

## Note

USE OF RAPTOR NESTS BY NESTING DUCKS. — While studying raptor populations in central North Dakota from 1977 to 1979 we examined 633 nests built in trees. During the last year of this study we encountered three examples where dabbling ducks nested in elevated raptor nests. That year raptor populations were higher than the two previous years and waterfowl breeding conditions were excellent.

Each nest site was located in a tree on the edge of a wetland; adjacent upland habitat was native prairie. Two nests were in eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) trees. One of the nests was 3.3m high and was rebuilt in mid-April by a pair of ferruginous hawks (*Buteo regalis*), which later abandoned the site. On 29 May a mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) was nesting on top of the large raptor nest platform. The other nest was 4.0m high and was used by ferruginous hawks in 1977 and great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*) in 1978. On 8 June a hen pintail (*Anas acuta*) was observed incubating a clutch of eggs in this nest. The third duck nest, occupied by a mallard, was in a cavity 3.6m high in the side of a large ferruginous hawk nest constructed in a peachleaf willow (*Salix amygdaloides*). The ferruginous hawk pair were incubating eggs and caring for newly hatched chicks while the hen mallard was incubating eggs 1m below. All three duck nests were successful.

Although this is the first report of a pintail nesting in an elevated nest site, this behavior has been observed for mallards and some other ground nesting ducks (Bent, 1923, Life histories of North American wild fowl, Dover Publications, New York; Coulter and Miller, 1968, Vermont Fish and Game Dep. Bull.

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68-2; Cowardin et al., 1967, *J. Wildl. Manage.* 31:229-235; Stewart, 1975, *Breeding birds of North Dakota*, Tri-College Center for Environmental Studies, Fargo, N.D.)

The use of raptor nests by ducks in North Dakota may be more common than originally thought. Severe predation on ground nests of waterfowl in the prairies may provide tree nesting ducks with a selective advantage. — *Paul M. Konrad and David S. Gilmer, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1747, Jamestown, North Dakota 58401. Present address of first author: 418 18th Street, Bismarck, ND 58501; present address of second author: Wildlife Research Field Station, 6924 Tremont Road, Dixon, CA 95620.*