

[From Spring 1998]

## **Environmental Education Programs begin in April**

The time is near to begin another busy season of environmental education programs at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR). Spring marks the migration of birds and students alike. Beginning April 1st, CNWR in cooperation with Assateague Island National Seashore, will conduct environmental education programs for students of all ages. The programs begin at 10 AM and 1 PM respectively, Monday through Friday. They will run through May 22nd and are on a first-come-first-serve basis.

The CNWR works hand-in-hand with Assateague Island National Seashore to provide a diverse array of program topics. Seashore staff conduct programs which explore barrier island dynamics and investigate salt water marsh habitats. Refuge staff offer programs that explore freshwater marsh and maritime forest ecology.

According to Ray Pattera, Outdoor Recreation Planner in charge of environmental education at the refuge, "along with teaching the students about various habitats, it is critical the we show students how and why these areas are being protected. It is not enough to teach students how things function. The real challenge is to make learning enjoyable and above all to make students care." Pattera added that once the students care about the natural resources they will begin to protect them. "If we can achieve this mission, then we know we will have had a positive effect on the students' visit and their lives."

To learn more about the upcoming environmental education program, contact Ray Pattera at (757) 336-6122.