

# Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants Program

## Ohio, Venezuela

### **Binational Partnership Receives a \$57,204 Conservation Grant.**

On May 3, 2004, as authorized under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (Act), Steve Williams, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, acting on behalf of Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, approved \$57,204 in funding for the Demography of Cerulean Warblers on Breeding and Wintering Grounds Project in Ohio's Athens, Vinton, and Jackson Counties in Congressional Districts 6 and 18. Project partners also will be carrying out activities in Venezuela to complement and further advance the conservation goals of this binational project. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop initiatives in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean to conserve neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. Certain activities defined by the Act are eligible for funding, and partnerships must match grant requests 3:1. Contributions from U.S. federal partners do not qualify as match.

Debates continue over whether events and conditions on the breeding grounds versus the wintering grounds pose the greatest limiting factor to declining migratory bird species, especially the cerulean warbler. This species breeds in large tracts of mature, deciduous forests in the U.S. mid-Atlantic region, and winters in submontane forests on the slopes of the Andes Mountains in South America. It has been experiencing the most severe decline of any warbler breeding in North America, yet very little demographic data have been collected on this species. The Cerulean Warbler Technical Group, an international public-private partnership, recognizes that studies must be conducted in core areas of the species' breeding and wintering grounds to help guide conservation efforts.

The goal of this project is to conduct the research needed to better manage cerulean warbler habitat. Project partners, including The Ohio State University-School of Natural Resources, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and The Nature Conservancy-Ohio Chapter, are contributing \$171,612 to help accomplish that goal.

### **In Ohio**

Cerulean warblers are considered to be area-sensitive; therefore, habitat fragmentation occurring on the breeding grounds is thought to be negatively affecting the population. Project partners will evaluate how arrival date, density, reproductive success, site fidelity, and condition of the warblers are related to forest management practices at multiple spatial scales. The project is located in Bird Conservation Region 28 (Appalachian Mountains) and the Appalachian Mixed Mesophytic Forests Ecoregion.

### **In Venezuela**

Andean forests, the wintering grounds of cerulean warblers, are intensively logged and often converted to other uses. Shade-grown coffee plantations may serve as refugia for birds in highly deforested areas. Project partners will compare density, sex and age segregation, condition, and site fidelity of the warblers in primary forest and in shade-grown coffee plantations within the Venezuelan Andes Montane Forests Ecoregion.



*Cerulean Warbler Habitat in Ohio*

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