

Rare Plants of Louisiana



Chasmanthium ornithorhynchum - bird-bill spikegrass Grass Family (Poaceae)

Rarity Rank: S2/G4

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

Range: AL, FL, LA, MS

Recognition:

- A rhizomatous grass, 30 to 50 cm tall with erect to reclining stems
- Short contracted panicle with sessile to short-pedicellate, somewhat feathered spikelets.
- Spikelets 7 to 18 mm long by 8 to 17 mm wide, laterally flattened with 5 to 7 florets

Flowering Time: June to October

Light Requirement: Shade – part shade

Wetland Indicator Status:

FACW – usually in wetlands

Habitat:

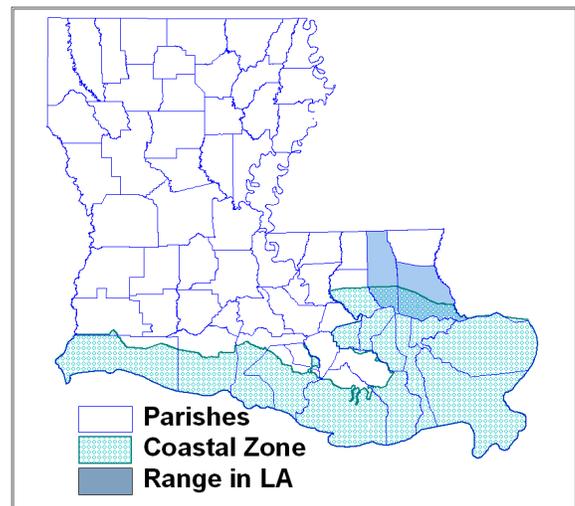
Bayhead swamps and margins of bayheads and wet longleaf pine flatwoods.

Threats:

- Conversion of habitat (pine flatwoods) to other vegetation types
- Hydrological modification by ditching/dredging of streams in bayhead swamps and bedding of pine flatwoods

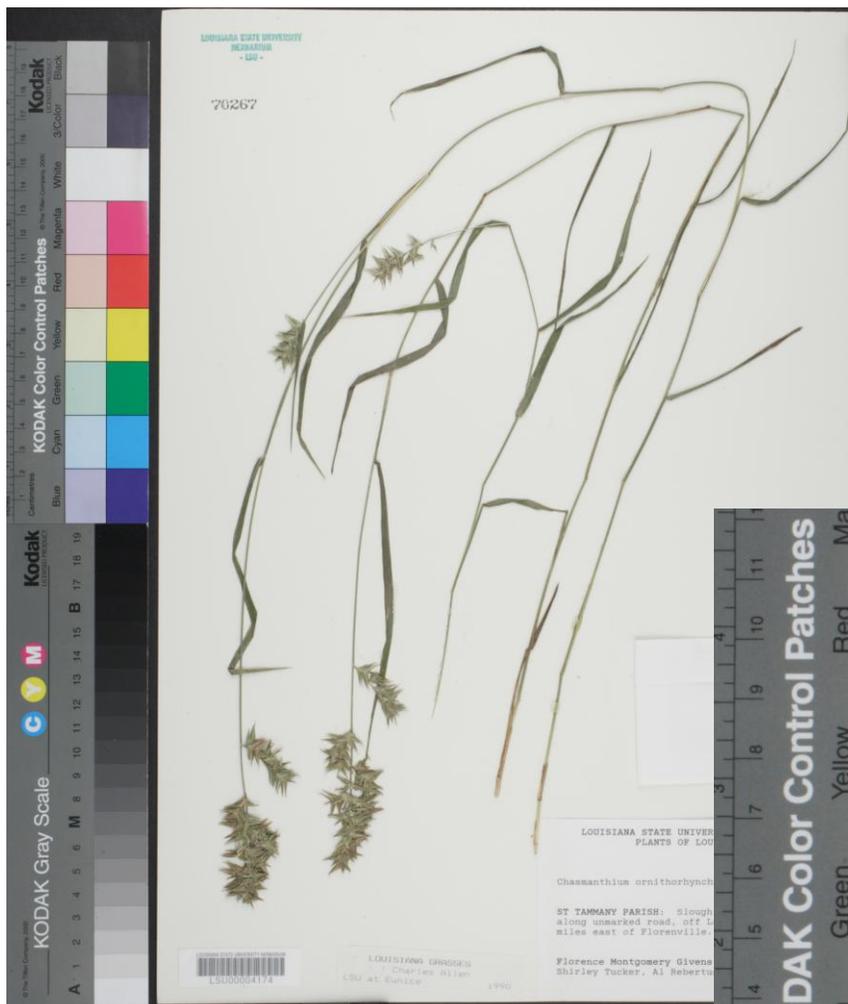
Beneficial Management Practices:

- Protect flatwoods streams from dredging/ditching
- Incorporate heavier thinning (during very dry periods) and regular burning in management of pine flatwoods
- Allow fires to burn into bayhead swamps rather than placing fire lines at the junction of pine flatwoods and bayhead swamps



LA River Basins: Pearl, Pontchartrain

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Left: Herbarium sheet of *Chasmanthium ornithorhynchum*.

Below: *C. ornithorhynchum* spikelets showing strong lateral compression. From the appearance of the spikelets, one can see the resemblance to bird's bills.

Specimen images courtesy of LSU Herbarium.



References:

Allen, C.M., D.A. Newman, and H. Winters. 2004. Grasses of Louisiana, 3rd edition. Allen's Native Ventures. Pitkin, LA. 374 pp.

NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program or 225-765-2811

www.BTNEP.org or 1-800-259-0869