

FIRST BREEDING RECORD OF THE SILVERY GREBE (*PODICEPS OCCIPITALIS*) IN THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE, ARGENTINA

Carlos A. Darrieu, Guillermo E. Soave, Marcos Juárez & Aníbal R. Camperi

División Zoología Vertebrados (Sección Ornitología), Museo de La Plata, Paseo del Bosque,
 1900 La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

E-mail: cdarrieu@museo.fcnym.unlp.edu.ar

Primer registro de nidificación del Macá Plateado (*Podiceps occipitalis*) en la provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Key words: Silvery Grebe, *Podiceps occipitalis*, Argentina, breeding colony.

The distribution of the Silvery Grebe (*Podiceps occipitalis*) is restricted to South America (Harrison 1985, del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). In Argentina, its breeding range includes the provinces of Tierra del Fuego, Río Negro, Neuquén, Mendoza, Córdoba, Santa Fé and Buenos Aires (Blake 1977, Olrog 1979, Darrieu *et al.* 1989, Navas 1993).

Although generally considered as breeding in the Buenos Aires province, up to now there is no documented breeding record. Narosky & Di Giacomo (1993) mentioned the Silvery Grebe for this province, without indicating localities, referring only to the egg collection of R. Runnacles in the Museo de La Plata.

This collection has two nests collected on 15 and 16 November 1940, in General Lavalle and Louge, District of Daireaux (previously District of Caseros), respectively, which so far constitute the only breeding records for the species in the Buenos Aires province.

On 30 October 2000, we observed a breeding colony of Silvery Grebe in temporary water bodies on both sides of Route 5, and eight km to the west of Juan José Paso in the Pehuajó District (35°50'S, 62°12'W). These water bodies belong to the Western Group river basin (Cuenca del Grupo Occidental) (Toresani *et al.* 1994).

The colony counted approximately 160 nests (Figure 1). During the same day, we found another group of 20 nests on the same route, five km from the former. In both colonies, the nest contained one or two eggs. These observations, as those provided by Johnson (1965), show that this species is highly gregarious and all lay their eggs almost simultaneously.

The species may have taken advantage of the rain cycle initiated in the 1970's with more abundant precipitation resulting in flooding various places. The development of lagoons and dells increased with the building of routes and railways and the digging of



FIG. 1. Nests of Silvery Grebe *Podiceps occipitalis* at 8 km to the west of Juan José Paso, Pehuajó District (35°50'S, 62°12'W).

channels, intercepting the normal course of waters with their transfer to boundary areas.

The presence of the Silvery Grebe as a nesting species in Buenos Aires, together with

the northern nesting localities reported during the last decades (Burger 1974, Nores & Yzurieta 1977, Darrieu *et al.* 1989), confirms an increase in their breeding range

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