

## ring-necked pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Galliformes

Family: Phasianidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

### FEATURES

The ring-necked pheasant male is about 30 to 36 inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen), while the female is 21 to 25 inches long. Both male and female have a long, pointed tail. The male is brightly colored with brown, iridescent feathers, red wattles on the face, purple and green areas on the head and usually a white neck ring. The female has dull brown feathers with darker brown blotches.

### BEHAVIORS

The ring-necked pheasant is a common, permanent resident in northern and central Illinois and a rare resident in the southern portion of the state. It lives in farms, hay fields, fallow fields, brushy fields, around marshes and, in winter, may be seen in pine groves. This bird is a fast runner on the ground and a good flier, too. Eggs are produced from May through June. The nest is built on the ground in a natural depression or one made by the female. The nest is lined with plant materials. Seven to 15, olive-brown eggs are deposited by the female, and she alone incubates them for the 23- to 25-day incubation period. One brood is raised per year. The male is polygamous with as many as six to 12 hens. The ring-necked pheasant is an occasional nest parasite of other ground-nesting birds' nests. It may lay an egg or eggs in other birds' nests, and leave them for the other birds to incubate, feed and care for. Since its eggs are usually larger and hatch faster than those in the nest being parasitized, the pheasant young tend to receive better care than the bird's own young. This bird eats insects, seeds, berries and waste grain. The crowing of the male is "kork-kok." The ring-necked pheasant is a native of Europe and Asia. It was introduced originally about 1890 and has continued to be introduced in the state.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

marshes

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie