

Leeches and crocodilians: first record of *Placobdella ringueletti* López-Jiménez & Ocegüera-Figueroa 2009 (Rhyncobdellida: Glossiphoniidae) on *Caiman crocodilus*, Linnaeus 1758 (Crocodylia: Alligatoridae) in Guatemala

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Abstract: *Caiman crocodilus*, Linnaeus 1758, is a crocodilian distributed from Mexico to Brazil, specifically in Guatemala, can be found in the Atlantic and Pacific slopes. Although, there lack of studies in the country prevents of making accurate decisions regarding their conservation. Since crocodilians inhabit semi-aquatic habitats tend to be hosts for several ectoparasites, which can provoke negative impacts in their health condition. Here, we present the first record of *Placobdella ringueletti* López-Jiménez y Ocegüera-Figueroa, 2009. The purpose of this study is to report ectoparasitic infestation degree of *P. ringueletti* and the areas where large amounts of ectoparasites were found in a private farm at the south coast of Guatemala. Four captive alligators were analyzed for the presence of ectoparasite *P. ringueletti*, 3 males and 1 female. This ectoparasite has been previously reported in other reptiles, such as freshwater turtles from the genus *Rhinoclemmys*, found in the same enclosure with *C. crocodilus*. All the individuals showed a high infestation degree, being the female with the highest parasitic load (a total count of 585 leeches). The body area with the highest prevalence of the largest amount of parasites was the groin, this might be related to be explained by the fact that this is a soft tissue compared to other body zones and it is easier for leeches to attach to it, provides protection from predators, or strong water streams.

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