

## Table of Contents

## In Press

## Article Archive

[CJAS \(63\) 2018](#)
[CJAS \(62\) 2017](#)
[CJAS \(61\) 2016](#)
[CJAS \(60\) 2015](#)
[CJAS \(59\) 2014](#)
[Issue No. 1 \(1-44\)](#)
[Issue No. 2 \(45-95\)](#)
[Issue No. 3 \(97-145\)](#)
[Issue No. 4 \(147-199\)](#)
[Issue No. 5 \(201-249\)](#)
[Issue No. 6 \(251-295\)](#)
[Issue No. 7 \(297-343\)](#)
[Issue No. 8 \(345-390\)](#)
[Issue No. 9 \(391-443\)](#)
[Issue No. 10 \(445-493\)](#)
[Issue No. 11 \(495-537\)](#)
[Issue No. 12 \(539-578\)](#)
[CJAS \(58\) 2013](#)
[CJAS \(57\) 2012](#)
[CJAS \(56\) 2011](#)
[CJAS \(55\) 2010](#)
[CJAS \(54\) 2009](#)
[CJAS \(53\) 2008](#)
[CJAS \(52\) 2007](#)
[CJAS \(51\) 2006](#)
[CJAS \(50\) 2005](#)
[CJAS \(49\) 2004](#)

## Editorial Board

## Ethical Standards

## Reviewers 2017

## For Authors

## Author Declaration

## Copyright Statement

## Instruction for Authors

## Submission Templates

## Fees

## New Submissions/Login

## Subscription

## Effect of housing system on reproductive results in ring-necked pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus* L.)

H. Kontecka, S. Nowaczewski, S. Krystianiak, M. Szychowiak, K. Kupś

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A comparative analysis of reproduction parameters and hatchability results of pheasants raised under two different housing systems (cages and aviaries) was performed. In the first system the pheasants were housed in 420 cages, 3780 from the total were females. In the second housing system, 3200 pheasant hens were placed in eight aviaries, where 50 cocks and 400 hens were kept in each. The following parameters were calculated: laying rate, the percentage of hatching, small and cracked eggs, hatchability from set and fertilized eggs, dead embryos up to day 8 of incubation and, finally, dead embryos after day 8 of incubation as well as unhatched, crippled, and weak chicks. The laying rate for the whole period of reproduction in pheasants kept in cages was significantly higher in comparison with aviaries (59.6 vs 27.2%). A higher ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) percentage of small and damaged eggs ( $\chi^2 = 13.6$ ) was recorded in aviaries. The percentage of dead embryos for eggs derived from aviaries, up to day 8 of incubation, was also significantly higher ( $\chi^2 = 4.7\%$ ). There were no significant differences between the housing systems with respect to the remaining features. The results of the investigation made it possible to conclude that pheasants kept in cages were characterized by a higher laying performance with fewer eggs unsuitable for incubation. A lower mortality of embryos during the incubation process was found in eggs derived from pheasants reared in cages. Although there were no significant differences between the analyzed housing systems in terms of hatchability, a higher laying rate for pheasants kept in cages implies that more chicks could be obtained from every female.

**Keywords:**

gamebird; keeping; performance; reproduction

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