

[From Fall 2003]

Other End of the Shore

By the time this issue reaches you, the 11th annual Eastern Shore Birding Festival and annual Harvest Fest will probably be concluded. But for those of you that haven't ventured beyond Chincoteague and Assateague, perhaps you'll mark your calendar to make the events next year - or at least make plans to visit the southern end of the Shore on your next visit to Chincoteague.

The first week in October is a great time to be on the south end of the Shore. On the first Wednesday in October, the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce sponsors the annual Harvest Fest - a one-day event showcasing the best of what the Shore has to offer featuring an all-you-can-eat feast of local food delicacies, great music, and local artisans - all in a picturesque setting overlooking the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.

After a day's break to recover from Wednesday's event, the annual Birding Festival begins at 10 a.m. on the first Friday of October and runs through 2 p.m. on Sunday. The same site that hosted the Harvest Fest becomes the launching site for 3-days of fun-filled activities ranging from workshops, boating trips, exhibits, hiking, a 5K Run/Fun Walk, all-day birding trips that visit both Accomack and Northampton county sites on the Eastern Shore loop of the Coastal Birding & Wildlife Trail, and birding activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge and Kiptopeke State Park - both of which are adjacent to the festival grounds located at the Best Western Sunset Beach Resort complex.

In addition to the many events and activities, there are educational exhibitors, artists, outdoor and birding retailers, and food vendors. Musical entertainment is also offered on Saturday and Sunday.

All activities on the festival grounds are free. However, to participate in any of the field trips, registration is necessary. The fee is \$35 for the 3-day weekend or \$15 daily - children under 12 years old, \$5.

The number of tickets for the Harvest Fest is limited. This year they were sold out in May. So you have to make your plans early!

Birding Festival events aren't sold out in May. But, here again, you should make your plans by early September.

For more information, contact the Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce at:

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Or you can visit their web site at: www.esvachamber.org

Even if you are unable to make these events, a visit to the Eastern Shore Refuge and Kiptopeke State Park - particularly during the fall songbird and hawk migration - is an experience you shouldn't miss. Thousands of songbirds and hawks stage at the tip of the Eastern Shore before continuing flight across the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.

If you're a boater, there are numerous public romps all along the Shore providing access to both the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

Both ends of the Shore - and the quaint and historic towns in between - offer much to those willing to explore off US 13.

Frank V. Moore
Editor