

[From Summer 2008]

International Migratory Bird Celebration a Big Success

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge hosted the 14th Annual International Migratory Bird Celebration on May 10, 2008. This year's theme *Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats, and People* explored the many birds that make these fantastic journeys, the habitats on which they depend, and the people who strive to conserve the birds and their habitats along the way.

On the day of the event itself, no entrance fees were required. Despite the rainy weather, more than 1,100 children joined in free festivities under the tent. With glee they scampered from activity to activity, often with parent in tow. They were very adamant about participating in each available activity which included building bird houses, making bird feeders, designing wildlife t-shirts, face painting, and more. Internal records indicate that over 8,800 people visited the refuge during the Mother's Day weekend.

More exciting opportunities awaited those who ventured inside the Herbert H. Bateman Educational and Administrative Center. Ron Grangier, winner of the art logo competition, was featured along with 14 other wildlife artists. The Town of Chincoteague's Centennial slide program was a big attraction with approximately 150 people in attendance that left standing room only in the auditorium. The live raptor program "Scales & Tales" presented by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources also drew a large crowd.

Winners of the Children's Art Contest sponsored by the Historic Main Street Merchants Association were presented with a check for \$50.00. The four winners of each class group were Adrianna Rippen, Victoria Carr, Madison Ferst, and Kristen Willey. I am especially proud of the impact and success of this year's contest, because we actually received art entries from a Delaware Juvenile Detention Center.

A special thanks to the Chincoteague Natural History Association and the Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring the event and to the many volunteers and staff who contributed to make the day a big success.

Sally Bowden
IMBC Coordinator