

mostly at night. The incubation period is between two and three weeks, followed by a fledging period of about a month. Both parents feed the young by regurgitation. After about two weeks things get crowded, and the adults feed the young birds, heads sticking out of the nest-hole, from the outside. After fledging, the young stay with the parents for several months and may stay in the natal territory for nearly half a year.

The main prey of Pileated Woodpeckers are carpenter ants and wood-dwelling beetle larvae, which they reach by scaling bark off trees, stumps, and fallen logs with their chisel-like bills. They use their long, protrusile tongue (which is sticky and barbed) to extract prey. They are opportunistic and will glean branches for prey such as spruce budworm larvae. They also eat various fruit and nuts and will eat suet in winter.

The Pileated Woodpecker was rare in the east by the end of the nineteenth century due to deforestation, but began to recover by the 1930s and continued to increase as reforestation has progressed. Interestingly, it has been suggested that the Dutch Elm blight may have benefited Pileated Woodpeckers by providing a source of large dead trees. Habitat alteration, particularly where old-growth forest is eliminated and harvest rotations shortened, is a current and future problem, since these woodpeckers need large dead trees for nesting and roosting. The birds are subject to predation by large accipiters and owls, lightning is a problem, and in the past they were shot for food. But Pileated Woodpeckers have become fairly tolerant of humans, and Breeding Bird Survey data suggest that populations are increasing, especially in the eastern United States and Canada. It appears that birders can hope to encounter the "log-cock" with increasing frequency.

W.E. Davis, Jr.

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

The work of Barry van Dusen appears frequently on the cover of *Bird Observer*. He is presently illustrating a pocket laminated guide on butterflies for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The fifth such guide Barry has worked on, "A Guide to Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening" will portray about sixty species. Another current project for Barry is adding a studio onto his central Massachusetts home.