



Globally Important Bird Areas



Kisatchie National Forest and Fort Polk, Louisiana

Ornithological Highlight: Significant numbers of Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Bachman's Sparrow

Location: Vernon Parrish

- *West Gulf Coastal Plain / Ouachitas* (NABCI Bird Conservation Region #25)
- *West Gulf Coastal Plain* (PIF Physiographic Area #42)

Size: There are about 85,000 acres of habitat for Red-cockaded Woodpecker on the Vernon Unit of Kisatchie National Forest and about 90,000 acres on adjacent Fort Polk.

Habitats: Pine forests, mixed woodlands and some grassland

Land use: forestry, recreation; military training exercises

Site description: The site represents one of the best examples of the longleaf pine-bluestem community. There is also some bottomland hardwood forest and a few pitcher plant bogs. Louisiana's only National Forest, the Kisatchie, consists of six widely-separated districts, but the habitat for the woodpecker is on the Vernon Unit of the Calcasieu District.

Birds: The area supports about 250 active clusters of Red-cockaded Woodpecker, (estimated to be up to 700 birds); this represents a significant percentage of the world's entire population. Of these, some 200 clusters are on the Vernon Unit, which abuts Ft. Polk; Fort Polk has about 50 clusters. The area has a good population of Bachman's Sparrow and provides wintering habitat for Henslow's Sparrow.

Conservation issues: The area has a burn history going back to the 1930s and is close to what the original habitat was like. Land managers manage woodpecker habitat to protect the species.

Visitor information: Best time to visit the National Forest is April-May and in the winter months. Contact the National Forest at 2500 Shreveport Highway, Pineville, LA 71360, tel. 318-473-7160.