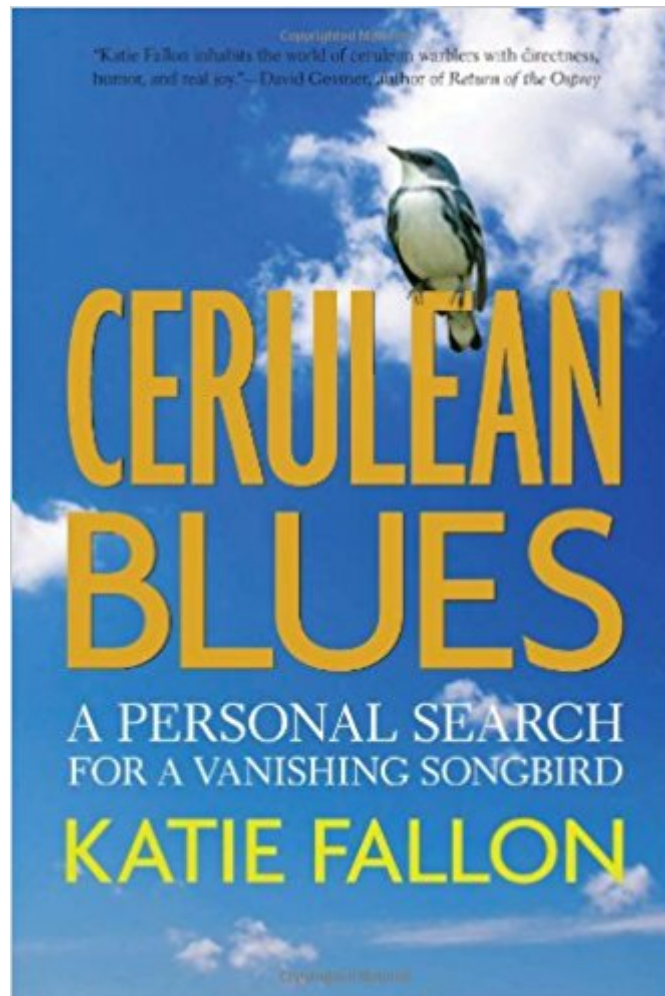




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Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search For A Vanishing Songbird



Synopsis

Taking the reader from the mountains of Appalachia to a coffee plantation near Bogotá, Colombia, this investigation into the plight of the cerulean warbler—a tiny migratory songbird—describes its struggle to survive in ever-shrinking bands of suitable habitat. This elusive creature—a favorite among bird watchers and the fastest-declining warbler species in the United States—has lost three percent of its total population each year since 1966. This precipitous decline means that today there are 80 percent fewer ceruleans than 40 years ago, and their numbers continue to drop because of threats including deforestation, global warming, and mountaintop-removal coal mining. With scientific rigor and a sense of wonder, Fallon charts their path across more than 2000 miles and shows how the fate of a creature weighing less than an ounce is vitally linked to that of our own.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Tracks not just the bird's globe-hurtling journeys, but the passion and determination of the people in two hemisphere who are trying to save it." —•Scott Weidensaul, Pulitzer Prize nominee and author, *Living on the Wind* and *Return to Wild America*"This book is a pleasure to read, and will open the eyes of many to the life of a small creature fighting an enormous fight." —•David Gessner, author, *Return of the Osprey* and *Soaring with Fidel*"Cerulean Blues first catches a reader's eye and ear as a fetching little piece about a fetching little creature of the treetops . . . The beauty of this slender volume . . . is that it tries to reach a deeper personal level than that of the

usual narrow-niche bird book." — Donald A. Carr "Cerulean Blues is many things. It's a fine work of nature writing that has its roots in American transcendentalism . . . It's a twenty-first century ecological manifesto, a plea for help in saving a small warbler." — Cheryl B. Torsney, ConnotationPress.com "Katie Fallon is a wonderful storyteller, nailing all the details in every memory that add to the flavor but also the relevance of each account. Images are skillfully placed where they make the biggest impact." — The Tusculum Review

Katie Fallon has had nonfiction pieces in a variety of magazines and journals, including *Appalachian Heritage*, *Isotope: A Journal of Literary Nature and Science Writing*, and *River Teeth: A Journal of Nonfiction Narrative*. Her essay "Lost," published in *The Fourth River*, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2008. She teaches creative writing at West Virginia University. She lives in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Katie Fallon, with a scientific perception and insightful demeanor, shows how a tiny, little songbird is important in the grand scheme of the world in her first book, *Cerulean Blues*. She proves that even this small creature deserves the right to survival because, if not for a plethora of other reasons, its existence is important even to the existence of mankind. And in the book, every creature matters because each one is dependent or related in some way to another. But to Katie Fallon, the cerulean warbler is one of the most beautiful and amazing of them all. Although this is Katie Fallon's first book, one would never know. The book is masterfully articulated, using clear and concise language to interest the reader in this niche topic. The book tells of Katie Fallon's journey to trace the path of the cerulean warbler from the Appalachian Mountains to the Andes Mountains in Colombia. She recounts beautifully the emotional and physical dangers as well as countless moments of joy and despair as she embarked on a personal exploration into the life of this tiny songbird. Throughout this adventure, it's not hard to see that Katie Fallon is a wonderful storyteller, nailing all the details in every memory that add to the flavor but also the relevance of each account. Descriptions are skillfully placed where they make the biggest impact, yet are subtle and act to draw the reader into the story. Imagery is deeply rooted and flawlessly moves ideas from one place to another. And even though much of the book is devoted to facts, just the right amount of thought and memory finds its way in. The best part about this is that it's so subtle; the facts are perfectly woven in and out of reflection and vice versa, that is, without truly visible or bumpy seams that might disrupt the reader. Also, the book is conversational and allows the reader to have an input while it skillfully steers and guides through a thicket of ideas and memories. There are no pretentious sentences full of jargon

and conceited intelligence. Cerulean Blues gets straight to the point. A large part of what makes Cerulean Blues so great is that Katie Fallon is not afraid to tell on herself. She openly admits her shortcomings and questions her actions often. However, this seems intentional though clearly honest and sincere. She is not overly self-deprecating; rather, she includes her own limitations so that she can make much larger points and ask much larger questions about humanity. And the most brilliant part of this is that she is able to do it so successfully. Her imperfections don't seem too cumbersome, but they provide plenty of grounds for her to present ideas about society and our current civilization. Cerulean Blues is a great read for anyone interested in literature and good writing. Even if the reader is not immediately wowed by the statistics and details of the dying songbird, I bet that by the end of the book, an attachment for at least some facet of nature will have cropped up in the reader's mind somewhere. This book is definitely worth the money, and will become, I think, a classic piece of nature-writing in years to come.

This book was a little different from other bird, nature or natural history books I've read, in part I think because the author isn't a scientist, although her research is certainly thorough. However, she sees this subject through a personal lens, a way to heal her soul from the horrific experiences dealt by the shooting on the campus where she was an English professor.

This is a lovely book. It's about the search for a beautiful warbler that summers in North America and winters in South America. The Cerulean Warbler is in danger, and this is the theme of the book, but the book is about much more than this. The story of how we have caused the demise of rain forests and songbirds is present throughout. Katie Fallon's lucid and easy-to-read style makes the book difficult to put down. This is a great read for anyone concerned about songbirds in the US; it also contains a strong message about the type of coffee we should choose to help maintain the populations of these beautiful creatures. Highly recommended.

Cerulean Blues is the story of a tiny songbird - and the woman who became obsessed with not only finding it, but finding ways to protect it. I expected to read about the challenges that this fastest-declining warbler is facing, due to mountaintop mining and other habitat encroachments. And this book delivers that, teaching us about exactly why mountaintop mining is so bad - not just for the bird but also for us - and why even something as simple as the choice of our morning coffee may have an impact far beyond the coffee cup. What I did not expect was the voice of the writer. Katie Fallon writes with clarity and passion, and no other book has ever left me feeling like the author was

sitting right next to me, telling me what she did, what she saw, what she thought. From her love for the little birds to her reflections on the tragedy at Virginia Tech to her interactions with her ever-patient husband who supported her every move, Katie Fallon delivers much more than a treatise on why a bird is vanishing and what we can do to save it. It shows us that if we dare to pursue our obsessions far enough, we might be surprised at what we learn about ourselves in the process. *Cerulean Blues* comes straight from the heart of this up-and-coming writer, and her voice is one to listen to. I look forward to more from Katie Fallon.

Nice read, See the *Cerulean* now! This is the last generation that will see a live one!

Love this book! Thanks so much!

This book is a personal journey to learn about a declining warbler species and the people who try to protect it. Well written, informative, and moving.

Very good

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