

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Well Traveled Waterfowl

January 15, 2008, Jackson, MS - On January 3, 2008, Freddie Scott of LaGrange, Georgia, harvested an extraordinary duck on his lease near Ruleville, Mississippi. The duck was a banded Northern Pintail drake. While any banded duck is special, the band on this particular duck read, "kankyocho-Tokyo Japan-10A75422."

After returning home to Georgia several days later, Mr. Scott shared the story of the banded pintail with his friends, explaining that the duck had to have been banded in Japan. His friends laughed at the thought of a Japanese banded pintail killed in Ruleville, Mississippi. The ridicule quickly became tiresome. In an effort to silence his friends, Mr. Scott began to research the duck's origin.

Mr. Scott contacted Jeffrey Lee, a wildlife biologist with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Pearl, Mississippi, to request help in his search for the truth. Mr. Lee contacted several professional waterfowl biologists including Dr. Paul Padding and Mr. Terry Liddick of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's Bird Banding Laboratory. Dr. Padding and Mr. Liddick indicated that the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology Bird Migration Research Center in Konoyama, Japan, was actively banding birds and may have some information to offer.



Despite the language barrier, an email was sent to the Japanese Bird Migration Research Center with the band information from the Ruleville pintail. In less than 24 hours, the Yamashina Institute Mississippi, was, indeed, banded near Niigata, Japan, on February 16, 2000. The duck was captured and banded by Ryuhei Honma, a member of the Japanese Bird Banding Association, on Hyoko Lake, which is located near the northwestern coast of Japan. At the time the bird was harvested, it was estimated to be at least eight years old.

Keiko Yoshiyasu, an employee of the Japanese Bird Migration Research Center, stated that band recovery data for pintails banded in Japan had been returned from the United States before, but only from Alaska, Washington, California, Oregon, and Utah. Utah was the farthest east any pintail banded in Japan had ever been reported until Mr. Scott reported his band. This is the first ever reported pintail that was banded in Japan and harvested in the Mississippi flyway.

And if you are wondering, the distance from Niigata, Japan, to Ruleville, Mississippi, is approximately 6,700 miles.

For more information, contact Jeffrey Lee, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, (601) 965-4559 or jeffrey.lee@ms.usda.gov.

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