

[From Spring 2001]

Boring January? - Think Again!

What do you do for fun during the long, cold month of January? I can tell you what 34 people from all over the Delmarva Peninsula did. They dressed warm (very warm!!), headed into the dark of the night on Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge carrying towels, a tackle box and an aluminum ladder and ... very gingerly awoke sleeping squirrels!

Once again, people traveled from all over the Delmarva Peninsula to assist Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Staff in conducting the annual Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel nest box checks (DFS). Checks were conducted on January 4, 5, 10, 22, and 27. Fifteen U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees and 19 volunteers assisted on various nights of the checks. One hundred and forty boxes were checked a total of three times each for refuge records and an ongoing research project. Representatives were present from Maryland Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Ecological Services Chesapeake Bay Field Office, Patuxent Research Refuge, DFS recovery team, Chincoteague NWR, Eastern Shore NWR, Eastern Neck NWR, Blackwater NWR, and Prime Hook NWR, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and Refuge Volunteers.

A total of 20 squirrels were captured the first two nights, and an additional 10 were captured in subsequent nights. Capture success was significantly lower than in 2000, potentially due to the warm weather conditions this year. The refuge would like to thank all those who assisted in the box checks especially the volunteers.

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