

The Cerulean Warbler is an uncommon and declining breeder in deciduous forests in the Hudson River Valley.

Conservation Status

This species is considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need and listed as Special Concern in New York. It is also a species of national conservation concern listed as a “Yellow” WatchList by the National Audubon Society and a Species of Continental Concern and of Regional Concern in Bird Conservation Regions (BCR) 13 and 28, and as a Species of Continental Stewardship and Regional Stewardship in BCR 28 by Partners in Flight. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate a decline in distribution in the Hudson River Valley.



Identification

This small, hard-to-see wood-warbler lives high in mature and older deciduous forests with broken canopies. The male has bright blue upperparts and white underparts, with two white wing bars and black streaks on the upper breast and sides. The female has bluish-green upperparts and yellowish underparts, with two white wing bars and faint streaks on the sides. The typical song has three parts--two or three slow buzzy notes, then several rapid buzzy notes without changing pitch, followed by a longer buzzy note on a higher pitch; “zray zray zray ze-ze-ze zreeeee.”

Habitat

This bird inhabits mature deciduous forests with tall trees and broken canopies in bottomland forests as well as forests on dry slopes and ridges. It prefers an open, sparse understory. Common tree species used include oaks, sycamores, cottonwoods, maples, black locust, and elm. The Cerulean Warbler Atlas Project found that breeding sites in the Hudson Highlands were primarily white oak, American beech, sycamore, and ash, whereas sites along the Hudson River were predominantly cottonwood and sycamore. It needs large tracts of at least 50-75 acres, but is more productive in tracts that are greater than 600 acres.

Nesting

The nest is placed on a limb in a mid-story or canopy tree that is located near an open space. It is generally concealed from above by clumps of leaves from other branches or vines growing alongside the branch supporting the nest. It is a small, shallow cup built by the female and is made of bark, plant fibers, lichen, and moss.

Food

This species feeds high in the canopy of a variety of trees by gleaning the undersides of leaves and taking short flights from a perch to capture flying insects. It is insectivorous and eats caterpillars, weevils, beetles, wasps, and bees.

Threats

- Loss and fragmentation of mature deciduous forest, especially along stream valleys, due to suburban and commercial development.
- Forest management techniques that shorten rotation periods so that less deciduous forest habitat reaches maturity.

Management Recommendations

- Conserve and maintain large, unfragmented tracts of mature deciduous forest of at least 600 acres.
- Practice forest management techniques that result in a broken canopy and an open understory.
- Restore riparian forests that include cottonwood and sycamore.

This management summary is adapted from Hamel 2000 and Hamel and Rosenberg 2007 and Rosenberg et al. 2000.

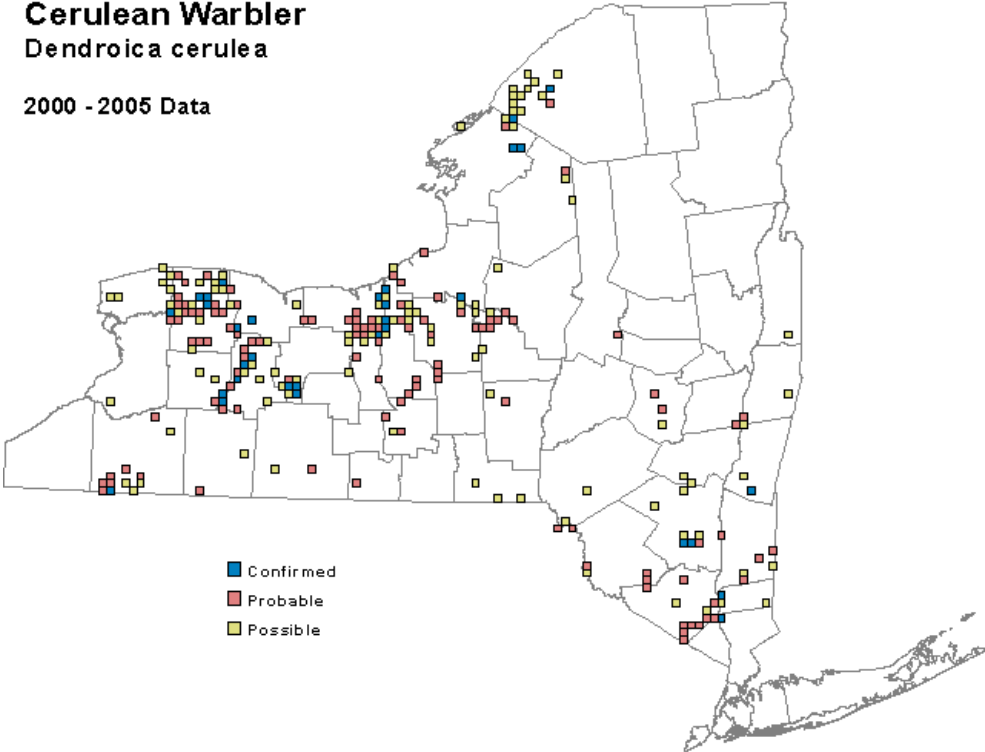
For additional information, see the following references:

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NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Cerulean Warbler *Dendroica cerulea*

2000 - 2005 Data



Cerulean Warbler *Dendroica cerulea*

1980 - 1985 Data

