

Nest buildup by a pheasant hen.—The building up of nests to maintain them above the level of rising water has been reported for several species among both surface-feeding and diving ducks. To my knowledge, the building up of nests by ground-nesting gallinaeous birds has not been reported and probably rarely occurs even though their nests are commonly flooded.

This note reports evidence of a buildup of a nest by a Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) hen during a heavy rain which flooded the nest site. The nest site was located in a low-lying area of an unharvested hayfield, containing tame grasses and legumes, near Sibley, Illinois, on 24 June 1960. About 2 inches of rain had fallen in the period of a few hours on the previous day and had caused a temporary accumulation of between 1 and 2 inches of surface water in the vicinity of the nest site.

There were two nest bowls, spaced only 1 foot apart, at the nest site. One nest bowl was situated typically in a slight depression and contained four dead chicks and the remains of the shells and membranes of six hatched eggs. The chicks had apparently either drowned or died of exposure.

The second nest bowl was atypical in construction, but not in diameter, and consisted of a platform of green and dead vegetation, which was raised 4 inches above ground level. The green vegetation in the nest bowl was still succulent which suggested that the nest had been constructed recently. Two dead chicks were entwined in the vegetation of the nest, indicating that the construction of the built-up nest was probably completed after some of the chicks had died. The dead chicks found in both nests evidently had been hatched shortly prior to or during the rain as they possessed unabsorbed yolk sacs. Three unhatched eggs, which had been subjected to prolonged incubation as evidenced by the decomposition of the egg content, were situated in a slight hollow at the top of the platform nest bowl.

The existing evidence suggests that this pheasant hen originally constructed a typical nest, laid nine eggs, and incubated the clutch. Six of the nine eggs hatched just prior to or during the flooding of the nest. The hen, when confronted with rising water at the nest site, built up a platform nest under the three unhatched eggs that were somehow moved out of the original nest bowl. This type of buildup suggests that the hen elevated the eggs by consistent addition of vegetative materials to the bottom of the platform, which is comparable to the behavior exhibited by duck hens. However, this pheasant hen constructed a separate structure, whereas ducks build up their original nests. The presence of two dead chicks entwined in the vegetation of the platform nest suggests that some of the chicks attempted, but failed, to reach the elevated nest bowl before dying. Although the hen was never observed, she evidently deserted the nest site shortly after the built-up nest had been constructed.—RONALD F. LABISKY, *Section of Wildlife Research, Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana, Illinois, 13 September 1962.*