



DID YOU KNOW.....what to do if you find a bird with a metal ID band on its leg? If the bird is injured but alive, you'd bring it to Second Chance Wildlife Center, of course. But, what if the bird is dead? I have encountered three types of ID bands; two are used on pigeons, fancy or racing and one on wild birds.

Not all fancy pigeons are banded but, when they are, the band has symbolic, combined letters like and numbers. I have been unable to find any means of tracing these numbers to an owner.

Racing pigeon ID bands have, in addition to numbers, the letters IF or AU which stand for International Federation or American Union of Pigeon Racers, respectively. These birds can be traced to owners but you must have the registration books or know someone who does. My experience suggests that most Racing Pigeon fanciers simply consider their birds lost and don't expect notification.

The third band I've encountered should be reported. The band will indicate: "Mail to AVISE Bird Band. Washington. DC." Remarkably enough, the band will get to the proper location with just that address. Avise bands are affixed by bird banders licensed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. These bands are applied by individuals who file annual reports with USF&WS stating what has been banded, where, when and, when possible, age and sex. This information is used to determine population levels, migration schedules, routes and destinations and other information needed to assist various species in their survival. These are the most important bands to report. Some rehabilitators are also licensed bird banders and band recoveries help them determine if their rehabilitation efforts have been successful.

If you recover a band, you should carefully record all numbers and letters on the band. Send that information, along with Species, if known, when found and where (be as specific as possible, i.e. 9300 block Cranford Dr. Potomac. MD), along with your name and mailing address to: Patuxent Research Center, Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD 20708 or call them direct at: 301-497-5942

In four to six weeks, you will receive a certificate of appreciation telling you who banded the bird, where, when and, sometimes, the sex and age of the bird when banded.

To date, little evidence has been collected to demonstrate that rehabilitation is successful; that is to say that rehabilitated birds returned to the wild survive and reproduce. I, personally, received a hawk that had been banded by a "rehab" facility in New Jersey six years earlier. Clearly, this bird had survived long enough to reproduce which must be considered a success.

Some will say that the work of rehabilitation is a waste of time, that we should devote our energy and resources to maintaining habitat. Although habitat preservation is very important, so is the preservation of each individual bird or animal. Reporting band recoveries will help prove that assertion. NOW YOU KNOW!!!!!!

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