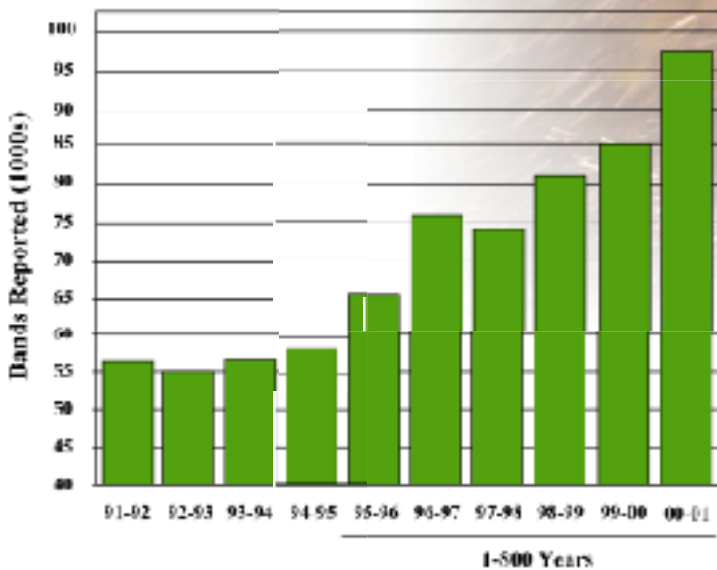


## Increasing Band Reporting Rates Via a 1-800 Telephone Number

State and federal conservation agencies band 350,000 waterfowl annually, including 125,000 Mallards, the most abundant and popular hunted species. Data from band recoveries are used to determine survival, movements, and distributions of harvests. The rate at which hunters report the recovery of bird bands is important. Obviously, the more bands reported, the more data will be available, but the band reporting rate, per se, is especially important. It is used to estimate harvest rates and assess the impact and effectiveness of hunting regulations. A 1991 report estimated that the band reporting rate for Mallards was only 32%; i.e., only one in three hunters who recovered a banded Mallard reported it to the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL), the National repository for banding data and the clearinghouse for reports of banded birds at Laurel, Maryland.

**Band Recovery Reports: 1991-2000**



In 1995, BBL established a toll-free telephone number (1-800-327-BAND) to increase band reporting rates by making it convenient for hunters to report bands. The 1-800 number was printed on the bands, and it was advertised on posters, the federal "duck stamp" and state hunting regulations brochures. Hunter response to the 1-800 number has been excellent, and record numbers of bands have been reported. Preliminary information suggests that the current band reporting rate for Mallards from some regions may be as high as 80%, more than double the previous rate.

To be more certain, a major new study of waterfowl band reporting rates will commence in 2002. The primary objective is to estimate current band reporting rates for Mallards, but Black Ducks, Wood Ducks, Canada Geese, Snow Geese and Ross' Geese will also be included in the study. Partners in the study include the US Geological Survey BBL, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the state and provincial waterfowl Flyway Councils.