



# NEWS

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Hugh Vickery 202-208-5634

## HUNTERS CAN CALL "1-800-327-BAND" TO REPORT BIRD BAND RECOVERIES

Have you ever experienced the excitement of harvesting a banded game bird? Hunters who take a banded bird may wonder where the bird originated, how old it is, or whom to contact to report the information on the band. In the past, many hunters found it difficult to report their band recovery, while others simply didn't feel it was necessary.

To make life simpler and to improve the reporting rate of band recoveries, the U.S. Geological Survey's Bird Banding Laboratory, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, recently placed a toll-free number on bird bands. Hunters can now call 1-800-327-BAND, or 1-800-327-2263, to report their recovery of a banded bird.

Hunters are welcome to keep the bands they report. When they make the call, they can find out where and when the bird was banded. In addition, each hunter who reports a band recovery will receive a certificate of appreciation that tells when, where, and who banded the bird.

The Service is responsible for establishing waterfowl hunting regulations. The banding program helps provide information about waterfowl movements, survival rates, and harvest rates that is critical to population management and setting of hunting regulations. The information provided by hunters is essential to this effort.

The banding of waterfowl is done under the auspices of the North American Waterfowl Banding Program, a cooperative effort among Federal, provincial, and state agencies, and private organizations. Each year, approximately 380,000 waterfowl are banded across the United States and Canada.

Research conducted in the mid-1980s indicated that only a third of the bands on mallards were reported by hunters. This low rate of return represents a tremendous loss of information.

By reporting your recovery of a banded bird, you will not only assist the Service in managing the resource but also you could learn some interesting facts. For example, banding information collected at the Bird Banding Laboratory indicates that the oldest northern pintail ever recovered was 22 years old, the oldest mallard 23 years old.

Beyond longevity records, the Bird Banding Lab also maintains data on waterfowl movements, such as waterfowl banded in Russia that are recovered in the Central Valley of California, or a northern pintail banded in California that was recovered in Arkansas.

The help of hunters is needed for the banding program to be successful, and the Service encourages all waterfowlers to report bands with the "1-800" number.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service's almost 93 million acres include 514 national wildlife refuges, 78 ecological services field stations, 65 national fish hatcheries, 50 wildlife coordination areas, and 38 wetland management districts with waterfowl production areas.

The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes Federal excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies. This program is a cornerstone of the Nation's wildlife management efforts, funding fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, shooting ranges, and related projects across America.