

this data. As Mark Fuller described, a new report form that he and Chandler Robbins have proposed will facilitate this data processing. Such a form--properly filled out--is essential for use by keypunch operators who may know nothing about birds but who are responsible for putting your observations into a language that can be understood by a computer.

The Passenger Pigeon, Heath Hen, and Carolina Parakeet became extinct without widespread public action. The recent plight of the Peregrine Falcon shocked a nation. Yet, it is still unclear whether this latter-day concern reflects a greater sympathy toward nature or merely apprehension for human survival. Has the canary in the coal mine only been replaced by the falcon in the field as our ecological early warning system?

HMANA is attempting to understand how and why the "visible raptors" survive, at home and on the wing. By this effort we may benefit; for this effort the association deserves your support.

#### AN INNOVATIVE WAY TO TAG WOOD DUCKS

by Ronald Clayton, Winchester

Color-marking birds to study their movements is important. However, capturing and marking the birds often has adverse effects on their subsequent behavior. For example, disturbing a Wood Duck on its nest during egg laying or incubation may cause abandonment.

Now biologists at the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife have found a way to color-mark nesting Wood Ducks without handling them. A hook is screwed into each corner of the long predator guard on the box, and a large rubber band is stretched over the four hooks. When the Wood Duck enters the nesting box, the rubber band is dislodged and snaps around the duck's neck. A strip of brightly colored vinyl flagging attached to the rubber band makes it visible at one hundred yards or more. The vinyl flags are also numbered so that individual birds can be identified. Marking Wood Ducks in this manner does not affect their flying, feeding, preening, or egg laying.

The colors are designed for short-term use and begin to wear away after a couple of months. By the following spring, even the rubber bands may have disappeared. This new color-marking method is an important advance in learning more about Wood Ducks during the nesting season without the risk of eggs or young being abandoned.

