



LA REINITA CERÚLEA

Drawing contributed by Erick Manrique, ProAves-Peru

Report to the Cerulean Warbler Working Group, from El Grupo Cerúleo, 13 March 2003

On the meeting of El Grupo Cerúleo, at Cabañas San Isidro, Ecuador, 4-6 March 2003



Dave Mehman photo, by Mitch Lysinger

Introduction

The primary activity of El Grupo Cerúleo during the first six months of 2003 was a workshop held in Ecuador to discuss the conservation of the Cerulean Warbler in the wintering range. The workshop was held 3-6 March 2003 at the Cabañas San Isidro lodge, Cosango, Napo Province, Ecuador. This workshop was financially sponsored by USDA Forest Service through funding to The Nature Conservancy and by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Organized by staff from NFWF, The Nature Conservancy, Fundación Jocotoco, and USDA Forest Service, this workshop constituted the second meeting of El Grupo Cerúleo, which was founded at the December 2002 Shepherdstown, WV, Cerulean Warbler workshop.

Objectives of the workshop were to:

- 1) To share general information about the status of an important migratory species, *Dendroica cerulea*, which is under consideration in the US for listing under the endangered species act.
- 2) To stimulate more joint conservation work involving North and South American partners in the conservation of habitat important for *Dendroica cerulea*, in the context of other ongoing activities.

Participants

A total of more than 30 people were invited, representing all the countries of the breeding and winter ranges of the bird. Emphasis was placed on participants from all countries of the winter range, limitation to the minimal number of North Americans, involvement of government, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and knowledgeable bird tour leaders. Seventeen participants, representing 7 countries, participated. Input from a large number of additional individuals was included in the work. Workshop funding was provided by NFWF, TNC, US AID, and US Forest Service.

Activities

Workshop was organized as a series of information presentations, followed by small group planning discussions, and a wrap-up session on priority activities.

Informational presentations were given by the North Americans on the biology and status of Cerulean Warbler, a report on the activities conducted by El Grupo in West Virginia in December, and an outline of the successful model of this project conducted for the Golden-cheeked Warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*) in recent years. Summary presentations on ongoing conservation activities for habitats and species of important conservation concern within the Cerulean Warbler winter range were presented for each South American country. Informational presentations on the occurrence and biology of the species in South American winter grounds were presented for each country in the winter range. Vision for coordinated conservation projects was presented by Luis Naranjo and David Pashley.

Small group discussions among representatives of the Northern (Venezuela, Colombia) and Southern Andes (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia) focused on a series of questions for discussion. They identified and set priorities for activities pertaining to information gathering, monitoring, research, and identification of important areas. Further small group work prioritized activities in terms of needed projects in research, GIS, land protection and management, and education and communication with the public.

Outcomes

A considerable amount of information on the occurrence and habitats of the Cerulean Warbler in South America is available. A great deal of clarification of this information, and accumulation of additional existing records from additional sources, is required. This can only be considered a preliminary summary of the workshop.

Cerulean Warblers in the winter are now virtually absent in Bolivia, and little evident in Peru. In the other countries occurrence is regular. Habitats include shade coffee plantations as well as secondary and primary forests. Investigations of habitat distribution are warranted. Cerulean Warbler range in the Andes coincides with that of one of the most diverse in species, and in species of conservation priority recognized by the majority of conservation interests in the Andes.

Interim leadership of El Grupo Cerúleo continues to be held by Paul Hamel, until October 2003, at which time the group will next meet in Chile.

Next Steps

Three primary activities were identified by the group as initial foci for the next several months. First is developing a proposal to accumulate GIS coverage layers sufficient to produce a map of Cerulean Warbler habitat distribution in conjunction with existing conservation projects across the species range in the Andes, with capability of use for modeling habitat distribution and effects of various future projections of land use and climate change and their effects on the species, its associates, and its range. Second is preparing a summary of distribution as a paper for the Neotropical Ornithological Congress in Chile in October, 2003. Third is the development of a pilot study to clarify the extant distribution, associated species, habitats and elevations, as well as successful survey methodologies for the species in the boreal winter, to be begun in fall 2003. US Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy are exploring possibilities of identifying funding sources for some of this pilot study. This is obviously an ambitious agenda.

Challenge

The absence of the species from Bolivia for over 40 years, and the scarcity of the species in Peru, despite the relative abundance of forests at the appropriate elevations there, has led El Grupo to extend a challenge to the rest of the Cerulean Warbler working group. The Challenge is to provide sufficient numbers of the birds that they can take advantage of existing habitats in the southern portion of the winter range.

Key to photo:

Standing Left to Right, Cecilia Pacheco, CECIA, Ecuador; Kate Girvan, Queens Univ., Canada; David Pashley, American Bird Conservancy, USA; Luis Naranjo, WWF, Colombia; Sebastián Herzog, Armonia, Bolivia; Francisco Sornoza, Fund. Jocotoco, Ecuador; Dave Mehlman, TNC, USA; Paolo Ramoni, Univ. De los Andes, Venezuela; Juan Fernando Freile, Birdlife Internacional, Ecuador; Gabriela Montoya, Min. Ambiente, Ecuador; Megan Hill, NFWF, Guatemala.

Kneeling Left to Right: Paul Hamel, USFS, USA; Luis Miguel Renjifo, Inst. Humboldt, Colombia; Jorge Botero, CENICAFE, Colombia; Miguel Lentino, Phelps Museum, Venezuela; Tomas Valqui, LSU, Peru; Jeremy Flanagan, ProAvesPeru, Peru.

Submitted by Paul Hamel, Interim chair, El Grupo Cerúleo, 14 March 2003; Spanish translation prepared 9 July 2003.

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