



Canada warbler

SUCCESS STORIES

CONSERVING STATE PRIORITY FOREST BIRDS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

Southern Wings partners are advancing the conservation of shared migratory forest birds by protecting critical habitats in Colombia's Central Andes. This region is a key wintering ground for Neotropical migratory bird (NMB) species such as the Cerulean, Golden-winged, and Canada Warblers.

Colombia is home to more than 170 migratory bird species and holds a strategic position along their migratory routes. Recognizing the importance of this region, American Bird Conservancy (ABC) established the Central Andes BirdScape, a conservation initiative spanning approximately 3,934 square miles across the departments of Quindío, Risaralda, Caldas, and Tolima. Situated between 1,000 and 3,000 meters in elevation, the BirdScape encompasses mid-elevation forests and agroforestry systems that support over 70 NMB species. These areas have been identified as priorities under the Conservation Investment Strategy for Mid-Elevation Forests (Stewart et al., 2023).

Despite its ecological importance, the region faces significant threats from deforestation and forest fragmentation—primarily driven by unsustainable agricultural practices. In 2021, the Andes region accounted for 17% of Colombia's total deforestation, second only to the Amazon.

To counter these threats, partners are working with local communities to promote bird-friendly practices in coffee-growing landscapes. The Paisajes Sostenibles (Sustainable Landscapes) project supports forest restoration and habitat connectivity by increasing native tree cover in and around coffee farms. Conservation practices also include organic production, protection of forest patches, and improvements in water efficiency during coffee processing—all designed to benefit both birds and local communities.

cerulean warbler



PARTNERSHIPS

ON THE GROUND PARTNERS

- American Bird Conservancy
- Corporación VivoCuenca
- Fundación Ecológica Cafetera
- Comité de Cafeteros de Caldas
- Central Hidroeléctrica de Caldas
- SELVA

STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCY PARTNERS

- Missouri
- Indiana
- Tennessee
- Virginia
- North Carolina
- Kentucky
- Michigan

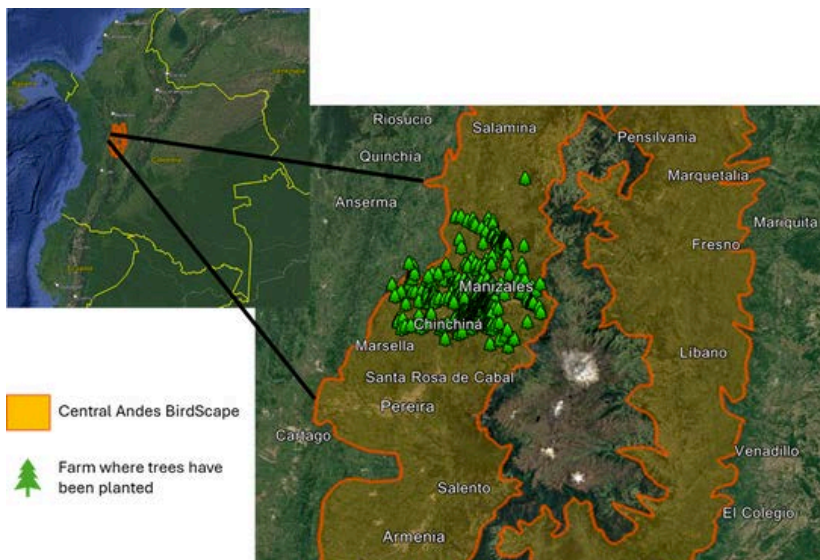
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PROJECT IMPACTS

- More than 250,500 native trees planted
- Over 10.5 miles of protective fencing installed
- Over 2,700 acres restored and conserved across 280 farms

All trees have been sourced from nurseries supported by the project or its partners, including those operated by Mujeres Cafeteras (Women Coffee-Growers) and local communities—strengthening local capacity and livelihoods.

Since 2021, ABC and its partners have hosted the annual **“Coffee, Forests, and Birds”** contest, recognizing coffee producers who demonstrate exemplary conservation efforts. The contest raises awareness of the BirdScape and inspires more farmers to join the movement to restore and protect vital bird habitats.



MAP: Locations of farms where trees have been planted (marked with green trees) in the three watersheds we are working within the Central Andes BirdScape (brown): río Chinchiná (light green polygon), ríos Tapias-Tareas (yellow polygon), and río Campoalegre (light blue polygon).

MOVING FORWARD, FUNDING IS NEEDED TO

- Engage additional landowners and coffee producers to enhance habitat connectivity for NMBs;
- Expand the project into adjacent watersheds and departments;
- Maintain a dedicated team of forestry technicians to support landowners with planting and habitat management;
- Develop a 10-year sustainability plan to guide long-term implementation of the sustainable landscape project;
- Plant 100,000 additional trees by 2026.

CONTACT

Bradley Wilkinson, Ph.D.
Bird Conservation Program Manager
NABCI Coordinator
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
202-838-3475
bwilkinson@fishwildlife.org

Deb Hahn
International Relations Director
Association of Fish and
Wildlife Agencies
202-838-3458
dhahn@fishwildlife.org

