



Predation of a Mesoamerican Cane Toad, *Rhinella horribilis* (Anura: Bufonidae), by a White-tailed Hawk (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*) in Laguna de Tixtla, Guerrero, Mexico

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The White-tailed Hawk (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*), a tropical raptor that ranges from southern Texas through Central America to Patagonia in northern Argentina (Heredia and Clark 1984; Ferguson-Lees and Christie 2005; Granzinolli and Motta-Junior 2007), feeds on a wide range of vertebrates and invertebrates (Cottam and Knappen 1939; Stevenson and Meitzen 1946; Granzinolli and Motta-Junior 2007). White-tailed Hawks typically sight prey while gliding or in stationary flight some 15–50 m above the ground (Oberholser 1974) in open fields with scattered trees and bushes or brushy ranchland (Howell and Webb 2005).

During a study of water birds at the endorheic Laguna de Tixtla, Guerrero, México (17°33'48.30"N, 99°23'11.25"W; elev. 1,337 m asl), at about 1645 h on 23 January 2021, we observed a White-tailed Hawk preying on an adult Mesoamerican Cane Toad (*Rhinella horribilis*). While gliding just above the lake, which was covered by Common Water Hyacinths (*Eichhornia crassipes*), it suddenly descended and captured the toad (Fig. 1) before flying south into an area covered by dry forest vegetation.

During a year of fieldwork in this area, we recorded a White-tailed Hawk four times and, on three different occasions, observed predation on Mesoamerican Cane Toads, although these amphibians are toxic to some predatory birds that avoid ingesting them (Beckmann et al. 2011). The Laguna of Tixtla is a natural, ephemeral, eutrophicated body of water surrounded by agricultural fields and bordered to the west by the city of Tixtla, which discharges the wastewater that is largely responsible for the eutrophication (Castro-Torreblanca and Blancas-Calva 2021).



Fig. 1. A White-tailed Hawk (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*) in flight after preying on a Mesoamerican Cane Toad (*Rhinella horribilis*). Photograph by Epifanio Blancas-Calva.

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