

[From Summer 2003]

CNWR Hosts International Interns and Volunteers

On January 12, 2003, two Canadians, Sabrina Roy and Marie-Melissa Kalamaras, arrived for an internship at the refuge which ended on February 21. Their internship at Chincoteague was part of their school's requirement to graduate from the Ecological Technology Program.

Sabrina and Marie-Melissa helped with both biology and visitor services divisions. They participated in various activities including deer surveys, waterfowl surveys, museum property inventory, and staffing the visitor contact station.

Their school, Vanier College, has previously sent other students to Chincoteague Refuge as well. Not being able to get enough of Chincoteague, Marie-Melissa returned as an environmental education intern in the spring on March 10, 2003 and will remain with us until June 7.

Dr. Gennady Smirnov and Barbara Litovka, from Anadyr, Russia, volunteered at the Chincoteague Refuge from April 21 through May 12. This assignment was organized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of International Conservation office in Washington, D.C.

Gennady is a biologist who has done research work on marine mammals and Barbara Litovka is a journalist. Since certain marine mammals share the same sea between Russia and Alaska, Gennady has worked in conjunction with the Division of International Conservation in the protection of these animals.

When they entered CNWR, Gennady and Barbara were very excited about how beautiful they found the maritime forest. As the piping plovers began to arrive on the beaches for breeding, the Russian volunteers eagerly assisted the biology staff in searching for nests.

Marie-Melissa, Gennady and Barbara all had the opportunity to attend the annual volunteer banquet on May 3, 2003, to witness recognition of the numerous volunteers of Chincoteague Refuge and to realize how important their work and time contribute to the refuge's function.

Volunteering at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge offered these individuals from other countries a chance to discover new ecosystems and natural resource management techniques used by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. This experience has provided them with information they can share with others, once they return to their homeland.

Although some may be out in the field watching protectively over your wildlife, on your next visit to the refuge please stop by to greet our interns.

Geralyn Mireles
Refuge Operations Specialist

