

[from Fall 2007]

Children in the Woods Day Camp is Big Success

The first Children in the Woods Day Camp held June 25 – 29, 2007 at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge was a big success. Camp activities included archery, surf fishing, crabbing and clamming; showcasing the six priority uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System. A unique aspect to the Day Camp was the “taste of the refuge,” where campers had the opportunity to learn about subsistence living and try different types of wild game prepared by volunteers Barbara Thackray and Sandy Gifford. Among the different “tastes” were deer, goose, duck, fish, crabs, and clams.

Throughout the week, campers learned the importance of the National Wildlife Refuge System by participating in interpretive and environmental education programs. Some included bird walks, animal call demonstrations, hunter ethics sessions, habitat twist, and wetland habitat programs. Nature photographers Bob and Sue Wilson demonstrated digital camera techniques instructing campers how to successfully capture candid shots of wildlife.

Local angler and refuge employee Robert Meehan provided surf fishing tips and techniques. Gander Mountain volunteer, Mr. Earl, assisted campers in learning the skills associated with archery. While on a bird walk led by refuge volunteer Dave Fernandez, campers were completely surprised by the sudden presence of researcher Dick Roberts, who stopped by with a European Starling. Roberts demonstrated how to band a bird, and explained how bird banding helps researchers in the field.

A Friday evening awards ceremony concluded the week long Day Camp. During the ceremony, campers were asked to identify their favorite part of camp. “Almost every camper shouted that everything was their favorite,” commented Becky Wolff, Day Camp Coordinator. “It was a great experience for the campers to go out there and reconnect with nature,” added Lou Hinds, Refuge Manager. Hinds wishes to thank the volunteers and staff for all their hard work. Special thanks go out to the Chincoteague Natural History Association for sponsoring the day camp. Their contributions helped make the camp a big success! For more information on next year’s day camp contact the refuge at (757) 336 – 6122.