



to ten white eggs are laid. Fall migration begins in October and peaks in November.

### **Habitats**

Mississippi River; Missouri River; bottomland forests; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; natural lakes and prairie marshes

### **Iowa Status**

uncommon; native

### **Iowa Range**

summer: scattered throughout Iowa in suitable habitats; migration: statewide

### **Bibliography**

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.

## **hooded merganser**

*Lophodytes cucullatus*

|                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Kingdom:         | Animalia               |
| Division/Phylum: | Chordata - vertebrates |
| Class:           | Aves                   |
| Order:           | Anseriformes           |
| Family:          | Anatidae               |

### **Features**

An adult hooded merganser is 16 to 19 inches long. It has a long, thin bill with toothed edges. The male has a striking fan-shaped crest on the head and black and white markings on the chest. The brown wings have white patches. The female's body is brown with gray sides.

### **Natural History**

The hooded merganser winters in the southeastern United States. Wooded clear-water streams, oxbows, and lakes are preferred habitats. It eats aquatic insects, crustaceans (crayfish, shrimp), and small fish. Its toothed bill is well-adapted for grasping fish. This bird flies low and fast over a body of water. It usually is found in pairs. Most hooded mergansers breed in the northern Great Lakes region. They are fairly late migrants, with the heaviest migration arriving in mid-April. The nest is placed in a hollow tree, usually in a bottomland forest or swamp. Seven