

larger siblings in lean years, thus facilitating brood reduction and survival of the larger chicks.

Both parents feed the chicks which fledge in about six weeks. The chicks, however, do not fly well by this time and prefer to hop about. They remain with their parents for an additional six weeks, with the nest as the focus of their activities, and during this time develop their considerable flying skills. The diet of ravens is largely carrion, small vertebrates, and especially at seabird colonies, eggs and nestlings. In areas of human habitation, they rely heavily on roadkills for carrion. They are cosmopolitan in their diet, eating garbage, berries, fruit, and seeds. They cache food, and have been observed dropping mollusks on rocks in a similar fashion to gulls.

Ravens were reported as common when the pilgrims arrived in Massachusetts but apparently were extirpated locally by shooting and by habitat alteration. Ravens are wary and nest in remote areas where they are persecuted by man, but have become bold and tame in areas such as Alaska, where they are not harassed. They are routinely seen in towns, perched atop buildings or hopping along sidewalks, and at garbage dumps. The recent expansion of their breeding range into Massachusetts bodes well for these intelligent and interesting birds.

W. E. Davis, Jr.

MEET OUR COVER ARTIST: ROBERT SHETTERLY

The Common Raven is the second contribution by Robert Shetterly to *Bird Observer's* covers. His first cover, Peregrine Studies, appeared on the October 1987 issue. He is a Maine artist and illustrator. His most recent book is *Speaking Fire at Stoves*, a collection of his drawings and etchings with poems by William Carpenter.

M. Steele