

The Coffee-Coal-Cerulean Warbler Connection

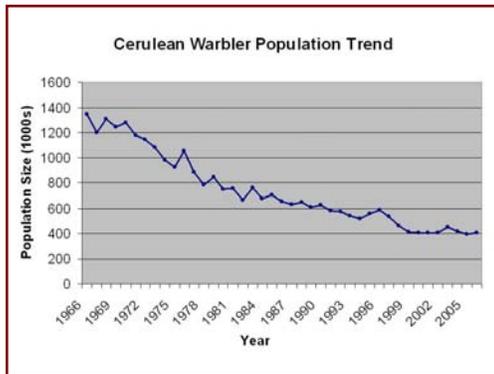
A Partnership Proposal for Conservation Action

The Partnership Challenge

The Cerulean Warbler is a small migratory songbird that breeds in mature deciduous forests of eastern North America, migrates across the Gulf of Mexico and through Central America, and winters in evergreen forests of the northern Andes Mountains in South America. Habitat loss and degradation across all these areas have contributed to Cerulean Warbler population declines of about 3% per year over the last 40 years. A remarkable overlap occurs between Cerulean Warbler habitat and existing areas of Appalachian coal and Andean coffee production. Therefore, these two industries are closely intertwined with the status of this bird.



Cerulean Warbler. Photo courtesy of Robert Royce



ESA Listing

Continued declines of Cerulean Warblers could lead to Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing, which would impose additional regulations onto industrial activities involving Cerulean Warbler habitat in the United States.

High Profile Opportunities

Industries seek opportunities to demonstrate environmental friendliness, bolster their environmental image, and develop 'name recognition' for their environmental activities by implementing ecologically appropriate practices. This partnership will

strive to provide effective, proactive, and high profile conservation opportunities to industry partners while recognizing the need for companies and producers to remain competitive in their respective markets.

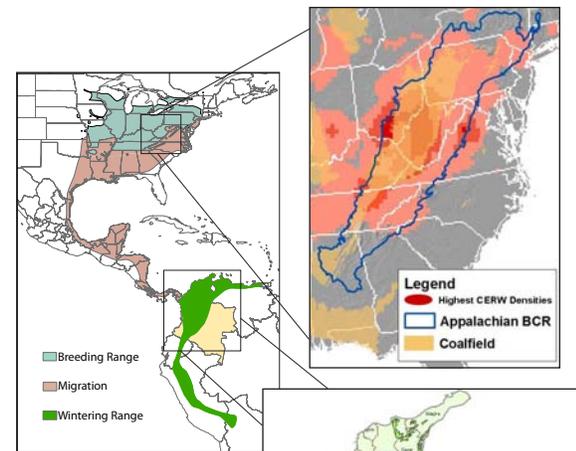
Connections and Collaborations

Cerulean Warblers connect the Americas through migration and the need for habitat conservation. Both the coal and coffee industries have connections throughout the Americas given the global nature of their products. The following collaborations could be developed to help strengthen connections between potential partners:

- Bird-friendly certification processes and products could link the two industries, such that they are promoted cooperatively through collaborations on marketing and public relations campaigns;
- Carbon sequestration markets could link carbon credits from shade grown agriculture or forest restoration programs to coal or other industries seeking carbon offsets; and
- Partners could work collaboratively to support forest conservation and shade grown agriculture in South America through mitigation or conservation funds.

Partnership Goals

A. Reverse population declines of Cerulean Warblers and reduce the likelihood of ESA listing by strategically conserving/restoring forest habitat on breeding and non-breeding grounds in a coordinated manner (i.e., formal industry-conservation partnership) and improve ecosystem functions in these areas.



These maps show the breeding and wintering range of Cerulean Warbler, overlap of coal deposits with the Cerulean's breeding range (upper inset), and overlap of coffee producing regions with the wintering range in Colombia (lower inset).

- In North America, reclaim surface mined lands back to functional native hardwood forest; and
- In South America, protect and restore native forest, and maintain or restore shade-grown agriculture.

B. Develop and implement sustainable industry practices to create additional resources and job opportunities that support the people of the Appalachian and Andean Mountain regions.

- Develop new programs and job opportunities in rural communities to help achieve partnership goals for habitat restoration;
- Build community awareness of the natural world and its interface with industry activities, as well as awareness of international connections among people industry, birds, and the environment;
- Develop positive public relations opportunities; and
- Develop new markets for bird-friendly certified products/processes.



Certified coffee plantation in Colombia (above) and a parade with children dressed as Cerulean and Golden-winged Warblers as part of an education program (left).

Key Strategies

Developing and implementing several key strategies will assist the partnership in achieving its goals; potential strategies include:

- Cerulean Warbler-based certifications for coffee products and mine reclamation processes;
 - i. Research, develop, and market a Cerulean Warbler Conservation coffee that supports farmers producing bird-friendly coffee;
 - ii. Develop and implement a bird-friendly certification process for mine reclamation that uses the 5-step Forestry Reclamation Approach;
- Public relations campaigns promoting certified products and procedures;
- Educational programs that build awareness of the natural world in local communities; develop international links among communities across the Americas;
- Develop job opportunities through reforestation of mined lands in the U.S. and through shade farming and restoring native forest in South America;
- Use carbon sequestration credits/markets to support industry-related reforestation efforts in both North and South America;
- Establish conservation funds provided to South American farmers to produce bird-friendly coffee and/or support critical bird research and monitoring; and
- Identify and create “Conservation Focus Areas” where Cerulean Warblers occur at high densities and a broad range of conservation activities could be targeted.

Expected Outcomes

Implementation of key strategies is expected to improve the status of Cerulean Warblers, decrease the likelihood of future ESA listing, improve social acceptance and sustainability of industries, and increase community awareness of conservation issues. Although factors outside the influence of this partnership will also impact the bird, the partnership’s strategies should address high priority actions in areas of high Cerulean Warbler densities to produce the greatest bird response while also creating positive outreach and marketing opportunities.



Research plot in Tennessee being loosely graded to form a soil medium suitable for tree growth under the Forestry Reclamation Approach.

Partnership Organization

The organization and structure of the partnership should be determined through consensus of the partners. Establishing a coordinator would help move the partnership’s effort forward, and a steering committee of partner representatives could develop a common vision while providing oversight for planning and implementing partnership activities. The resulting organization should reflect the perspectives of all the partners.

This proposal has been developed through the Cerulean Warbler Technical Group by staff from federal agencies and partnership organizations (including FWS, OSM, Forest Service, ARRI, and American Bird Conservancy). It is a draft proposal and active input is sought from industry representatives. For more information, contact Brian Smith at bsmith@abcbirds.org or Patrick Angel at pangel@osmre.gov