



Brazilian Merganser (*Mergus octosetaceus*)

Update September 2020

For this update we are excited to announce the success of this year's breeding season of the Brazilian Merganser. For the first time, one female has laid 7 fertile eggs and all of them have hatched. The ducklings left the nest on the 1st of August and are being raised by the parents in the aviary since.

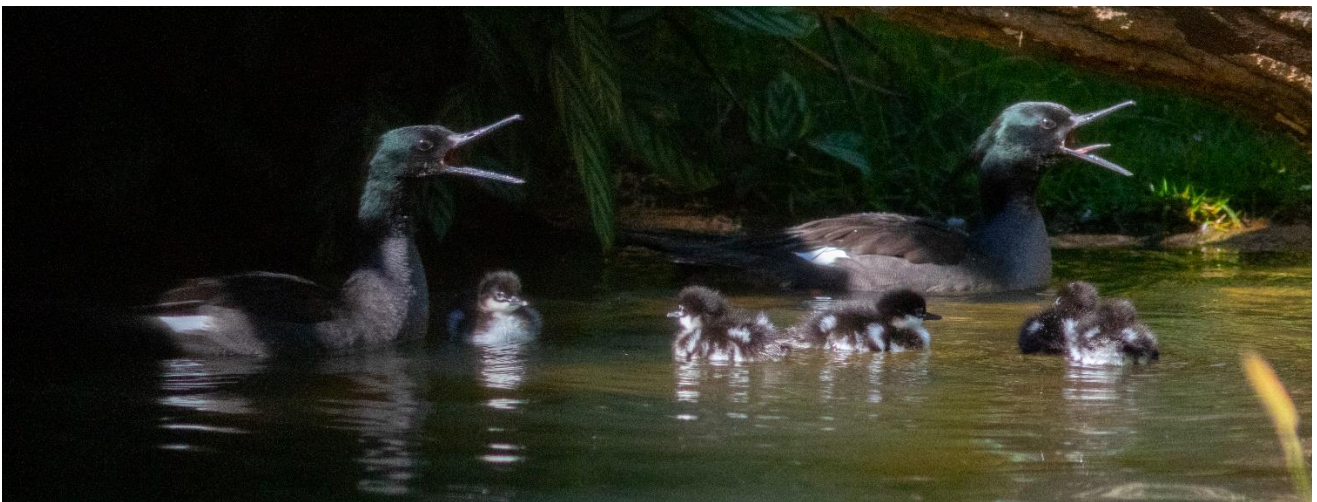


Pictures 01-08-2020



Picture 04-09-2020

Another female came in August the 4th with 5 ducklings, this is a F1 pair that had never reproduced before but now giving us results of our first F2 ducklings!



Picture 04-08-2020



Picture 04-09-2020

Because of the partnership between Zooparque Itatiba and ICMBio (the Institute of Conservation with of Ministry of Environment), it was possible for us to collect 3 eggs from Serra da Canastra, in the state of Minas



Gerais. This was very important for the project because we need more bloodlines to integrate the ex situ population of mergansers. When the eggs arrived at zoo, they were placed with a foster parent. For these foster parents we used a pair that laid unfertile eggs. All of the eggs were incubated by this female, but only 2 were fertile. In August 9th, 2 ducklings left the nest and are under the foster parents' care.



Picture 09-08-2020



Picture 04-09-2020

So far, we have 14 duckling in the zoo, but we're still waiting for another female that is incubating her eggs. The eggs are due to hatch in the next few days. Today we have a total of 29 adult birds (12,17), and 14 ducklings.



Considering the success of this breeding season and the support received from you, we have to start building new enclosures for these birds and establish new procedures for husbandry and management of the mergansers with the least human interaction as possible.

Besides that, we are trying to raise more funds for a bore hole with a pump for water. Although we have a good water filtering system, we will still need more fresh water, actually it is not sufficient for all the ponds of the new planned aviaries of the Brazilian merganser, especially in the dry season.

We're working together with ICMBio (the Institute of Conservation of the Ministry of Environment) and MZUSP (university of Sao Paulo) and looking for a releasing area here in the State of Sao Paulo. But we still do not have an authorized area, so we wait for the feedback and authorization of the Brazilian Government. Even though the bureaucratic procedure will take some time, we need to start working in consideration of the releasing program.

The Brazilian merganser and Zooparque Itatiba would like to thank Aviornis again for your great support of this extremely endangered waterfowl.

Because of your support we are increasing our numbers of mergansers for the releasing program.

We ask you to support us for the last steps before we can do the reintroduction. It will be a big success for Belgium and for Brazil.



Thank you very much!
Robert Frank Kooij
responsible project manager