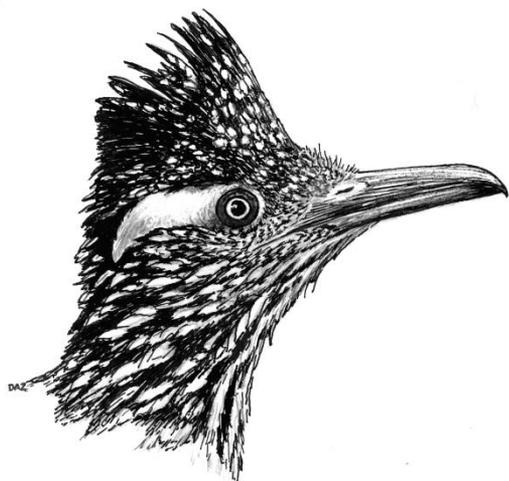


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THE NEW MEXICO ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Please welcome the following new members who have joined NMOS in 2020:

Claudia Anders, Berea, OH
Karen Blisard, Silver City
Meaghan Conway, Santa Fe
Phyllisha Hamrick, Santa Fe
Rickey Hudson, Albuquerque

David Loney, Farmington
Bob Nieman, Carlsbad
Dianne Rossbach, Albuquerque
Deb Wallace, Albuquerque
April Wilkinson, Rio Rancho

* * *

MEMBERSHIP DUES REQUEST

The work of NMOS continues even in these difficult and challenging times. Your support is needed now more than ever. If you've already joined or renewed, please consider an extra donation to support us at this time. Take this opportunity to pay your 2020 NMOS membership dues at our website (www.nmbirds.org/membership) and pay using PayPal or download the membership form, fill it out, and mail it, including a check made out to "NMOS." Membership in the society includes subscriptions to both our quarterly publications: *NMOS Bulletin* and *NMOS Field Notes*. Thank you!

* * *

IN MEMORIAM: ROLAND S. SHOOK

Roland Shook, a past president of NMOS, passed away from pneumonia in Silver City on 27 May 2020, aged 75 years. Roland was a life member of NMOS, served as a director of the society 2000–2006, editor of the *NMOS Bulletin* 2004–2006, and as president 2006–2010. He was a professor of biology at Western New Mexico University and was named emeritus professor after his retirement. Roland's passion was the birds of the Gila Valley and he spent countless days studying their distribution, status, and biology. He was always generous with what he learned and was a mentor to all others seeking to learn more about the birds of the Gila.



THE CERULEAN WARBLER IN NEW MEXICO

SARTOR O. WILLIAMS III

New Mexico Bird Records Committee, 1819 Meadow View Dr. NW, Albuquerque,
NM 87104

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An impressive array of New World warblers (Family Parulidae) occurs in New Mexico, where 49 species have been verified including all but one of the widespread warblers of eastern North America. Of those widespread eastern warblers, the Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*) is the rarest as regards to its occurrence in New Mexico, with but four acceptable records through 2019. This paper details those four records, discusses a questionable early report, corrects an erroneous published report, and summarizes the status of the species in the state.

The Cerulean Warbler breeds in eastern North America, almost entirely in the eastern U.S., where it nests primarily in mature deciduous forests; it migrates largely through the Mississippi Valley and across the Gulf of Mexico and winters in northern South America (Dunn and Garrett 1997, AOU 1998). Within recent decades, the species has declined precipitously throughout much of its breeding range, related to loss or alteration of mature hardwood forests, and it is similarly threatened within its relatively narrow wintering range on forested mountain slopes in northern South America (Dunn and Garrett 1997, Curson 2010, Buehler et al. 2020). The species is currently considered as a bird species of continental conservation concern (Rosenberg et al. 2016).

NEW MEXICO RECORDS

The Cerulean Warbler was first adequately reported in New Mexico in 1989, but there have been only three additional records since then; this scarcity in New Mexico is consistent with scarcity of the species elsewhere in western North America (Dunn and Garrett 1997, Buehler et al. 2020). One described as a spring-plumaged female was seen at Rattlesnake Springs, Eddy County on 19 April 1989 by Steve West (*Am. Birds* 43:522, 1989). One described as a female or immature male was seen at Percha Dam State Park, Sierra County, on 5 October 1991 by John E. Parmeter and again on 7 [not 14 as published] October by Larry P. Gorbet (*Am. Birds* 46:135, 1991). A singing male was described near Piedra Lisa Spring, Sandia Mountains, Sandoval County, on 22 May 1994 by Mike Ramos (unpublished). A singing male was photographed in the San Mateo Mountains at Springtime Campground, Socorro County, on 26 May 2001 by Christopher M. Rustay (*North Am. Birds* 55:338, 2001), providing the only confirmed (*i.e.*, with photograph or specimen) New Mexico record (Figure 1). The New Mexico Bird Records Committee has reviewed and accepted each of these four records; full documentation for each is on file with the committee.



Figure 1. Male Cerulean Warbler at Springtime Campground, San Mateo Mountains, Socorro County, New Mexico, 26 May 2001. Image capture from video taken by Christopher M. Rustay.

QUESTIONABLE AND ERRONEOUS REPORTS

A report of a Cerulean Warbler seen along the Mimbres River, Grant County, in late April 1853 by T. C. Henry (Henry 1855) was included in the state's avifauna by Bailey (1928) but was questioned by Hubbard (1970, 1978). As there are no details with which to evaluate that report, it is considered questionable and is not included here. A Cerulean Warbler was reported as definitively photographed at Ruidoso, Lincoln County, on or about 4 July 1978 (*NMOS Bulletin* 10:56, 1982). Reexamination of the single color slide of that bird (NM-1978-20-A) proves it to be a Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*), likely *J. h. dorsalis* (the breeding subspecies there), the misidentification probably caused by a shadow across the bird's breast resembling the breast band of a Cerulean Warbler.

NEW MEXICO STATUS SUMMARY

Distribution. The Cerulean Warbler is a casual vagrant to New Mexico, with four acceptable records through 2019, these from four counties from the vicinity of the Rio Grande Valley eastward: Sandoval County (Sandia Mountains), Socorro County (San Mateo Mountains), Sierra County (Rio Grande Valley) and Eddy County (Black River Valley) (Figure 2).

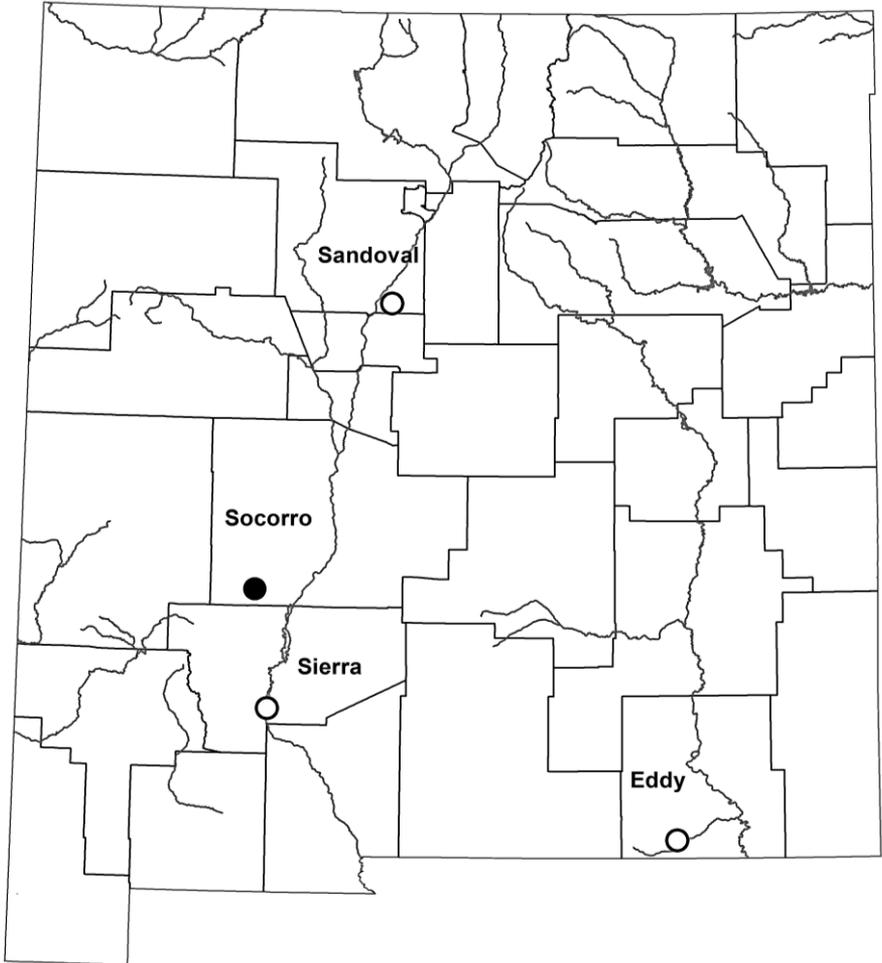


Figure 2. Map of New Mexico showing counties and locations of four Cerulean Warbler records through 2019. Solid circle indicates photographic record; open circles indicate detailed sight records.

Seasonality. There are three spring records, 19 April-26 May, and one fall record, 5-7 October. The 19 April date, from southeastern New Mexico, is early as regards the western U.S., and the preponderance of spring versus fall records is the opposite of that recorded for western North America generally (Dunn and Garrett 1997, Buehler et al. 2020); this is likely the result of New Mexico's eastern location. Adjacent western states show the same bias for spring records, Arizona with two spring records 18 and 28 May and none in fall (Monson and Phillips 1981) and Colorado with three spring records 4-25 May and two in fall 4 and 9 September (eBird.org, accessed 19 May 2020).

Habitat. All New Mexico records are of single birds, each showing preference for tall trees in wooded or forested areas. In riparian situations, they were found feeding in tops of cottonwoods (*Populus* sp.) at Rattlesnake Springs (elev. 1105 m) and Percha Dam State Park (1265 m). In mountains, they were associated with Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*) in mixed oak-conifer habitats near Piedra Lisa Spring (1890 m) in the northern Sandia Mountains, where a male was singing and gleaning insects from the crown of an oak, and at Springtime Campground (2135 m) in the San Mateo Mountains, where a male was singing and gleaning small caterpillars from oaks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett for confirming that the Ruidoso bird photographed in 1978 was not a Cerulean Warbler. Thanks also to Christopher Rustay for submitting video of the Springtime Campground bird in 1991 and to Bill Howe for "capturing" six definitive images from that video. Patricia Mehlhop created the map. Matt Baumann, Dave Krueper, Bill Howe, and Dave Mehlman provided helpful comments on an earlier manuscript.

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NMOS 58TH ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The previously scheduled 58th Annual Meeting for Saturday, March 28, 2020, was cancelled. Given the current situation with the coronavirus and the advice of health experts to reduce/eliminate nonessential social gatherings, the Board of NMOS decided to cancel the meeting. Those who registered will be reimbursed. Information on future annual meetings will be available at www.nmbirds.org.

* * *

NMOS FUNDRAISING TRIPS

The previously announced NMOS Fundraising Trips have been postponed and tentatively rescheduled to 2021 and beyond due to the coronavirus/COVID-19 health crisis and ongoing travel restrictions. Please check our website (www.nmbirds.org) and Facebook page for updates.

Tour Schedule:

- Belize, November 2021
- Caribbean: Greater Antilles Megatour, February, 2022
- Colombia, Fall/Winter, 2022/2023
- Trinidad & Tobago, Fall/Winter, 2023/2024

MELROSE WOODS RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATE

ROBERT MUNRO
Central New Mexico Audubon Society
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Melrose Woods is a nine-acre grove of white poplar and cottonwood surrounded by shortgrass prairie in Roosevelt County, eastern New Mexico, and is a designated Important Bird Area (www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/melrose-migrant-trap). More than 275 species of birds (including 44 species of warblers) have been reported from the location, often using it as a place to refuel before they continue their flight. This small parcel on New Mexico State Land Office property is leased for ranching, and the rancher leaves the gate on State Highway 60 unlocked for birders. Central New Mexico Audubon Society (CNMAS) has been working toward restoring Melrose Woods so that it remains viable for migrating birds for years to come.

In 2011, a lightning-caused grass fire burned into the woods, doing considerable damage to the cottonwood trees. In the years immediately following, CNMAS President Raymond VanBuskirk recognized how important the site was for birds and produced a restoration plan, but the State Land Office could not reach an agreement with CNMAS in 2014. In May 2019, Christopher Rustay convinced the CNMAS board that the time was right to revisit the restoration plan with the new administration.

CNMAS arranged a stakeholder meeting in June 2019 at the Randall Davey Audubon Center, where CNMAS and Audubon New Mexico representatives met with New Mexico State Land Office (SLO) representatives. The results were excellent news for birders: SLO proved to be very motivated to begin opening more state land sites to the public and they saw Melrose Woods as the first of many such projects. SLO recommended that CNMAS enter into a five-year business lease of the site, requiring the SLO to make improvements according to a Restoration Work Plan (see www.nmstatelands.org/2020/03/30/melrose-woods-trash-removal-and-trail-creation-project/). CNMAS would be required to carry insurance, provide an interpretive kiosk, and monitor use. The agricultural lessee would continue to hold his agriculture lease and cattle water tank, which would provide water for new plantings. As a reminder to all birders, while birding has been allowed on this property without a SLO permit thus far, camping has never been permitted here and crossing the fence at the north end of the property is still considered trespassing.

As of May 2020, CNMAS is the lease-holder of Melrose Woods. In order to make this challenging conservation project a reality the lease was crafted in such a manner to fulfill the requirements of not only CNMAS but SLO and the agricultural lessee. Through collaboration, compromise, and a shared vision for the successful conservation of this oasis we hope that our agreement may stand as an example for future conservation efforts. SLO has selected a contractor to complete the first phase of the restoration project which includes trail building and debris removal. A huge thank you goes out to all that participated in the online town hall event that preceded the selection of the

contractor. Here is a selection of how a few of the participants' comments were integrated into the plan:

- Some unnatural rocky fill areas will not be eliminated during debris removal in order to support migrating Rock Wrens.
- Specific attention will be given during the trail building phase to not disturbing the understory as it is essential habitat for birds.
- Although some fallen wood will be used for trail marking and bench construction, there will not be any wood removal from the site as it provides vital cover.

Johnson Environmental, based in Alamogordo, will be charged with completing this first phase of work. Work will commence in June 2020 and wrap-up within 30 days. For everyone's safety, public access to Melrose Woods will be limited to Friday through Sunday during the month of June. Please check the CNMAS Facebook page for any further updates including specific dates of completion.



MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

Please take the opportunity now to pay your 2020 NMOS membership dues. To join or renew your membership, go to our website (www.nmbirds.org/membership) and pay using PayPal (save a stamp, pay online!) or download the membership form, fill out, and mail to the following address, providing a check made out to "NMOS." Thank you!

New Mexico Ornithological Society
P.O. Box 3068
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New Mexico Ornithological Society
— Founded 1962 —

The New Mexico Ornithological Society was organized to gather and disseminate accurate information concerning the bird life of New Mexico; to promote interest in and appreciation of the value of birds, both aesthetic and economic; to further effective conservation of the state's avifauna; to facilitate opportunity for acquaintance and fellowship among those interested in birds and nature; and to issue publications as a means of furthering these ends.

Membership and Subscriptions: Membership in the New Mexico Ornithological Society is open to anyone with an interest in birds. Memberships are for a calendar year and annual dues are payable 1 January. Dues are: Regular Membership \$20; Family \$30; Student \$10; Supporting \$50; Life \$500. Address for the New Mexico Ornithological Society: Post Office Box 3068, Albuquerque, NM 87190-3068.

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The *Bulletin* is published quarterly; subscription is by membership in NMOS. The *Bulletin* serves two primary purposes: (1) to publish articles of scientific merit concerning the distribution, abundance, status, behavior, and ecology of the avifauna of New Mexico and its contiguous regions; and (2) to publish news and announcements deemed of interest to the New Mexico ornithological community.

NMOS members are encouraged to submit articles and news. Articles received are subject to review and editing. Published articles are noted in major abstracting services. Please submit articles in double-spaced electronic format, such as a Microsoft Word document, by e-mail to the Editor (see inside front cover). Refer to recent issues of the *Bulletin* for examples of style. News items may be submitted to the Editor by way of e-mail.

www.nmbirds.org

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