

Cerulean Warbler Forest Enhancement Program

ABOUT CERULEAN WARBLERS

Named for the male's brilliant blue coloration, the Cerulean Warbler may be one of the most elusive birds to see in the Appalachians. They nest high up in canopies of large trees, which often keeps them out of sight. In the Appalachian portion of their breeding range, Cerulean Warblers seek out mature oak and northern hardwood forests with tall deciduous trees with open canopies and gaps that allow sunlight to reach the forest floor.

Regional Importance

About 80% of the entire Cerulean Warbler population breeds within the Appalachian Mountains, making it one of the species of highest concern in the region.



Loss of forest habitat and declines in mature forest health in the region has led to the population declining sharply during the latter part of the 20th century. Over the last 50 years, about 70% of the Cerulean Warbler population, or about 1 million birds, have been lost.

IMPROVING FOREST HEALTH FOR WILDLIFE

Though significant areas of Pennsylvania remain forested, forests today are very different from those that existed prior to the 19th century. Present-day forests are often very uniform with densely packed trees and closed canopies that lack the variety of overstory and understory habitat structure required by many songbirds, including the Cerulean Warbler. Increased development across the landscape, as well as disrupted or absent natural disturbances like forest fires, has dramatically impacted mature forest health and reduced the quality of these habitats for a variety of birds and wildlife.

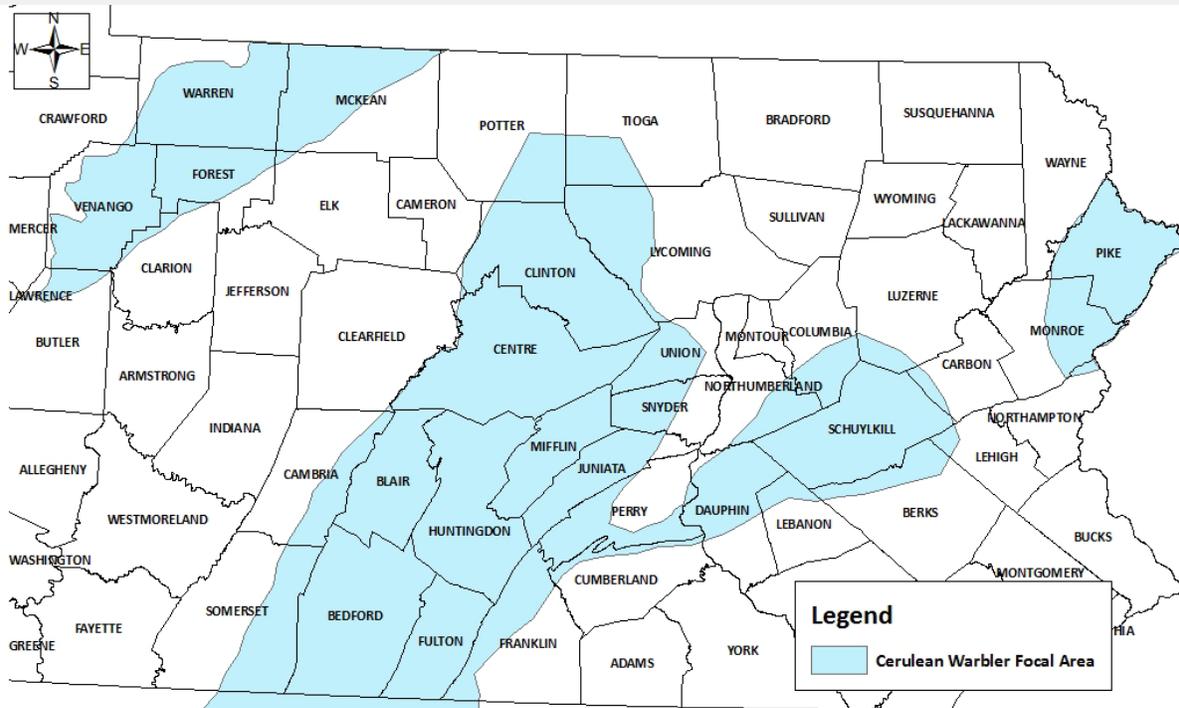
Active forest management, including controlling competing and invasive plants, thinning, and forest stand improvement can promote the mix of cover and tree species needed for wildlife to thrive. Removing undesirable plants improves forest health by providing more sunlight, water, and nutrients to higher value and unique species. The increased food and cover means better habitat for deer, turkey, and many non-game species.

Management practices that enhance Cerulean Warbler habitat also improve forest regeneration, tree growth rates, and acorn production in oaks.

ABOUT THE CERULEAN WARBLER FOREST ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Cerulean Warbler Appalachian Forestland Enhancement project will work with private landowners to enhance forest habitat on private lands for Cerulean Warblers and other wildlife. Technical and financial assistance for landowners to improve forest habitat for Cerulean Warblers and other wildlife is available for properties meeting the following criteria:

- **Within the Focal Area** (See map below)
- **Within Forested Landscapes** (At least 80% forest within 1.5 miles, or within >1,800 acres of contiguous forest)
- **Willing to actively manage portions of their forest for Cerulean Warbler habitat**



MAP OF CERULEAN WARBLER FOCAL AREA

Projects to improve Cerulean Warbler habitat often include thinning the forest by removing low-quality trees and using herbicides to control undesirable or invasive plants on the forest floor. Financial assistance may be available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help cover the costs of these practices. More information on the Natural Resources Conservation Service is available online at www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

If you own property that meets the criteria above and are interested in learning more about the Cerulean Warbler Forest Enhancement Program, contact:

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