



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

NORTHWARD BOUND GEESE WEAR COLORED NECK BANDS

If you see a Canada goose during the next month or so wearing a brightly colored neck band of red, green, yellow or white, don't think it is a freak, says the Fish and Wildlife Service. Instead, the bird is a member of the winter colony at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge in coastal North Carolina and one from a group marked with plastic neck bands for the purpose of learning more about local movements in relation to food supplies and evidence of malnutrition.

About 250 of the Canada geese which wintered at the Pea Island Refuge during the past season will fly northward with these bright bands about their necks. These geese have just started their northward flight up the Atlantic Coast and across the Eastern States.

All persons who see any of these marked geese are urged to report the place and date of observation immediately to the Bird Banding Office, Fish and Wildlife Service, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland. Probably not more than one or two birds in any flock will carry the telltale identification but it can be seen at about 100 yards with the naked eye, or a quarter of a mile with binoculars.

The plastic bands are expected to disintegrate or drop off within six weeks or two months. These neck bands are quite different from the conventional aluminum leg bands which may remain on birds for 10 years or more. Sometimes these are worn so smooth that chemical treatment is required to make their numbers become visible again. Preliminary tests with the plastic neck bands on captive geese indicate they are harmless to the birds.

From banding recoveries of southbound geese during the hunting season, there are indications that most of the North Carolina birds nest in the region from James Bay eastward through the Province of Quebec and into Labrador. The majority of these are believed to move northward in the general vicinity of Chesapeake Bay over central Pennsylvania and through the Finger Lakes section of New York. Some, however, are known to take a coastal route, as evidenced by recoveries from Massachusetts, Maine, and New Brunswick.

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