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Agriculture - Forest Service



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## Wings Across the Americas

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### Southern Research Station Scientists Win Wings Across the Americas Awards

Asheville, NC -- On March 27, Southern Research Station (SRS) Forest Service (FS) scientists [Susan Loeb](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/staff/352) (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/staff/352>) and [Paul Hamel](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/staff/262) (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/staff/262>) received honors at the Wings Across Americas Awards Ceremony held at the 73rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Phoenix, AZ. Awards go to FS employees and their partners, including conservation organizations, universities, volunteers, foundations, and private sector firms.

[Wings Across the Americas](http://www.fs.fed.us/global/wings/birds/welcome.htm) (<http://www.fs.fed.us/global/wings/birds/welcome.htm>) is a FS program that represents an integrated and collaborative approach to bird conservation across agency program areas. The annual awards ceremony celebrates exceptional work that conserves birds, bats, and butterflies and their habitats across the Americas, recognizing the important roles that these sometimes overlooked species play in the environment and in relation to human concerns.

[Susan Loeb](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/staff/352) (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/staff/352>), SRS research ecologist, shared the Bat Conservation Award for cooperative research on the ecology and conservation of forest bats with the National Forests-Region 8; the Sumter, Chattahoochee, Daniel Boone, and Nantahala National Forests; the Congaree and Great Smoky Mountain National Parks; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Clemson University; and MeadWestvaco. Individuals recognized include Dr. Eric Britzke, a private consultant and Dr. John Blake of the USFS-Savannah River.

Loeb leads a comprehensive research program on the ecology and conservation of southern forest bats developed in direct response to needs expressed by customers and cooperators. The program, which is part of the SRS Upland Hardwood Ecology and Management Research Unit, serves the research needs of managers in a variety of ecosystems throughout the Southeast.

[Paul Hamel](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/staff/262) (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/staff/262>), SRS wildlife biologist, received the International Cooperation Award for the Cerulean Warbler Nonbreeding Habitat Assessment conducted by El Grupo Cerúleo, a subcommittee of The Cerulean Warbler Technical Group, of which Hamel is a founding member. Project locations include Northern Andes of South America, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

Hamel is an expert on the cerulean warbler, a bird that is becoming a less common sight in the eastern United States; habitat loss and fragmentation is thought to be behind a steady decline in recent decades. Hamel's studies on the national and international assessments of bird conservation needs and opportunities along with the research, monitoring, and evaluation for bird habitat protection were key to his receiving this award. The award will be shared among FS employees and 40 other partners involved in the project.

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