

NOTES

PRESENCE OF THE NEOTROPIC CORMORANT IN CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO

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The Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) is widely distributed from Tierra de Fuego to the southern United States (Coldren et al. 1998). Recently, its breeding range in the United States has expanded (Pranty et al. 2010). In mainland Mexico, this species has been recorded as a regular breeding resident in several states (Friedmann et al. 1950, Howell and Webb 1995, Gómez de Silva 1998, Erickson et al. 2013). In this note, we report what is apparently the first record of Neotropic Cormorant for Chihuahua.

As part of a bird-monitoring project at El Vado de Meoqui in east-central Chihuahua, a migratory bird corridor decreed as a Ramsar site in 2012, Mondaca observed and photographed an adult Neotropic Cormorant on the banks of the San Pedro River on 29 January 2012 (28° 15' 42.37" N, 105° 28' 51.02" W) in Meoqui municipality, approximately 70 km south of Chihuahua city. Field identification was based on the tail longer than that of a Double-crested Cormorant (*P. auritus*), whitish border to gular skin, absence of any yellow skin in the supraloral area, facial and gular area brownish yellow, plumage blackish overall (Figure 1). The photo was deposited at the Laboratorio de Ecología y Biodiversidad Animal (LEBA), Instituto de Ciencias Biomédicas, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

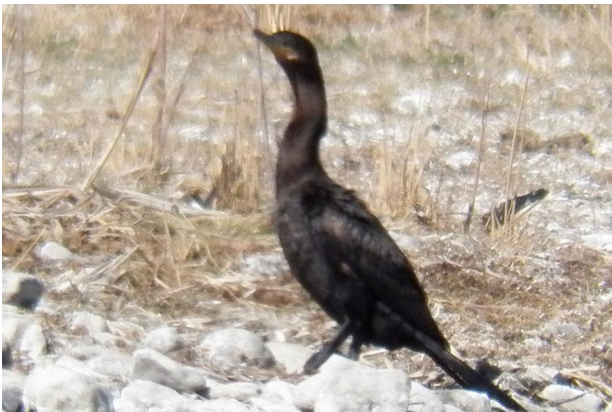


Figure 1. Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) on banks of San Pedro River, Meoqui municipality, Chihuahua, Mexico, on 29 January 2012.

Photo by Fernando Mondaca-Fernández

NOTES

From a review of published literature (Howell and Webb 1995, Navarro and Peterson 2007) and online resources for bird distribution (databases of Ornis, www.ornis2.ornisnet.org, and eBird, www.ebird.org), the species has apparently not been recorded previously in Chihuahua. Perhaps this record represents a vagrant, but it also might reflect a recent colonization of areas with environmental conditions similar to those in the species' typical habitat (Ehrlich et al. 1988). We cannot rule out that this species is probably being overlooked in Chihuahua because of a lack of birders and field ornithologists, so it may have been present but gone undetected in the state in previous years.

Possibly, the Neotropic Cormorant also occurs at reservoirs or urban parks in northern Chihuahua (e.g., Juárez or Guadalupe municipalities), given their proximity to recorded localities in the Trans-Pecos region of Texas, where Peterson and Zimmer (1998) considered it an "uncommon permanent resident." Elsewhere in Texas, Lockwood and Freeman (2014) considered it to be an uncommon to common resident throughout the coastal prairies and south to the lower Rio Grande Valley, with previous summer records at inland locations scattered through eastern Texas. In addition, this species has been recorded regularly in southwestern New Mexico (Williams 2013a, b, 2014).

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