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Terrapene ornata ornata parasitism

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TERRAPENE ORNATA ORNATA (Ornate Box Turtle). PARASITISM. Two incidents of leech parasitism on *Terrapene ornata ornata* were observed (Fig. 1). On 18 September 2022, an adult



FIG. 1. Two incidents of *Placobdella parasitica* parasitism observed in *Terrapene ornata ornata* in Iowa, USA.

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female was hand captured in Louisa County, Iowa, USA (locality withheld), ca. 50 m from the edge of an ephemeral wetland. Two *Placobdella parasitica* (smooth turtle leeches) were found attached to marginal scutes above the rear right leg. The second incident occurred on 30 May 2023 in Muscatine County, Iowa, USA, ca. 35 m from the edge of a permanent shallow pond. One *P. parasitica* was attached to the marginal scutes above the rear right leg. Although this genus of leech has been documented from more than 22 species of aquatic and semi aquatic turtles (Moser 1995. *Texas J. Sci.* 47:71–74; Watermolen 1996. *J. Fresh. Ecol.* 11:211–217), leech parasitism has only been documented in the genus *Terrapene* in three instances, once in a Coahuila Box Turtle (*Terrapene coahuila*; Brown 1974. *Bul. Fl. St. Mus., Bio. Sci.* 19:1–68) and twice in the Gulf Coast Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina major*; Richardson et al. 2016. *Comp. Parasitology* 84:18–20; Richardson et al. 2017. *J. Ark. Aca. Sci.* 71:105–108). Although *T. ornata* is almost entirely terrestrial, individuals of both sexes within the current study have frequently been documented utilizing wetland margins, and occasionally observed fully submerged or swimming. This record is apparently the first documentation of any leech species using *T. ornata* as its host and increases the number of known turtle hosts for *P. parasitica*.

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