

[From Fall 2004]

## **Invasive Plant Control**

The spread of invasive plant species is a growing problem across the country. An invasive species is a plant or animal that is exotic (or alien) to the ecosystem and which threatens the native species. Invasive plant species spread aggressively and take over important wildlife habitats. Species exotic to the U.S. include those transported from Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, Australia and other parts of the world.

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge plans to control invasive plants species encroaching on our precious wildlife habitat. Two species that are currently targeted at Chincoteague NWR are the Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*). *Phragmites* is a tall grass found extensively along the edges of wetlands. It can destroy wetlands by crowding out native vegetation and raising the level of the ground with dense rhizomes. In late September, the refuge plans to spray the *phragmites* by helicopter with a very specialized herbicide. The spraying and control efforts should reduce the spread of *phragmites* on the refuge.



Autumn olive is a woody shrub often found along roadsides. It will be controlled by cutting and spraying to allow native, beneficial plants to grow. Autumn olive control is also planned for this fall.

If you would like more information on invasive plants or control efforts, please contact the refuge at 757-336-6122 or visit numerous web sites on the topic such as [www.invasive.org](http://www.invasive.org).

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