

CENTRAL
New Mexico
AUDUBON SOCIETY

October 2023 Updates

In this month's news

Restoring Melrose Woods
By Robert Munro

The Backyard Refuge Program
By Glenda Morling



Thursday Birders

October 5th

Calabacillas Arroyo Open Space - 8:25AM - 11:30AM

October 12th

North Corrales Siphon Beach - 8:25AM - 12 noon

October 19th

Albuquerque Bosque Open Space Trails South - 7:55AM - 11:30AM

October 26th

Mariposa Basin Park - 8:25AM - 11AM park trail

<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org/trips/thursday-birders/>

Restoring Melrose Woods

By Robert Munro



As the days grow shorter and the leaves begin to change, there's a place in eastern New Mexico that beckons us. Melrose Woods, a tiny oasis of woodland amidst the harsh prairie grasslands, is an undisputed gem for those seeking the beauty of fall migration. If there's one thing that brings unbridled joy to a birder's heart, it's the thrill of identifying a fall warbler against the backdrop of the verdant poplars at Melrose Woods

This eight-acre sanctuary has long been a vital stopover for birds on their journey south for the winter. Over the years, more than 275 bird species have graced this small haven, making it a premier migrant "trap." What sets this location apart is not just the usual suspects; Melrose Woods has documented a remarkable list of vagrants—birds rarely seen outside their typical habitat.

According to the American Birding Association's "North American Birds, New Mexico: Fall 2020," Melrose Woods boasts a staggering list of forty-five new world warblers recorded at this location, the highest count at any single site in the entire United States. For birders, this is nothing short of a dream come true.



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Did You Know?

Per the NPS the average person would need to eat around 285 pounds of meat per day if they had the metabolism of a hummingbird.



However, the story of Melrose Woods has not been without its challenges. In 2011, a lightning strike sparked a fire that inflicted extensive damage upon this cherished woodland. Central New Mexico Audubon Society rallied to its defense. CNMAS, working alongside the agricultural lessee and the State Land Office, has been working tirelessly to conserve the area ever since, ensuring that Melrose Woods continues to thrive as a migratory sanctuary for birds.

Recent efforts have breathed new life into Melrose Woods, making it even more accessible and enjoyable. A dedicated team has been hard at work, going above and beyond to ensure the woodland remains a pristine haven for birds and visitors alike. Pathways have been cleared using a brush hog, allowing for better access to the site this fall. The past year has seen a campaign to rid the woods of the hundreds of thousands of tumbleweeds that inundated the area during a freak wind event. While there is still much work to be done, the progress is undeniable, and Melrose Woods is in much better condition than before.

In the spirit of responsible conservation, chainsaw work will be postponed until after the nesting season is clearly over to minimize disturbances. Please watch your step as some trees are blocking pathways. For those of you who haven't visited in some time you can also look forward to new signage that enhances the experience by providing valuable information about the area's ecology and the importance of bird conservation.

Moreover, for the comfort and convenience of guests, a generous donation has allowed us to provide a porta-potty on site. It's these thoughtful touches and the dedication of the community that make Melrose Woods not just a prime birding location but a testament to the power of community-driven conservation efforts. So, as you make your way to this natural paradise this fall, take a moment to appreciate the hard work and commitment that goes into preserving Melrose Woods for generations to come.

For those eager to embark on their birding adventure at Melrose Woods, here are the directions: Head to the north side of US-84, located just 10 miles west of Melrose, near Mile Marker 354. Please shut all gates as you go through them.



**If you have any questions or comments, or would like to get involved and help at Melrose Woods, please contact us on our website or email Robert Munro
rmunro@cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org**

A BIG thank you from all of us to Robert

I would like to thank Robert Munro, one of our two board vice presidents, who has donated so much time to Melrose Woods over the last few years in order to restore it and support the thousands of migrants that pass through there during migration. This fall, Robert went out to Melrose and single-handedly cleared pathways with a rented brush hog so that birders could enjoy seeing migrating birds. In September alone, 101 species were reported from this small oasis.

Glenda Morling, President, Board of Directors, CNMAS

The Backyard Refuge Program

By Glenda Morling



The National Audubon recently released their new and very ambitious strategic plan. As we have researched it, we have been working on aligning ourselves with their goals for reversing the decline in bird numbers and species due to climate change and habitat loss. One huge step we have taken towards this is to add a Climate Team, led by a new board member, Dana Loy. This team is already actively engaged in issues of environmental concern in our neighborhoods. We will learn more about their activities very soon. We also started to think about a grassroots effort that is already well established -- The Backyard Refuge Program. I wondered if, by raising awareness and promoting the Program this year, we could get more of our members and community to participate, and could thus be part of the NAS strategic plan at a real grassroots level, assisting bird populations and bird habitat in our region.

Friends of Valle de Oro, who run this excellent program in our area, have already certified 105 acres and 319 individuals and businesses. I believe we can help them to add more! Our chapter has over 1400 members! We will be working on helping individual members to become certified this year through mentoring and practical support from volunteers.

Calendar

October 15th

9:30AM - 2PM

Rail-Yard market, Albuquerque

CNMAS Volunteers will have a table and be handing out information and educational materials

October 19th

7PM - 8PM

CNMAS Monthly Program Zoom and live at the Bernalillo Extension Center

Jon Hayes, Executive Director, Audubon South West (ASW), will be talking about the structure, mission & projects of ASW, including ASW's involvement with the SunZia Transmission Project

October 21th

9:30AM - 1:30PM

Join Laurel Ladwig from Friends of Valle de Oro for Build your Backyard Refuge Day!

Details linked below:

<https://friendsofvalledeoro.org/abq-backyard-refuge/>

Laurel will be doing our Montly Program Presentation in March 2024

If you have any questions or comments, or would like to get involved and help make a positive impact on bird populations and habitat, please contact us on our website or email gmorling@cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org