

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Cerulean Warbler Breeding in Suffolk County: In 1982, in the course of work on the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas, a small colony of Cerulean Warblers (*Dendroica cerulea*) was discovered south of Sag Harbor in Southampton Town, Suffolk County. Confirmed breeding evidence was obtained, the first for Long Island.

The breeding area is a narrow band of widely spaced Black Locust trees (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*) at the edge of a rich, mesic woodland in the Ronkonkoma Moraine. The habitat, bordered by deep woods on one side, farmland and old pasture on the other, is characterized by extremely dense growth of blackberry (*Rubus*), catbriar (*Smilax*), and rose (*Rosa*) which effectively prevents a shrub or small tree layer from developing underneath. The scattered locusts average between forty and sixty feet in height.

The habitat is approached with great difficulty and the human uses of the surrounding areas are almost completely restricted to farming, fall hunting, and a limited amount of woodcutting in the forest (the latter in the fall and winter and probably by the owners of the tract). The actual breeding area is virtually impenetrable and essentially undisturbed.

The presence of Cerulean Warblers was first detected on 31 May 1982 from the woodland side at a place where a rather open, mixed woodland intersects with the edge of the belt of locusts. A persistently singing male Cerulean was using an open circle of forest trees as a regular part of its singing and feeding rounds and could be observed at length.

The persistence of this bird in pursuing a highly regular circuit throughout the month of June—often in drenching rain—led to suspicions of breeding. On 18 June a second (with possibly a third) singing male was located nearby. On 26 June, by following the edge of the locust belt from inside the forest, two or three more singing males were discovered and at least two females located in an area of somewhat lower and denser locust growth. One of these females was seen, in a rather agitated state, carrying food. Finally, on 10 July, at the site of the original observations, a fledging was observed in a shrub thicket at eye level being fed by an adult female. This fledgling bird, which exhibited every sign of having very recently been a nestling, had presumably fluttered down during an early flight attempt.

Interestingly enough, Dennis Puleston and Gilbert Raynor observed male Cerulean Warblers singing persistently and apparently on territory on a variety of breeding-season dates in the 1960s in moist woods near Noyack, hardly more than a mile or two north of the new breeding site.

These records were as follows: Singing males 19 May and 29 May 1962; 24 May and 10 June 1963; and 5 June 1964; and a female 20 June 1962.

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