

[From Spring 1997]

Happy Birthday

How old is the Chincoteague Natural History Association? Good question. And what is recognized as the "birthday" of this wonderful organization?

In 1986, staff of the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge began to plan for a cooperating association to assist with the enhancement of the refuge's interpretive and educational programs. On July 7 of that year, the first organizational meeting was held to discuss association membership, appoint officers, develop and adopt by-laws, and develop direction for a cooperating association. Seven business and professional people from the local area were selected to serve on the board of directors.

However, the association did not have a formal agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). For the next five months, this group of dedicated individuals worked to become incorporated in the State of Virginia, recruited members, developed a non-profit status, arranged for funding and developed a draft cooperative agreement. Finally, in December 1986 a formal Cooperative Agreement with the FWS was signed. This allowed the association to operate on the refuge. The book sales outlet was begun in early 1987. So then is the CNHA's birthday the first organizational meeting, the date of incorporation with the state, the signing of the cooperative agreement, or what?

Although the official anniversary date remains a mystery, the fact remains that your organization, the Chincoteague Natural History Association, has been and continues to be very successful. During the first year of book sales, your association donated over \$12,000 in supplies and materials to support the interpretive and educational programs of the CNWR. An equal or higher level of annual support has continued to the present. The staff of both the Chincoteague Refuge and Eastern Shore of Virginia Refuge appreciate the support of your organization over the years. So HAPPY BIRTHDAY whatever the date.

CNWR Staff