

Cerulean Warbler

Dendroica cerulea

Guidelines for Landowners Using Conservation Practices

Missouri Department of
Conservation

Common name ▪ Cerulean Warbler
Scientific name ▪ *Dendroica cerulea*
State Status ▪ Species of Conservation Concern
Federal status ▪ None

Ecology

The cerulean warbler is a light blue bird trimmed with black and white. Cerulean warblers are migratory, insectivorous songbirds. They pick small insects from tree leaves and occasionally catch flying insects. In Missouri, and throughout most of their breeding range, cerulean warblers are associated with mature deciduous forests, particularly in floodplains or other wet habitats. They arrive in North America in mid-April. Nesting is initiated soon after arrival.

Reasons for Decline

In the past, the cerulean warbler was one of the most abundant breeding birds in the lower Mississippi valley, presently; the warbler population is a fraction of its original size. This decline primarily followed logging in the early part of this century. Loss of bottomland forest acreage has also reduced cerulean warbler populations. Recent surveys indicate there is a continued downward trend. In Missouri, the cerulean warbler population has declined at an average annual rate of over 5% according to 1967-1989 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data.

Recommendations

Where possible, promote land management activities that restore or maintain native bottomland forest, riparian and wetland habitat for cerulean warblers.

Consider the balance between adverse and beneficial practices when determining the overall effect of a conservation practice.



Beneficial Practices

- Large tracts, preferably of at least 1,000 acres of mature, deciduous forests, primarily in lowland areas, should be maintained or selectively managed. Younger hardwood stands adjacent to mature stands should be protected from intense timber harvest. These younger trees will provide future habitat for the warblers.
- Restore riparian, bottomland forest and wooded wetland habitat adjacent to large tracts of mature deciduous forest.
- Warbler breeding sites can be protected in Missouri by proper management of lowland forests from timber harvest and by restoring bottomland forest.
- Livestock exclusion from riparian, wetland and bottomland forest habitat.

Adverse Practices

- Destruction, degradation or fragmentation of lowland hardwood forests, riparian or wetland habitat from clearing, construction, timber harvest or other associated practices.
- Unmanaged application of pesticides, animal waste or fertilizers that destroy or degrade habitats that support populations of this species.
- Livestock grazing of wetlands, riparian and bottomland forest habitats.

Information Contacts

Missouri Department of Conservation
Policy Coordination Section
P.O. Box 180
2901 W. Truman Blvd
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
Telephone: 573-751-4115

<http://www.mdc.mo.gov/nathis/endangered/>

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
Telephone: 800-361-4827 / 573-751-1300

<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/env/index.html>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
101 Park DeVille Dr., Suite A
Columbia, MO 65203
Telephone: 573-234-2132

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/partners/missouri.html>

Legal

The Missouri Department of Conservation prepared these guidelines for conservation practices with assistance from other state agencies, contractors, and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat.

Compliance with these management guidelines is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law or by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal, state or local laws may affect construction practices.

“State Endangered Status” is determined by the Missouri Conservation Commission under constitutional authority, and specific requirements for impacts to such species are expressed in the Missouri Wildlife Code, rule 3 CSR 10-4.111.