

[From Summer 2008]

## **First Fridays at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge**

Many members of the Chincoteague Natural History Association (CNHA) have fond memories of attending evening programs held at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Assateague Island National Seashore. The CNHA, in partnership with the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, is reviving this popular tradition through the sponsorship of a new and exciting program called "First Friday".

*"First Friday"* was created by the Membership Committee of the CNHA as a way to encourage community involvement with the Refuge and present information on a variety of Refuge and environmental topics. On the first Friday of each month, a different presentation will be offered. Speakers will include authors, biologists, artists, historians, environmentalists and archaeologists. Audio and visual aids will add depth to each presentation, and speakers will be available afterward to answer questions. Refreshments will be served and the Herbert H. Bateman Educational and Administrative Center will be open late to host these special monthly events.

The inaugural session of *First Friday* will be held Friday August 1, 2008, with a presentation by renowned author Larry Points, who will present his popular talk on "Birds, Beaches and the Wild Ponies of Assateague." The CNHA is pleased to carry several of Mr. Point's books in the CNHA bookstore, including "Barrier Islands are for the Birds", and "Ribbons of Sand", co authored with Andrea Jauck. Mr. Points will make his presentation at 7 PM, and will be available for book signings following his talk. The CNHA store will be offering extended hours for this special event.

Refuge Manager Lou Hinds has agreed to waive the entrance fees to the Refuge after 6 pm for attendees of the *First Friday* programs. Future *First Friday* Programs include:

**September 5-** Dick Roberts "The Assateague Fish & Wildlife Project" Dr. Roberts is an environmental chemist who began bird banding 31 years ago along the shores of Lake Ontario and has continued to use this technique for environmental projects in New York State, Maryland, and Virginia. Dr. Roberts is currently in charge of several research programs on the Eastern Shore. The project on Assateague Island is in conjunction with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and involves a census of the woodland bird species utilizing the Refuge.

**October 3-** "Historic Assateague Lighthouse-Yesterday & Today" Myrna Cherrix is the standing President of the Chincoteague Natural History Association and the Assateague Lighthouse Historian. Myrna will provide information on the history of the Assateague Lighthouse. Many historic photographs are included in Myrna's presentation which also includes the present day Lighthouse restoration efforts.

**November 7-** "Assateague Habitat-From Beach to Bay", presented by Park Ranger Gretchen Knapp, of the National Park Service. Gretchen's program will allow us to explore the many habitats on Assateague, from the surf on the shore to the marsh on the bay.

The Membership Committee of the CNHA hopes that all who visit Chincoteague will make time to come and partake of this exciting new program, and get a chance to hear from a growing number of professionals who have something to tell us about this special area of Virginia's Eastern Shore.