

MEET OUR COVER ARTIST

SCOTT HECKER has been sketching wildlife since childhood in Olmsted Falls, Ohio. He studied natural history at Prescott College in Arizona and natural resource management at Antioch/New England Graduate School in New Hampshire. Scott and his wife (Ann Prince Hecker) have lived in Belize, Central America, where they worked on national park development and Scott conducted a doctoral study on the Aplomado Falcon. Copies of this artist's etchings and ink drawings can be purchased by writing to Scott Hecker, 7254 Alafia Ridge Loop, Riverview, FL 33569.

THE COVER ILLUSTRATION Great Horned Owl

Scott's cover illustration depicts a Great Horned Owl, a predator widely distributed in New England throughout a variety of habitats, ranging from dense, forested areas to suburban woodlands and city parks. During the day these owls roost in thick stands of evergreens that offer camouflage from the potential mobbing of crows and jays. Their resonant hooting (whoo-whoo, whooo, whoo-whooo) can be heard from late December to early February. Great Horned Owls normally begin egg-laying between late February and early March, usually selecting the abandoned nest of a Red-tailed Hawk, crow, or squirrel. A powerful and voracious predator, this owl's diet includes insects, reptiles, many species of birds (including other species of owls and hawks), and a variety of mammals from small rodents to foxes and even skunks! A regular (preferred) perch is used by the owl for feeding. The indigestible portions such as bones, fur, and feathers are eliminated in a pellet that is regurgitated, informing the alert birder who finds it of the presence of *B. virginianus* in the vicinity.

J. B. Hallett, Jr.

ATTENTION ARTISTS: CALL FOR COVER ILLUSTRATIONS

Bird Observer is using different art for the front cover of each issue. We would like to use illustrations from as many artists as possible, and we therefore welcome contributions for possible use on *Bird Observer* covers. A brief biographical sketch of the artist will be printed, including information about whether you accept commissions or have artwork available for sale. We are primarily interested in pen-and-ink and scratchboard drawings, but dark pencil work may also be acceptable.

If you wish more information about this or have pictures you would like to submit, please call or send photocopies of your work to William E. Davis, Jr., Chairman *Bird Observer* Cover Art Committee, 127 East Street, Foxboro, MA 02035 (tel. 617-543-8988). We welcome your submissions.