



Birdwatchers everywhere know Chincoteague Refuge as one of the finest places in the east to add to their life lists. As the seasons turn, the refuge hosts the moving bird populations and the resident species alike. Falcons and hawks pass through in late fall, an eagle or two among them. Winter days reveal the sparkling white of the Greater Snow Geese covering marsh pastures and Canada geese trafficking to mainland farm fields. Whistling swans rubber-neck in the refuge ponds and brant raft in the channel bays. Dipping, diving, and sea species of ducks abound, interspersed by grebes and coots. By late March the waterfowl have gone north, clearing the refuge for a spring spectacle of migrating shore birds. Wood ducks arrive and take up residence in the nesting boxes set on posts for them in the pools. Teal, gadwall, black duck, and mallards nest on pool edges, and by early June, broods of fuzzy ducklings are lined up behind 'mom' in the pools, learning to make it on their own. A long summer smiles upon them, and upon herons, egrets, ibis, 'pipers, gulls, and terns. In all, 262 species of birds use the refuge in the course of a year.

Defying the rigors of a barrier island, small bands of wild ponies dot the wide marshes and course through myriad trails in the Loblolly woods. Stand quietly and you may hear a stallion call to his herd, or glimpse a mare leading her tiny foal to a freshwater pool.

Sika, a diminutive species of oriental elk released here in 1923, and Virginia whitetail deer share the forest understory habitat with raccoons, 'possums and rabbits. Red fox dig their dens right into the low dunes. A Rare and Endangered species, the Delmarva Peninsula Fox Squirrel, was introduced in 1968 and, under careful management, has established a strong community of bushytails.

Now you see them, now you don't --- out in the pools, or riding the currents in tidal guts, popping up for a look around, are sleek river otter. They thrive on the abundant ocean spawned eels, that, as elvers, slip into the pools through control gates. A muskrat nonchalantly munching water vegetables, or carrying a mouthful back to a family den in the dikes, is a common sight in all the pools.

No need to shudder when you see a snake -- they are all harmless species, protected and respected as they take their place in the refuge ecosystem.

Extensive trails, visitor facilities, and programs are designed for observing the rich wildlife and bird populations, making Chincoteague truly a place "Where People and Wildlife Meet".

Known as 'wild beach', ten miles of ocean front offers surf-fishing, hiking, shelling, secluded sunbathing, or an insight to marine ecology. Watch kilometer posts as you browse northward -- it is that far back again.

An arm of wide ocean-beach arcs gently to the southwest for five miles around Tom's Cove. The National Park Service administers this arm as a recreational area. In summer, lifeguards maintain a guarded beach and ranger naturalists conduct a full schedule of interpretive programs and activities for children and adults.

The refuge is located three miles east of Chincoteague Island, where motels, family campgrounds, stores and restaurants provide all accommodations. A refuge Visitor Center provides information, with descriptive leaflets and schedules always available in outdoor racks. A seashore Visitor Center at the beach provides National Park Service information and literature.

Write to:

Refuge Manager, Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 62, Chincoteague, Virginia 23336, telephone 804-336-6122; and to Virginia District Ranger, Assateague Island National Seashore, P.O. Box 38, Chincoteague, Virginia 23336, telephone 804-336-6577.

PETS ARE PROHIBITED

Department of the Interior

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



REFUGE LEAFLET-51570
APRIL, 1977



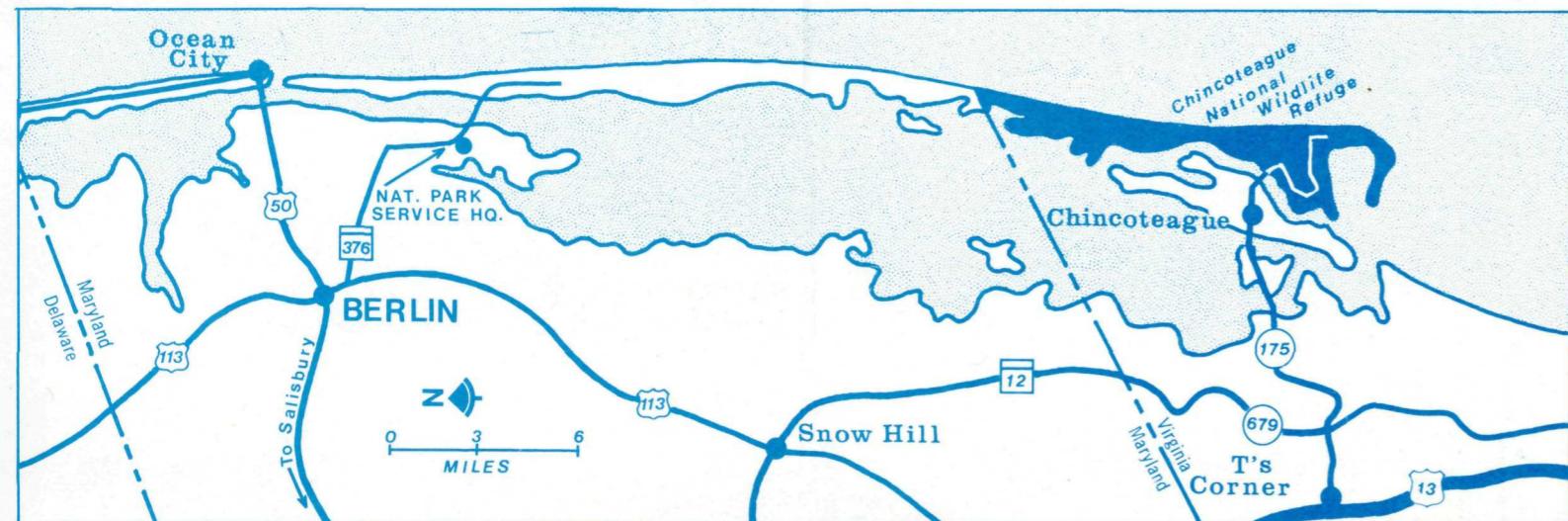
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CHINCOTEAGE, NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
P. O. BOX 62, CHINCOTEAGE, VIRGINIA 23336
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

CHINCOTEAGE

National
Wildlife
Refuge

Virginia



Called by the Indians "Running Stream In Between" a pencil-slender island wraps its length close against the eastern shores of Maryland and Virginia, a barrier for the two states against a restless ocean. It is Assateague Island, thirty-seven miles long and a scant three miles across at its widest. A single high dune-ridge rises forty-seven feet above sea-level. While at a lower level the 142 foot tower of Assateague Light sits since 1833, flashing its warning -- "shoal waters all around".

The Virginia portion of the island was included in a string of coastal wetland areas to be preserved for wildlife, especially for the countless thousands of migratory birds whose ageless instincts drive them southward in the fall and northward in

the spring. Virginia's 9,460 acres, offering a natural diversity of habitats, fell easily into the management techniques of refuge lands and in 1943, was named "Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge".

A coastal storm burst upon the island and its inhabitants in 1962, nearly flattening the seaside dunes and inundating the bay marshes from end to end. Rebuilding the dunes and diking the fresh water away from the salt was accomplished within the year. The rest of the island required emergency funding, and resulted in the entire island being designated as "Assateague Island National Seashore" in 1965. The status of Virginia's portion remained as "Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge".

CHINCOTEAGUE

National Wildlife Refuge

0 2000 4000 6000 8000 FEET



ATLANTIC OCEAN

TRAIL LEGEND

WALKING
BICYCLE
AUTO

