

[From Fall 1999]

A Summer Gone by but not Forgotten

The warm days of summer have given way to the crisp autumn air, yet we still hold on to our memories of "the busy season." The last summer of the millennium proved to be as successful and exciting as the millennium itself. The refuge's interpretive programs reached more than 2000 people through guided walks, auditorium programs, and other educational discussions. A particularly exciting union between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service resulted in a "Life Behind the Dunes" nature walk. This beach-side romp discussed the ever-changing face of barrier islands and how it affects each agency differently on Assateague Island.

Another highlight of the summer included the success of the 2nd annual Refuge Academy, a two week-long day camp for children ages eight through 13. The 20 eager campers spent their days enjoying the beauty of Assateague Island while learning about its ecosystem.

This summer's interpretive efforts consisted of seven different guided walks focusing on the variety of wildlife and habitats found on the refuge. Whether you were a morning bird and preferred the 7:30 a.m. bird walk or a night owl and took to the 8:30 p.m. night walk, there was something for all personality types.

The little ones of the family received special treatment with the refuge's own Jr. Refuge Manager/Jr. Refuge Birder activity booklets and nature walk. The truly ambitious, those who completed the booklets, were rewarded with patches for a job well done. Three times a week visitors could escape the heat into the refuge auditorium for an hour long program whose topics ranged from wildlife photography to an educational version of bingo. The combined energy of refuge staff, interns, and volunteers resulted in realizing our goal of educating the public in the importance of wildlife and refuges. The summer may be gone but its invaluable memories and experiences will take us through until next year.

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