Upper Ouachita
National Wildlife Refuge

photo: USFWS

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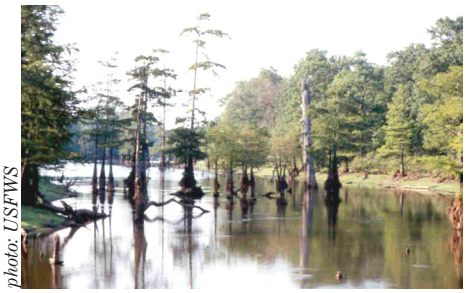

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Refuge Facts
- Established: 1978.
- Acres: 43,500 purchased with Duck Stamp funds. Located in Union and Morehouse parishes.
- Location: The refuge is managed from the North Louisiana Refuge Complex office located 10 miles north of West Monroe on LA Highway 143.

Natural History
- Eighteen miles long and up to ten miles wide, the refuge consists of over 19,700 acres of bottomland hardwood forest, 4,500 acres of upland forest, 10,000 acres of reforested farmland, and 2,900 acres of open water. About 80% of the refuge is subject to annual flooding from December through May.
- The central physical feature is the Ouachita (pronounced washitaw) River, which bisects the refuge. The river's wide floodplain is characterized by alluvial soils.
- Refuge supports concentrations of ducks, geese, wading birds, raptors and a small nesting population of bald eagles.

Financial Impact of Refuge
- Visitation 23,000 annually.

Refuge Objectives
- Provide habitat for a diversity of migratory birds and resident wildlife species.
- Provide habitat and protection for endangered species.
- Provide opportunities for wildlife-oriented recreation, environmental education and interpretation.

Management Tools
- Forest management.
- Law enforcement.
- Public hunting and fishing.
- Education/interpretation.

Public Use Opportunities
- Foot trails.
- Wildlife observation.
- Scenic vistas (land and water).
- Hunting.
- Fishing.
- Photography.
- Group tours.

Calendar of Events
January: waterfowl numbers typically peak.

February: wood ducks begin nesting and fishing improves.

March: major flooding season and early migrant songbirds arrive.

April: songbird migration peaks and everyone catches fish.

May: fishing success is at a high.

June: floodwaters recede, concentrating fish and other food in sloughs and creeks where wading birds congregate to feast on them.

July: wading bird populations continue to build, fishing drops off with hot weather.

August: shorebirds arrive to feed on mudflats.

September: blue-winged teal arrive and fishing picks up.

October: small game and archery deer seasons begin.

November: bald eagles arrive for the winter, waterfowl numbers increase, and big game and waterfowl seasons open.

December: waterfowl are attracted to shallowly flooded forest.

Questions and Answers

What is there to see here?
The drive along River Road gives beautiful views of the Ouachita River and bottomland forest. Squirrels, wading birds, deer, turkey and numerous songbirds are usually seen.

When and where can I hunt and fish?
Fishing is allowed year round on most refuge waters. Hunting is allowed for many species. Contact the refuge office for a current hunting and fishing brochure for additional information.

Can I camp on the refuge?
The refuge has no camping facilities and does not allow camping. However, the Corps of Engineers has a public campground at their Finch Bayou Recreation Area, located between the north and south units of the refuge.

Where can I launch my boat?
There are three ramps on or near the refuge.