

[From Summer 2002]

Crowds Flock to 8th IMBC

During Mother's Day weekend, over 13,000 people visited Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge for the 8th Annual International Migratory Bird Celebration. The celebration began on Friday night with a campfire program at the beach. A two team act by Gretchen Knapp, National Park Service and Alison McGuire, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, presented a program on bird migration and navigation. Refuge volunteer Charlotte Thomas continued with a star watch program, educating visitors on the night sky. On Saturday, over 1,200 people joined in the festivities under the tent.

Under the tent, children were able to choose from a variety of fun and educational activities. Hungry birds will be happy to hear that 110 bird feeders were made, 125 children made animal tracks to take home with them while 80 children had their face painted or tattooed with wildlife art designs. One hundred children made sand painting artwork and over 100 children made bird and Centennial pop-up books. Nearly 900 people climbed to the top of the Assateague Island Lighthouse for a beautiful view of the surrounding area.

While conservation groups, including Biowhitaker, Assateague Coastal Trust, The Nature Conservancy and Marine Science Consortium, helped spread the word of wildlife conservation, wildlife artists exhibited their work. Local decoy carver, Reggie Birch demonstrated his talent and Assateague Coastal Trust presented a backyard habitat program. Over 200 participants attended bird walks and other hikes.

The Historic Main Street Merchants Association sponsored an art contest for children in three school-grade groupings and the winners were presented with U. S. Savings Bonds at the celebration on Saturday morning. It was a close contest by ballot, but as it turned out all three winners were from the same family. Dameon Orlando won the pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade entrant group; Rachel Orlando won the second, third, and fourth grade entrant group, and Nina Orlando the fifth, sixth, and seventh grade entrant group.

Refuge staff would like to thank all the sponsors and volunteers who contributed their time and expertise to make the event a great success.

Sally Bowden
Park Ranger, CNWR