

*John Vanelli*  
**TALES OF BANDED BIRDS**

by Billy Gianquinto



Billy Gianquinto with a beautiful bag of mallards.

**B**anding birds has been a valuable tool for ornithologists to determine life spans, migratory routes, and mortality rates of many species. Waterfowl biologists, in particular, consider bird banding their primary way of documenting flyway routes of all types of waterfowl.

Every hunter would love to bag a banded bird, but not everyone does. It's one of the many joys of waterfowling. You can always tell how long a duck hunter has been waterfowling by the number of bands he has hanging from his duck call lanyard.

Will you bag a banded bird this year? Chances are you won't. But if you do, you may let out a howl heard 10 blinds away. I bet you will be on the phone with your buddies bragging about that wondrous piece of metal that costs about a penny, but is worth its weight in gold. And of course, you'll have the bird mounted.

What creates the mystique of a banded

bird? For one thing, it's knowing that another human has handled the bird before—maybe many years before. You will think of the thousands of miles and different places this worthless piece of metal has traveled. But most of all, it's the odds of ever getting a banded bird. Of the 105 to 110 million waterfowl in North America, fewer than 100,000 are banded yearly. That's nine thousandths of one percent. I asked Greg Yarris, director of waterfowl programs for the California Waterfowl Association (CWA), about the odds of getting a banded bird. His reply, "minuscule." As years pass, more birds are banded so chances increase, slightly.

Hunters love telling stories about bands they've retrieved. I've heard of a pintail banded in Utah that was shot nine days later in England. Years ago, I picked up a banded red-winged blackbird that was hit by a car. There have been birds retrieved

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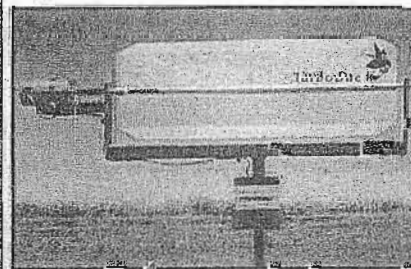
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**BANDING DATA:**

BAND NUMBER 1157-78433 LAND OF BIRTH HALLARD SEX FEMALE

AGE OF BIRD IT WAS LESS THAN ONE YEAR OLD WHEN BANDED

BANDER IT WAS BANDED BY PERSONNEL OF SHELTON-EAST MOUNTAIN  
NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE, PO BX 111 LAKEVIEW OR 97632

BANDING LOCATION NEAR ALTURA CA DATE 09/27/80

**RECOVERY DATA:**

LOCATION BUTTE SINK CA DATE 12/31/81 22919

ON BEHALF OF PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR BIRD BANDERS THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA, THANK YOU FOR REPORTING THE BAND NUMBER AND RECOVERY INFORMATION NOTED ABOVE. THE PERSON WHO BANDED THE BIRD WILL BE NOTIFIED OF YOUR REPORT. THE DATA WILL BECOME PART OF THE PERMANENT FILES OF THE BIRD BANDING LABORATORY.

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**BANDING DATA:**

BAND NUMBER 1847-69634 LAND OF BIRTH HALLARD SEX MALE

AGE OF BIRD IT WAS LESS THAN ONE YEAR OLD WHEN BANDED

BANDER IT WAS BANDED BY PERSONNEL OF WODOC NATIONAL WILDLIFE  
REFUGE, P O BOX 111 LAKEVIEW OREGON 97630

BANDING LOCATION NEAR ALTURA CA DATE 09/27/81

**RECOVERY DATA:**

LOCATION BUTTE SINK CA DATE 12/31/81 22919

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