

by the female and fledge in ten to fourteen days. The male plays a greater role in feeding the young after they have fledged.

During the breeding season Redwings forage largely on emergent insects from the marsh, which they capture by gleaning foliage or by hawking. Outside of the breeding season they subsist mainly on vegetable material, such as weed seeds and crop residues. By forcibly opening their beaks, Redwings are able to prize apart vegetation or overturn stones, a process called gaping, which aids in finding prey in a wide variety of circumstances.

In August all the Redwings seem to disappear, as they undergo their annual molt inconspicuously, deep within the marshes. In the fall flocks of females and young forage in the uplands separately from the flocks of males, and all return to roost in marshes. The northern populations of Redwings are migratory and join huge mixed species flocks of blackbirds, some containing several million birds. They may do considerable damage to crops, particularly in the Midwest. Winter roosts of well over a million birds in the southern states have also caused a variety of problems, resulting in control measures and heated controversy.

Despite the economic problems which the vast numbers of these birds have caused, they remain a favorite with most people, their cheery song and handsome territorial displays epitomizing the vitality and productivity of the spring.

W. E. Davis, Jr.

MEET OUR COVER ARTIST

Barry Van Dusen's artwork has frequently appeared on *Bird Observer* covers, most recently for the December 1991 issue. He lives in Princeton, Massachusetts, and has been an independent professional artist for nearly fifteen years. For the past eight years, he has worked closely with Audubon societies and conservation organizations throughout New England, and he was named the Audubon Alliance Artist of the Year for 1992. His work has been featured in books, magazines, posters, and brochures involving many aspects of natural history, although his favorite subjects are birds.

Barry is currently working on a pocket guide for beachcombers (a Massachusetts Audubon Society project). The guide will include drawings and information on shells, seaweeds, and seabirds. His artwork will also be featured at two upcoming shows. He will have a special one-person art show, "Natural Impressions," at the Sterling Mill Works from May 2 through May 31, 1992. The Sterling Mill Works is located at 15 School Street, Sterling, Massachusetts, telephone 508-422-3200. He will also have artwork exhibited at the Lyme Invitational Wildlife Art Show, to be held on June 6 and 7, 1992, at the Lyme Art Association Gallery in Old Lyme, Connecticut, telephone 203-434-7802. For future scheduled exhibits or additional information, Barry can be reached at 13 Radford Road, Princeton, Massachusetts 01541.

M. Steele