# Forests Are Natural Climate Solutions

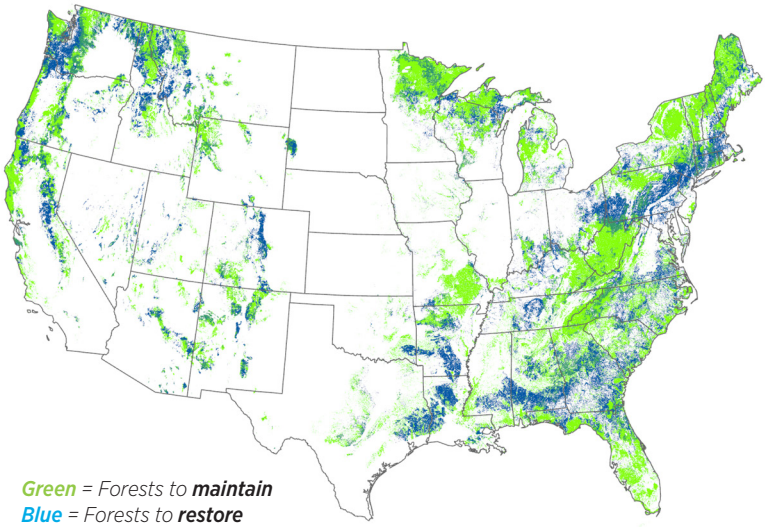
*<< **Cerulean Warblers** are vulnerable to climate change but could be helped by investments in North America's forests*

## About Audubon's *Natural Climate Solutions Report*

Audubon's science team focused on one of the most powerful tools in the climate mitigation toolkit: the natural ability of ecosystems to store carbon. By keeping more carbon in the ground and capturing it in plants, we can reduce carbon dioxide in our atmosphere.

Researchers looked at forest, grassland, aridland, coastal and freshwater wetland, tundra, and urban and suburban ecosystems. In each, they found significant overlap between important bird habitat and areas of high carbon value.

**The bottom line: what's good for birds is also good for climate change mitigation.**



*Green = Forests to **maintain***
*Blue = Forests to **restore***

*Photo: (Top) Cerulean Warbler. Gary Robinette/Audubon Photography Awards.*
*Map: Carol Zuber-Mallison/ZMGRAPHICS.*

## Takeaways from the Natural Climate Solutions Report

In the US, forests are home to the greatest diversity of breeding bird species, and up to one-third of migratory birds depend on forests at some point during the year. Nationally, forests have the largest climate mitigation potential of all ecosystems; thus, reforestation represents the greatest opportunity to mitigate climate change impacts while also benefitting biodiversity, air and water filtration, soil enrichment, and flood control.

- Total forest carbon storage is higher than any other ecosystem in the US, and forests actively sequester more carbon than any other habitat type.
- The majority (> 50%) of priority areas in forests are privately owned, highlighting the importance of working with landowners and managers, and investing in policies that will provide incentives for maintenance and restoration of forests.
- Reforestation will provide early successional forest for species like American Woodcock and Wood Thrush, and protection of old growth forests will benefit species like Spotted Owl and Black-throated Blue Warbler.
- Forests are home to some of our most climate vulnerable groups of species; restoring and sustainably managing forests will help these species track their preferred habitat under climate change while also serving as critical carbon stores and sinks.