica-pau Consultoria Ltda. Caixa Postal 104, 83700-970 Araucária, PR, Brasil. E-mail: sobania@ninhodopicapau.com.br

Recebido em 2 de março de 2004; aceito em 7 de maio de 2004.

**RESUMO. Primeiros registros de *Podiceps occipitalis* Garnot, 1826 no Brasil (Podicipediformes: Podicipedidae).** *Podiceps occipitalis*, uma espécie da Cordilheira dos Andes e do sul da América do Sul, é aqui mencionado pela primeira vez para o Brasil. Foi verificado em duas localidades no sul do país: Fazenda da Cruz Alta (26°45'S, 51°33'W; 1290 m s.n.m.), município de Água Doce, centro-oeste de Santa Catarina, onde três indivíduos foram observados em uma lagoa artificial em 18 de outubro de 2002; e Parque Barigüi (25°25'S, 49°18'W; 930 m s.n.m.), município de Curitiba, leste do Paraná, onde dois e posteriormente um indivíduo foram observados em uma represa entre 11 de outubro e primeiro de novembro de 2003. Ambos os registros foram documentados por meio de várias fotografias. Os cinco indivíduos vistos, todos adultos, pertenciam à subespécie típica pela presença de tufo auricular amarelo e garganta cinzenta. Um exemplar coletado no Lago Acaray, sudeste do Paraguai, em 15 de junho de 1979, é o registro mais próximo conhecido. Sugere-se que a presença de *P. occipitalis* no Brasil e Paraguai seja consequência de dispersões acidentais para além das áreas normalmente cobertas durante sua migração.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Podiceps occipitalis*, primeiros registros, Paraná, Santa Catarina, sul do Brasil.

**KEY WORDS:** Silvery Grebe, *Podiceps occipitalis*, first records, Paraná, Santa Catarina, southern Brazil.

Of the nine accepted species of grebes (Podicipedidae) known from South America (Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990, Sibley and Monroe 1990), only four are mentioned for Brazil: *Podilymbus podiceps* (Pied-billed Grebe), *Tachybaptus dominicus* (Least Grebe), *Podiceps major* (Great Grebe) and *Rollandia rolland* (White-tufted Grebe) (Sick 1997). While the first two are widely distributed through the country and also over the Americas, the latter are austral species known to occur from the Andean-Patagonian region to southern and central Brazil (Blake 1977, Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990, Sibley and Monroe 1990, Llimona and del Hoyo 1992, Sick 1997). The remainder South American grebes have their ranges predominantly or completely confined to the Andean region, with one species (*Podiceps occipitalis*, the Silvery Grebe) reaching the lowlands of Patagonia and the southern sector of the Rio de la Plata basin (Fjeldså 1985, Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990).

While conducting an ornithological survey in the western sector of Paraná and Santa Catarina states, M. R. B. and G. N. M. found three individuals of *P. occipitalis* at Fazenda da Cruz Alta (26°45'S, 51°33'W; 1,290 m above sea level), Água Doce municipality, in the highlands of central-western Santa Catarina state, on 18 October 2002. The birds were in a c. 0.5 ha artificial pond with shallow edges and deeper interior (c. 2 m). The water was somewhat turbid and the surface relatively open, aquatic plants being scarce and restricted

mainly to the margins. The general landscape of this region, including the area around the reservoir, is dominated by natural and managed open pasture (grazed by cattle) over a rather undulated terrain. Other natural or man-made water bodies were common in the surroundings.

The birds were observed for about three hours. During this period they remained at close distances from one another, dispersing only when the observers approached about 15-20 m. The grebes covered almost all the surface of the pond, at times swimming alongside individuals of *Anas georgica* (Yellow-billed Pintail); they dived frequently, generally for short periods (c. 15 s), and in two occasions a bird was seen with prey on its bill. On 21 July and 22 October 2003 no individuals of the species were present, *Podilymbus podiceps* being the only grebe recorded in the pond.

On 11 October 2003, while birdwatching at Parque Barigüi (25°25'S, 49°18'W; 930 m a.s.l.), Curitiba municipality, eastern Paraná state, R. L. M. S. observed two individuals of *P. occipitalis* swimming on a dam. On 31 October and first November 2003, R. L. M. S. (in part with M. R. B.) detected a lone bird at the same locality, while on five subsequent visits to the area he failed to detect any grebe. The birds were very tame, allowing observers to approach at distances up to about 5 m. On a total of 15 h of observations covering several times of the day, the grebes were seen swimming, forag-

ing or resting near the dam's edges, frequently alongside individuals of goose *Anser* sp. The dam had a turbid water and lacked emergent aquatic plants. It is surrounded by a grassy terrain devoted to recreation, with a great daily influx of people (for more details about Parque Barigüi see Krul and Moraes 1993).

The five birds recorded in adult plumage were unambiguously referable to the nominate form by having straw-yellow ear-plumes (or ear-tufts) and light gray throat, instead of drab brown ear-plumes and white throat as seen in the high-Andean form *P. o. juninensis* (cf. Blake 1977, Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990, Llimona and del Hoyo 1992, Konter 2001). The birds were quite similar to one another in size and plumage coloration, though some differences were noticed, notably in the extension of the black area of the neck, in the tonality of the gray of the throat and in the ear-plumes volume, which also varied in the intensity of the yellow. Both records were properly documented with several photographs, one of each locality being depicted in figure 1. These and other pictures are available in color in the home pages of the Comitê Brasileiro de Registros Ornitológicos – CBRO (<http://www.ib.usp.br/cbro/>) and Liga Ambiental (<http://www.ligaambiental.org.br/>).

Given that *P. occipitalis* has been recorded in eastern Paraguay, near the border of Paraná state, the possibility of its occurrence in this Brazilian state was anticipated by Scherer-Neto and Straube (1995). This record is based upon an unsexed specimen collected in Lago Acaray, Hernandarias, Alto Paraná department, on 15 June 1979 (specimen examined by M. R. B., housed at the Museu de História Natural de Itaipu Binacional under the number 250) (see Hayes *et al.* 1994, Hayes 1995, Scherer-Neto and Straube 1995, Straube 2003; cf. A. Colmán and N. Pérez abstracts of the Encuentro de Ornitología de Paraguay, Brasil y Argentina, Ciudad del Este, 1991, p. 33). Scherer-Neto and Straube (1995) and Chebez (1996) erroneously regarded that this specimen was collected in the Represa de Itaipu (= Reservatório de Itaipu or Lago de Itaipu), which lies a few kilometers from Lago Acaray. Recently, Straube (2003) mentioned a different day and collecting place for the specimen, but this place is at the Lago Acaray margin (F. C. Straube pers. comm. to M. R. B., 2004). Despite this skin represents the only known record for Paraguay, Hayes *et al.* (1994) and Hayes (1995) considered *P. occipitalis* an austral migrant in the country, possibly due to the specimen's collection date (June is the first month of the austral winter). On the basis of the same record, however, Chebez (1996) regarded the species as accidental in Paraguay.

*Podiceps occipitalis* is known to migrate from the austral portion of its range (Storer 1979), wintering, at least partially, in northern Argentina (Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990). In Tierra del Fuego, for instance, it occurs only between September and April (Humphrey *et al.* 1970, Llimona and del Hoyo 1992). The presence of this species in Brazil and Paraguay probably results of accidental (or irregular) irruptions beyond areas usually covered during migrations. The birds may have



Figure 1. *Podiceps occipitalis* (Silvery Grebe): (top) Fazenda da Cruz Alta (26°45'S, 51°33'W), Água Doce municipality, central-western Santa Catarina state (photo by M. R. Bornschein); and (bottom) Parque Barigüi (25°25'S, 49°18'W), Curitiba municipality, eastern Paraná state (photo by P. Forone). Note the small to medium-sized bill with a conspicuously ascendant mandible profile, presence of an auricular tuft, head (including throat) moderately pigmented contrasting with the intensely pigmented nape and dorsal surface of the neck as well as with the unpigmented ventral and lateral surface of the neck; this character combination distinguishes the species from all other known grebes, including the subspecies *P. o. juninensis*.

reached Brazilian and Paraguayan territories following wetland corridors along Rio Paraná and Rio Uruguay valleys. The place where the species was found in Água Doce municipality lies in the Rio Chapecó headwaters (a tributary of Rio Uruguay), whereas Curitiba is in the upper reaches of Rio Iguaçu, a tributary of the left bank of Rio Paraná, both regions being rich in water bodies such as marshes, ponds, oxbow lakes and dams (pers. obs.). The finding of two *R. rolland* in July and August and one to seventeen *Anas versicolor* (Silver Teal) in July and October 2003 in Água Doce municipality (M. R. B., in part with G. N. M., B. L. Reinert and R. B. Lopes), suggests that central-western Santa Catarina state may receive an influx of austral species at least in winter and early spring, since these species are known to increase their numbers in extreme southern Brazil from au-

tumn to middle spring (Sick 1997, G. N. M. unpublished data). A pair of *A. versicolor* was also found in Parque Barigüi from October 2003 to February 2004 (R. L. M. S.; this are one of the few records known from Paraná state). It is possible that *P. occipitalis* reached both areas during autumn or winter and remained there up to the spring months, when then were detected.

The only Portuguese name known for the species in the Brazilian ornithological literature is “mergulhão-de-orelhas” (“Eared Grebe”), appearing in Scherer-Neto and Straube (1995). Since another Brazilian species (*R. rolland*) has conspicuous ear-tufts (called “orelhas” in Portuguese), we consider the name inadequate. Therefore, we propose “mergulhão-de-orelha-amarela” (“Yellow-eared Grebe”) as a Portuguese name for *P. occipitalis* in Brazil, highlighting the distinctive auricular yellow tuft of the species.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The “Fundação O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza”, in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation, and “Instituto de Conservação Ambiental The Nature Conservancy do Brasil”, funded additional expeditions to western Santa Catarina state in 2003, during which Bianca L. Reinert and Ricardo Belmonte Lopes took part. Priscila Forone provided the picture of *P. occipitalis* from Paraná, Zig Koch scanned the picture of the species from Santa Catarina, and José Fernando Pacheco and Rafael A. Dias revised the text.

#### REFERENCES

- Blake, E. (1977) *Manual of Neotropical birds*. Vol. 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chebez, J. C. (1996) *Fauna misionera, catálogo sistemático y zoogeográfico de los vertebrados de la Provincia de Misiones (Argentina)*. Buenos Aires: Editorial L.O.L.A.
- Fjeldså, J. (1985) Origin, evolution, and status of the avifauna of Andean wetlands, p. 85-112. In: P. A. Buckley, M. S. Foster, E. S. Morton, R. S. Ridgely and F. G. Buckley (eds.) *Neotropical Ornithology* (Ornithol. Monogr., No. 36).
- Fjeldså, J. and N. Krabbe (1990) *Birds of the high Andes*. Copenhagen: Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen.
- Hayes, F. E. (1995) *Status, distribution and biogeography of the birds of Paraguay*. New York: American Birding Association (Monographs in Field Ornithology, No. 1).
- Hayes, F. E.; P. A. Scharf and R. S. Ridgely (1994) Austral bird migrants in Paraguay. *Condor* 96:83-97.
- Humphrey, P. S.; D. Bridge, P. W. Reynolds and R. T. Peterson (1970) *Birds of Isla Grande (Tierra del Fuego)*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Museum of Natural History, for the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- Konter, A. (2001) *Grebes of our world, visiting all species on 5 continents*. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions.
- Krul, R. and V. dos S. Moraes (1993) Aves do Parque Barigüi (sic), Curitiba, PR. *Biotemas* 6:30-41.
- Llimona, F. and del Hoyo, J. (1992) Family Podicipedidae (Grebes), p. 174-196. In: J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott and J. Sargatal (eds.) *Handbook of the birds of the world. Ostrich to ducks*. V. 1. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions.
- Scherer-Neto, P. and F. C. Straube (1995) *Aves do Paraná. História, lista anotada e bibliografia*. Curitiba: authors' edition.
- Sibley, C. G. and B. L. Monroe Jr. (1990) *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the world*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- Sick, H. (1997) *Ornitologia brasileira*. Edition revised by José Fernando Pacheco. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira.
- Storer, R. W. (1979) Order Podicipediformes, p. 140-155. In: E. Mayr and G. W. Cottrell (eds.) *Check-list of birds of the world. Volume I*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Museum of Comparative Zoology.
- Straube, F. C. (2003) Bases legais para a identificação dos limites territoriais do Brasil na fronteira com o Paraguai e suas implicações para a consideração de registros ornitológicos. *Ararajuba* 11: 131-135.

**BRANCA**