WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

WEST VIRGINIA SONGBIRDS

Landowner engagement is a key to successful habitat conservation for a wide diversity of species, including forest songbirds. Researchers are in West Virginia gathering information about songbirds as a preliminary step to determining the best ways to engage different types of landowners, mprove management strategies for songbirds linked to certification of sustainable forest practices, and identify the most effective way to implement multi-species conservation across ownership boundaries and types.

KEY COLLABORATORS

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO)
- The National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, Inc. (NCASI)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)
- West Virginia Department of Natural Resources
- U.S. Geological Survey
- West Virginia University

PROJECT TIMELINE

2021: PROJECT START

JUNE 30, 2024 (WITH OPTION TO EXTEND): PROJECT COMPLETE

SPECIES FOCUS

The research focuses on the entire songbird community, including:

Golden-Winged Warbler

Cerulean Warbler

Wood Thrush

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Researchers have been counting species by recording all songbirds seen and heard in large private, Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)-certified forests and adjacent family-owned forestlands. They completed 330 surveys in multiple locations in 2021 and 2022, and recently completed a third season (data not yet available).

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that they have baseline data, researchers are testing various approaches to engaging private landowners in activities to improve conditions for songbirds. The project might be expanded to include additional ownership types and management strategies, such as state or federally owned forestlands. Long-term monitoring will be essential to understanding how conservation management techniques across all types of forest ownership to benefit songbird species in West Virginia.

CONSERVATION SUCCESS STARTS WITH KEEPING FORESTS INTACT

We all have a hand in ensuring conservation of wildlife. When we purchase wood and forest products, we support the sustainable cycle of growing, harvesting and replanting that keeps our forests as forests. Thousands of species call working forests home, and many species thrive in actively managed working forests.

This project is made possible by the Wildlife Conservation Initiative (WCI), a collaborative partnership between NAFO, the USFWS, NCASI, and other stakeholders to conserve fish and wildlife species in private working forests. The WCI was founded on the recognition that private working forests are an important conservation tool. NAFO members own and manage more than *43* million acres of private working forests in *32* states — the scale needed to achieve meaningful conservation success. Through the WCI, the proactive and voluntary conservation efforts of government and private working forest owners are delivering positive outcomes for wildlife across the United States.

WildlifeConservationInitiative.org

NAFO National Alliance of Forest Owners