

[From Winter 2000 - 2001]

## **Annual Pass Increases**

Effective January 1, 2001, the annual pass to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge will increase from \$12.00 to \$15.00. This matches the annual pass fee for the Assateague Island National Seashore in Berlin, Maryland. The annual pass is honored at both ends of Assateague Island. The increase was initiated as part of the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program mandated by Congress on a five-year trial basis. The purpose of the fees is to generate money to fund much needed maintenance, repairs and improvements on the refuges.

At CNWR, 80% of the fees collected comes back to the refuge and has provided funding for many projects. For example, during the year 2000 fee money was used to construct a boardwalk on the Environmental Education Trail located near the lighthouse. Funds were also used to begin the extension of a new bike trail leading to the Lighthouse Parking Lot. Other projects included: purchasing two Seecoast spotting scopes that were placed on the observation deck of the Marsh Trail; printing and designing refuge brochures; purchasing new interpretative signs; funding a temporary Recreation Assistant as well as biology and public use interns; supporting the YCC (Youth Conservation Corps) summer camp; and, purchasing a tent for special events. And more projects are being planned for 2001, with the most notable project being the planning and designing of new exhibits for three existing public use trails which receive over 1,000,000 visits each year. This project will improve the visitor experience by better educating them about the refuge's cultural and natural resource values.

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Park Ranger