

[From Spring 2003]

## **Fees to Increase**

Effective April 15, 2003, the weekly entrance fee to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and the Assateague Island National Seashore will increase from \$5.00 to \$10.00 for a seven-day period. The price of the Annual Pass, National Parks Pass, Golden Eagle and Golden Age Passports will not change. All passes are also accepted at both ends of Assateague Island. Camping fees will increase from \$16.00 to \$20.00 at National Park Service campgrounds on the Maryland end of the island.

The increase in fees is a result of a comparability survey, which assessed federal fees in relation to fees collected at other federal sites and businesses providing similar visitor services. This is the first time the refuge's weekly fee has been increased since 1997 and, compared to other local refuges in the area, who charge a \$5.00 daily fee, \$10.00 for a week is still a bargain.

Eighty percent of all moneys that are collected through the fee program remain at the refuge to fund projects that will directly benefit the visiting public. In 2002, refuge staff utilized fee money to fund interns and a full-time, temporary recreation assistant; replace worn out informational and wayfinding signs; print trail maps, hunt and general brochures; and fund a telemetry study for Atlantic brant (the birds' migration patterns were put on the refuge website). In past years, fee money was used to replace the roof of the visitor contact station; replace the observation decks of the Marsh and Woodland Trails; construct a bike trail from the visitor contact station to the Lighthouse Trail; and, purchase Romtec toilets to place on the Environmental Education Trail, Woodland Trail and Wildlife Loop. These are just a few of the many projects your fee dollars have provided.

Sally Bowden  
Park Ranger