

[From Summer 2000]

## **International Migratory Bird Celebration Delights Mothers and Others!**

On Mother's Day weekend, approximately 3000 people joined Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in celebrating the sixth annual International Migratory Bird Day. The celebration began Friday night with a reception at the Chincoteague Center. The reception offered food donated by local restaurants and an inspiring slide show by Jim Clark, nationally renowned nature photographer, author, and writer. Saturday morning, runners and walkers came out for a little exercise and a good cause. The celebration's 5K fun run/walk raised more than \$700 for a local chapter of the Special Olympics.

The beautiful weekend continued with family activities, auditorium programs, guided walks, and tours to the top of the Assateague Island Lighthouse. "The event was a great success and we were very pleased to receive support and gratitude from both the local community and visiting public", said Refuge Manager John Schroer.

Under the big tent, visitors were able to choose from a variety of fun and educational activities. Over 300 children walked away with bird houses for their backyards that they built themselves. Hungry birds will be happy to hear that 225 bird feeders were made over the weekend. Artistic talent was commended with a wildlife art contest in which 200 children entered artwork and competed for several prizes.

Other activities included: T-shirt printing, decoy soap carving, creating crafty critters out of natural materials, making wildlife pins, and face painting. Over 800 people climbed to the top of Assateague Island Lighthouse for a beautiful view of the surrounding area. Wildlife artists exhibited their work, and conservation groups helped Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge spread the word of wildlife conservation under the tent as well.

Renowned artists and wildlife experts presented auditorium programs both Saturday and Sunday. Leonard Lee Rue, known worldwide for his captivating photography, presented a program on various flora and fauna of the east coast. Local decoy carver, Reggie Birch, demonstrated the depths of his art. National Volunteer of the Year, Paul Smith, helped us identify those confusing little shorebirds with his Sunday morning program.

Refuge Manager Schroer would like to remind visitors that Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is open to the public year round. So, you don't need to wait for next Mother's Day weekend to enjoy and appreciate the beauty and wildlife of Assateague Island.

Principal funding for this event was provided by CNHA and the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce. However, special thanks is due the guest speakers, volunteers, and the following businesses and organizations for donating time, materials, services or merchandise that made the IMBD celebration a huge success:

Historic Main Street Merchants Association  
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