

[From Winter 1997-98]

Volunteers Sought for Woodcock Survey

In the past 30 years American woodcock populations have declined substantially in the Northeast, one of their major breeding grounds. Efforts to slow and reverse this trend are currently underway at Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge and several other refuges. There has been a woodcock management program at the refuge since 1985 and night surveys will be conducted again this winter. The program will start in mid-December and continue through January.

Over the years, volunteers have assisted the refuge staff with night surveys and the banding program. In a good year, 200 to 500 woodcocks are identified and a few of those birds are banded, aged, and measurements taken to learn more about their habitat needs, general health and population size.

The refuge is looking for volunteers to participate in this year's program. A maximum of six people can participate each night. Anyone interested in volunteering should call the refuge office at (757) 331-2760 to find out when we will be banding and to sign up. The refuge office is open Monday through Friday, except holidays, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.