

construction. The clutch consists of 3-4 blue-green eggs which hatch in about two weeks. Only the female has a brood patch, and she alone does the incubation, although the male may bring food to her as well as defend the nest. The female also does all the brooding of the young during the twelve days before fledging, but both parents feed the young.

The diet of this species is largely composed of soil invertebrates, although Wood Thrushes also glean foliage for insects and spiders. They characteristically hop along the forest floor searching the leaf litter for arthropods. Fruit is an important dietary component in the late summer and fall.

Wood Thrushes have recolonized the northeast as the result of reforestation, but Breeding Bird Survey results indicate that numbers have been declining throughout the East since at least the mid-1960s. The reasons for the decline are complex and difficult to assess, but the main causes appear to be a combination of forest fragmentation on the breeding grounds and habitat destruction on the Central American wintering grounds. Forest fragmentation tends to produce a larger percentage of edge habitat in which predation by avian nest predators such as Blue Jays, American Crows, and Common Grackles, and by mammalian predators, is higher. In addition, Brown-headed Cowbird nest parasitism is higher near forest edges than in deep forest, and can significantly affect breeding success. It can only be hoped that wise conservation policies will help slow the decline of Wood Thrush numbers and preserve for us the "cathedrals where peace and serenity abide."

W.E. Davis, Jr.

#### About the Cover Artist

**Barry van Dusen** is presently acting as production manager and illustrator for an upcoming Massachusetts Audubon Society publication, *Grasslands of Northeastern North America*, by Peter Vickery and Peter Dunwiddie. From September until the end of the year, a selection of Barry's smaller works will be on display at the Cornucopia Gallery at 325 Ayer Road in Harvard, MA (508-772-6701). At the Society of Wildlife Artists exhibition in London, England, this past summer, Barry received a commendation for his water color, "Young Arctic Tern." Barry is still completing a new studio at his home in central Massachusetts, and he looks forward to using the new space to broaden his use of large formats and oil paints.