



Assateague Island Guide

Summer 2002

Visitor Guide

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Contact Us:

Web Site: www.nps.gov/asis

National Park Service

Barrier Island Visitor Center
7206 National Seashore Lane
Berlin, MD 21811
410-641-1441

Toms Cove Visitor Center
PO Box 38
Chincoteague, VA 23336
757-336-6577

US Fish & Wildlife Service

Chincoteague Refuge Visitor
Center (VA) 757-336-6122

Maryland State Parks

Assateague State Park (MD)
410-641-2120

Emergency Numbers

Maryland

Ranger Station
410-641-3030
After Hours - Dial 911

Virginia

Ranger Station
757-336-6577
After Hours - Dial 911

Experience Your Park

Assateague, Get to Know It

Beautiful, peaceful beaches are an obvious lure for most of us during the lazy days of summer. Assateague offers us a chance to be alone at the edge of the continent and watch the sun rise to grant us all the possibilities of a new day. A chance to emboss the beach with the first footprints of the day... to find the perfect treasure surrendered to the land by a chance wave....to witness pelicans plunging, dolphins surfing, shorebirds scurrying or ghost crabs scavenging... Each wave, every single experience, will settle into our memory banks and wait to be recalled when we need it most. Assateague will call out to you and you may find yourself unable to stop listening.

Perhaps it is simply the hugeness of the ocean that calls us to its shores. We brave relentless waves and shocking temperatures to bathe in this primordial pool. Free floating away from the familiar, out to the unfamiliar, but soothing realm of the sea. We cannot usually see the critters of this world, but we feel we must somehow venture here anyway. We've heard of the big ones, the toothy ones, the stinging ones, the pinching ones, and even the tasty ones. We float and consider the weird ones, the unseen ones, even the glow-in-the-dark ones. We feel exceedingly brave sharing this marine habitat with such abundant, potentially monstrous, critters from far and wide, under, around and with our floating body. We are intruders for the moment, but what a visit!

For those of us that choose to stay after sundown, Assateague rewards us. We find comfort in the rhythm of tides, hooting of owls, emphatic calling



of the Chuck-Will's Widow, bugling of sika stags, swishing of horse tails, and buzzing of mosquitoes! How do we explain the thrill of hunting and capturing a ghost crab in our flashlight beam and suddenly realizing five or six pairs of eyes of ghost crab neighbors have us surrounded! A walk in the wet sand may reveal the rarest of treats, glowing footsteps! Bioluminescent plankton lights our way along the dark beach. Turn off your flashlight and let these be your lanterns in the moonlight.

Assateague's shallow coastal bays deceive many who do not take the plunge. Many find the salt marsh fringe filled with disagreeable, stinky, buggy, misery. Most of us do not consciously ponder the vital marine food chain, nursery, and ecological functions as we visit this thriving community. A canoe or kayak allows us to participate in this bay life. Cruising over verdant grass beds may launch a school of mullet skyward. We may sneak a peak at busy blue crabs or a sting ray digging for clams while passing over in a silent glide. An afternoon of paddling, clamming, swimming, floating, picnicking and napping is exhilarating. These days provide fuel for the rest of the year.

Many of us cannot get enough of Assateague, or the feelings we discover here. It is a privilege to visit an unspoiled natural place. Perhaps more than ever we need the simplicity of nature. We know we are part of it all. We love our natural world more when we are just in it. When we are at rest from fighting against nature and trying to tame it or alter it, we get to know it. That may be why we are here at Assateague, just to get to know it.

- Liz Davis

Park Ranger, Interpretation



What's there to do here?
Turn to page 3 to find out!





The Voice of Assateague

Welcome to Assateague Island National Seashore. This issue highlights some of “the Voices of Assateague”. There are many. There have been many more in the past. At one time, the voice of antiquity, the Pocomoke, Annemessex, Manokin, Nassawattex, Acquintica, Kicotank, Chincoteague, and Assateague tribes rang while they were crabbing, fowling, hunting and fishing on and near the island.

After centuries, the voice of exploration intruded in 1542 with Giovanni da Verrazano. An Italian, he sailed for the King of France, and his voice was the harbinger of many voices to come.

Compared to the preceding centuries, the next four centuries brought many different voices and accelerating change. The voice of survival rasped through the lips of Colonel Henry Norwood as he and his small marooned group subsisted on waterfowl and oysters in January 1650. The voice of enterprise claimed the island and settled on it to raise livestock. A fishing industry boomed and Chincoteague oysters became synonymous with the “best oyster in the world.” The voice of courage called out over the wind and the surf as the brave men of the U.S. Lifesaving Service risked their lives to save the lives of those shipwrecked on the shoals. The voice of enterprise persisted, this time to subdivide the island and cover it with houses, roads, stores and hotels. The howling voice of storms interrupted, destroying most of what had been built. The voice of conservation vociferously protested such enterprise, and declared it was time for the voice of Assateague to be heard.

The voice of Assateague *is* a special one. It is a symphony of all the voices ever heard on it, and it is ever changing.

The importance of that voice and the wisdom of the voice of conservation was never more apparent than on the afternoon of September 11, 2001. In the initial reaction to the terrible events that unfolded earlier that day the park was initially instructed to “close.” Forcing people to pack up and leave the island would have added to the confusion at their ultimate destinations. Besides, nobody had attacked the island. We asked for and received permission to merely close the mainland visitor center. Not wanting to totally deprive people of someone to talk to, we stationed a ranger in the parking lot of the visitor center to answer the inevitable question “Why are you closed?” And yes, we left the flag flying high.

Over the next several hours many people came to the island. They came, they said, to find peace. It’s here. You can find it - if you listen. It remains the most enduring voice on the island, the voice of peace.

- Mike Hill, Superintendent
Assateague Island National Seashore

PWC Update

Seashore Superintendent Michael O. Hill announced that all of Assateague’s waters will be **CLOSED** to PWCs (personal watercraft) until a special regulation is completed that will allow limited use at the extreme northern and southern ends of the 37-mile long island.

A Service-wide rule affecting all National Park Service units (36 CFR 3.24) went into effect on April 20, 2000. It prohibits PWC use in national park areas unless a special regulation is completed. In order to promulgate a special regulation, the Service must determine that this type of water-based recreational activity is appropriate for a specific park based on enabling legislation, protection of resources, other visitor uses, safety and overall management objectives and an environmental assessment or impact statement must be completed to support that regulation.

The proposed regulation for PWC use at Assateague Island will limit areas open to these craft to the extreme northern and southern ends of the 37-mile-long island. The areas will provide access to the island for PWC operators and are described in compliance documents as “transportation corridors.”

“The purpose of this proposed regulation is to allow PWC users a way to visit the island, too,” said Hill, “A majority of the park waters will remain closed to PWC use. These two small areas were selected because the environmental impacts there are negligible.”

Persons wishing to review and comment on the proposed regulation and the environmental assessment may do so by visiting the Assateague Island National Seashore web page at www.nps.gov/asis/index.htm. The comment period is open for 60 days and began May 6, 2002. Comments should be sent to the Superintendent of the Seashore via the methods listed in the proposed regulation.

If You Care, You Won’t Share

Assateague’s wildlife inhabit many different environments! Mammals, reptiles, crustaceans, mollusks, fish and over 250 species of birds call the ocean, beach, dunes, forest, salt marsh and bay home.

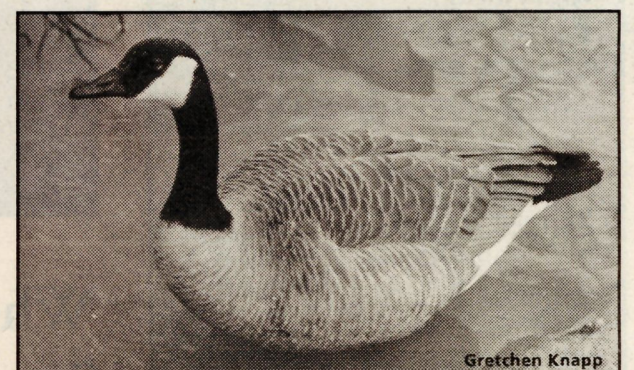
Please remember, interaction (including feeding) between visitors and wild animals is strictly prohibited and often dangerous for all involved. If you care, you won’t share. Deer, horses and other creatures may appear tame, but they are capable of inflicting serious injury and may spread disease. Each year several visitors are bitten or kicked by what appears to be ‘tame’ wildlife.



Your actions may have consequences long after you leave. Some animals become beggars, frequenting the roadsides, and each year deer and horses are hit and killed by cars, and birds and other wildlife are found dead, entangled in human trash and fishing tackle. If you care, you won’t share.

Enjoy wildlife from a distance - please do not stop or park on the roadside or bike trail to view the wildlife except in designated areas. Glimpse a diamondback terrapin while strolling the marsh nature trail, search for a doodlebug’s wanderings on the dunes nature trail, surprise scurrying ghost crabs at night on the beach, or birdwatch while pedaling along bike trails. Take a few moments to observe Assateague’s true residents using their special ‘neighborhoods.’

Assateague Island is an oasis of habitat for countless wild creatures in this world of ever-shrinking natural places. Take pictures and memories, but do not take the ‘wild’ from wildlife.



Gretchen Knapp



Hiking

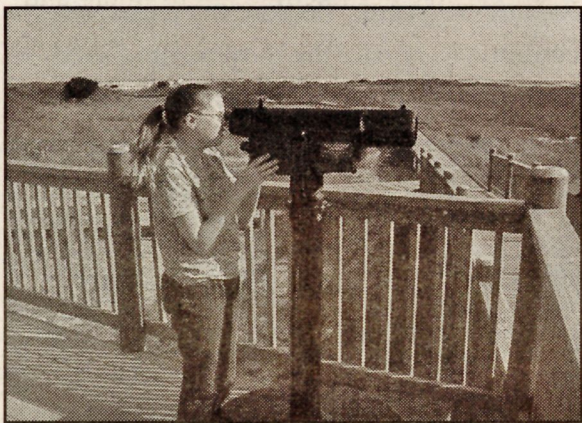
Assateague Island has a variety of paved and unpaved trails open for hiking. There are also 37 miles of beach to wander!

Maryland

Life of the Forest Trail - 1/2 mile loop.
Life of the Dunes Trail - 1/2 mile loop.
Life of the Marsh Trail - 1/2 mile loop.

Virginia

Service Road - 7 miles.
Wildlife Loop - 3.2 mile loop.
Woodland Trail - 1.6 mile loop.
Swan Cove Trail - 1.25 miles.
Black Duck Marsh Trail - 1.0 mile.
Freshwater Marsh Trail - 1.0 mile loop.
Lighthouse Trail - 1/2 mile loop.



Biking

Biking on Assateague is great way to explore the island and avoid summer traffic and parking problems.

Maryland

Cyclists may explore miles of paved bike path from the Bridge parking lot, west of the Verazzano bridge, over the Bike bridge and along Bayberry Drive and Oceanside campground.

Virginia

A paved bike path leads from the town of Chincoteague to Assateague Island.
Wildlife Loop - 3.2 mile loop.
Woodland Trail - 1.6 mile loop.
Swan Cove Trail - 1.25 miles.
Black Duck Marsh Trail - 1.0 mile.

Ranger-Guided Activities

A variety of ranger-guided programs are offered to encourage visitors of all ages to enjoy and learn more about the barrier island environment. Check pages 6, 7, 10 and 11 for more information.



Surf Fishing

Surf fishing has been a popular recreational activity for generations. With a few basic tips on seasons, conditions, equipment, species and regulations, anglers can have an enjoyable experience, create a few memories and share a few tales for years to come. Fishing is prohibited within the lifeguarded beach area. Stop by the visitor center and pick up a surf fishing brochure and current regulations.

Shellfishing

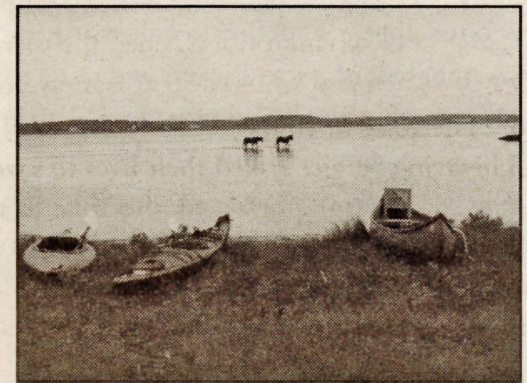
Crabbing and clamming are great ways to discover the bays behind Assateague and sample some local seafood. Regulations change often! Please stop by the Barrier Island or Toms Cove Visitor Center for more information.

Shell Collecting

Shell collecting is a popular way to enjoy Assateague's beaches. To ensure a supply of shells for beach dwelling organisms and future visitors, please limit collecting to one gallon or less of **unoccupied** shells.

Canoeing, Kayaking, Boating

Explore Assateague's largest habitat and get a different perspective on your park! Bring your own watercraft or rent one from nearby local companies or the park concessionaire in Maryland (canoes). Canoes and kayaks may be launched from designated areas on Assateague. Careful consideration should be given to weather conditions and tidal currents. Federal regulations require a personal flotation device for each person in a watercraft. Check at the Barrier Island or Toms Cove Visitor Center for more information.



Off-Road Vehicles

There are 12 miles of beach in Maryland and a small section of beach in Virginia open to off-road vehicles. An annual off-road vehicle permit may be purchased for \$70. Specific equipment is required. Be aware of closures during the busy summer season. Check at the Toms Cove Visitor Center (VA) or the Ranger Station/Campground Office (MD) for details.

Swimming, Surfing

Experience Assateague's most dynamic habitat! During the summer, lifeguard protected beaches are provided in both the Maryland and Virginia districts. Mats, floats, surfing and surf fishing are allowed **outside** of the lifeguarded beach areas. See page 5 for tips to help you safely enjoy your ocean experience.

When It's Not a Beach Day, Try These Ideas

Enjoy exhibits, nature films, and bookstores in the Toms Cove, Chincoteague Refuge and Barrier Island visitor centers.

Walk the Life of Assateague nature trails in Maryland and the Swan Cove, Woodland, Lighthouse, Freshwater Marsh and Wildlife Loop trails in Virginia.

Drive the Assateague to Crisfield 'Beach to Bay Indian Trail.' Discover rich regional history in several museums, small towns and state parks.

Visit the Salisbury Zoo and Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art – both small but outstanding!

Explore charming Chincoteague and its museums, and NASA's Wallops Island Visitor Center.

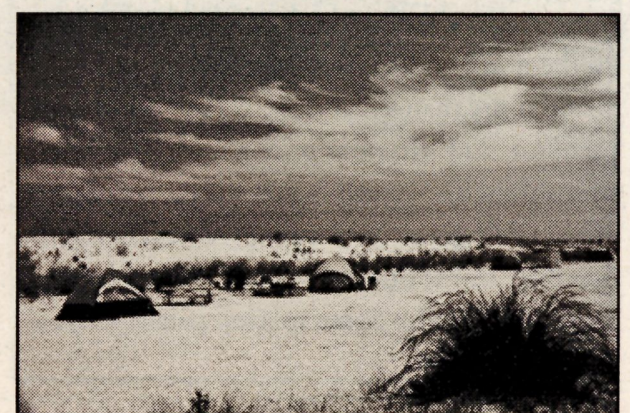
Seashore Camping - Something for Everyone

A variety of camping is available on Assateague Island, in the Maryland section only. The National Park Service provides two campgrounds, Oceanside and Bayside, which offer drive-in pads suitable for tents, trailers and recreational vehicles. In addition, Oceanside has walk-in, tent only sites, located 100-200 feet from centralized parking areas.

Both campgrounds have primitive facilities with outdoor chemical toilets, central locations for drinking water and outdoor rinse-off showers. Reservations can be made from April 15th through October 15, up to five months in advance of a camping date by calling the National Park Service Reservation System at 1-800-365-2267 or online at <http://reservations.nps.gov>. The rest of the year is first-come, first-served. Organized group camps and backcountry camping for paddlers or hikers are available at established sites. Additional camping information is available at

the National Seashore's campground office by calling 410-641-3030; or visiting our web site at www.nps.gov/asis.

Assateague State Park in Maryland also has a campground that features hot shower bathhouses. There are a limited number of electric hookups in the state park. Further state park information is available at 410-641-2120. For reservations call 1-888-432-2267.





Assateague and the Tides of Change

"The edge of the sea is a strange and beautiful place. All through the long history of Earth it has been an area of unrest where waves have broken heavily against the land, where the tides have pressed forward over the continents, receded, and then returned. For no two successive days is the shoreline precisely the same. Not only do the tides advance and retreat in their eternal rhythms, but the level of the sea itself is never at rest. ... Today a little more land may belong to the sea, tomorrow a little less. Always the edge of the sea remains an elusive and indefinable boundary."

- Rachel Carson

Assateague Island is a 37-mile-long ribbon of moving sand. Seen from the air, its oceanfront shoreline appears alternately dry and wet, smooth and polished, glistening in sweeps of waves and sand. On its bayside the line of land and water often appear undefined. Salt marsh and forests mingle in shades of green and brown. Throughout the island plant and animal life appear abundant and thriving. In this timeless landscape one can imagine that it has been this way since the beginning of time. But this is a barrier island, and it changes, constantly, sometimes **dramatically**.

A barrier island is one of the most dynamic landscapes in the world. Depending on conditions, parts of it can literally appear or disappear overnight. In March of 1962 one of the most severe storms ever to hit the mid-Atlantic coast came to Assateague. Its surging high tides, raging northeast winds, and 30-foot high waves transformed the island in a matter of hours. Assateague was very different then. In the 1960s the island was becoming a popular vacation spot and real estate developers had acquired and subdivided most of the Maryland section. About 3,600 tracts had been sold, summer homes were being built, and streets and avenues were being constructed. The storm overwashed the island, breached frontal barrier dunes, and severely damaged cottages and streets. Another wave of storms in the same year, and another in the following year, overwashed the island again, obliterating much of the shoreline and what was left of the budding vacation community. Traces of the old asphalt streets in the Maryland section can still be seen crumbling among the dunes, and what was once considered prime beachfront property is now submerged 100 feet from shore.

Storms have not been the only reason things have changed on Assateague. Jetties constructed to stabilize the inlet separating Ocean City and Assateague Island have also had a significant impact. Acting like dams on a river, they have halted sand that would otherwise have moved southward onto the island. With the elimination of natural sand deposits the beach on the north end of Assateague has moved inland more than 1,200 feet, frontal dunes have been lost, and what was once a tract covered with shrubs and marsh is now an open expanse of sand and grass. In the past few years even moderate storm tides have washed completely across the island. Some species, particularly

ground nesting birds, such as the endangered Piping Plover, have thrived under these conditions. However, the rate and extent of change have caused coastal geologists to predict that northern Assateague could split apart with the next significant storm, if the natural movement of sand is not restored.

After more than 6 years of planning, the

beach, reduce overwashes, and will maintain conditions that sustain barrier island animal and plant communities.

The second phase of the project will restore a "natural" sand supply to Assateague Island. Because the jetties will continue to restrict the movement of sand to the island, plans call for removing sand



Storms, rising seas, and human folly have all played a role in the changing shoreline of Assateague Island.

National Park Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Minerals Management Service, and state and local agencies are partnering to initiate several water resource related projects in the Maryland Coastal Bays vicinity. One is a restoration project for northern Assateague Island to compensate for the impacts caused by the Ocean City Inlet. Beginning this summer, park visitors may be surprised to see heavy equipment, such as dozers, dumptrucks and graders on the beach. Most of the restoration activity will be well away from public areas, but they will be ongoing and extensive.

The first phase of this multi-year project will involve 'nourishing' Assateague's beaches using sand from offshore shoals. Approximately 1.4 million cubic meters of sand will be redeposited along the shoreline (that is enough sand to fill almost 4,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools). Redepositing this sand, and creating low berms along the shore will significantly widen the

from in and around the Ocean City Inlet where it has been trapped, and then transporting it south to Assateague. This may not only help Assateague, but may also benefit local navigation by decreasing the need for channel dredging.

For millions of years barrier islands have moved and adapted to rising and falling sea levels, providing a critical habitat for many species of plants and animals, protecting the mainland as a barrier from the ravages of storms. Barrier islands may be able to adjust to the rising and encroaching seas, but their accelerated movement presents special problems for humans. How we meet the test of time may depend on how we approach it. We can take a lesson from the long history of Assateague, by working *with* - rather than against - the inevitable tides of change.

- Robert Fudge,
Chief of Interpretation



Monday, June 17 - Saturday, August 24

Guided Explorations

Birds Across Assateague - Join us for a 1 mile stroll from beach to bay to look for island birdlife. We provide binoculars and a spotting scope for a close-up look. Meet in the history exhibit parking lot at the intersection of Bayberry Drive and Ferry Landing Road. Insect repellent, long pants and long sleeves are recommended. Distance: 1 mile.

Time: 1-1 1/2 hours.

The Lost Beach Mystery - The beach is missing! We have rounded up all the usual suspects: Shifty Sands, Stormy Surges, and Nora Easter. Join us for this geography who-done-it. Meet at the pedestrian/bicycle bridge parking lot (between the visitor center and the bridge). After walking to the top of the bridge overlook, we'll car caravan north of the state park and explore evidence of an island on the move. Distance: 1 mile.

Time: 1 1/2 -2 hours.

Bay Discovery - Marshes and bays are some of the most productive places on earth. Join a naturalist and take a close look at marine organisms that thrive in the bay. Wear clothing that you don't mind getting wet! A snug pair of wading shoes is required - no flip-flops. Meet at the Old Ferry Landing. Time: 1 hour.

Canoe Trip - Join a park ranger at the Old Ferry Landing for a unique way to explore the marshes and waters of Chincoteague Bay. After a short briefing on basic canoeing skills, we will explore a rarely experienced part of the island. **Paddlers must be age 14 or older**, and all paddlers must have strength to paddle in windy conditions. Children ages 6-13 have the option of sitting in the middle of the canoe. **No children under age 6 permitted.** All equipment is provided. Wading shoes (no flip-flops) are required, as wading will be necessary at certain stops. **Note: Reservations must be made in person at the Barrier Island Visitor Center. There is a \$20.00 per canoe fee for the activity, payable by cash or check only at the time of making the reservation.** This fee is non-refundable except when stormy or extremely windy weather forces cancellation of the trip. Reservations are limited to one trip per person each summer. Canoeists with reservations must arrive on time or risk forfeiture to others standing by. Distance: 1 mile. Time: 2 hours.

Seashells & Shore Life - Search for seashell treasures while uncovering the secrets of shore life. Meet at the pedestrian/bicycle bridge parking lot (between the visitor center and the bridge). After walking to the top of the bridge overlook, we'll car caravan north of the state park and explore the special relationship between land and water. Distance: 1 mile.

Time: 1 1/2 hours.



Nature Talks

Aquarium Feeding - You don't need scuba gear to join park staff for a look at the weird and wonderful creatures inhabiting the waters around Assateague Island. Meet at the Barrier Island Visitor Center. Time: 45 minutes.

Recreational Demonstrations

Shellfishing Demonstration - Learn about the undiscovered delicacy of Assateague, the ribbed mussel, and how to safely harvest and cook it. Join a ranger at Ferry Landing to find out how to collect clams and blue crabs, too and learn about the environmental and economic pressures that threaten them. Those interested in seeing where mussels live should wear clothing and shoes (no flip-flops) suitable for wading.

Time: 1 hour

Surf Fishing - We provide several surf rods and bait, and demonstrate equipment and casting techniques to help you learn about the basics of surf fishing. Wear clothing and shoes suitable for wading in the surf if you want to cast it "way out there!" All participants will have several chances to cast; those interested can fish awhile. No better way to learn before investing in equipment. Meet at the northeast corner of the Ocean Beach parking lot. **Note: program is for ages 12 and older.** Time: 1-1 1/2 hours.

Surf Rescue Demonstration - Join our lifeguard staff as they demonstrate the equipment and techniques of ocean surf rescue. Because ocean swimming can be dangerous, the staff strongly encourages your participation in this activity. Meet at the designated lifeguard stand at North Ocean Beach. Time: 1/2 hour.



Evening Programs

A Walk at Dusk - (precedes Campfire Program) Join a ranger for an evening stroll down the beach to the site of the campfire program. Insect repellent may be necessary. Meet under the canopy outside the National Seashore's Campground Ranger Station. Distance: 1/4 mile.

Time: 1/2 hour.

Campfire Program - Did pirates hide out on Assateague? Where did the ponies really come from? Join a park naturalist for a discussion of the many faces of Assateague. Insect repellent may be necessary. If driving, park at the southernmost beach boardwalk in the North Ocean Beach lot and walk 200 yards south along the beach. If you are camping in Oceanside Campground, walk north from one of the boardwalks that lead to the beach. Time: 1 hour.

For Young Naturalists

Junior Ranger - For children ages 6-14. Make your visit an Assateague exploration and learn more about the seashore. Purchase a Junior Ranger booklet at the Barrier Island Visitor Center. When you have completed the activities in the booklet and attended two ranger-guided programs, you'll earn a Junior Ranger certificate and patch.

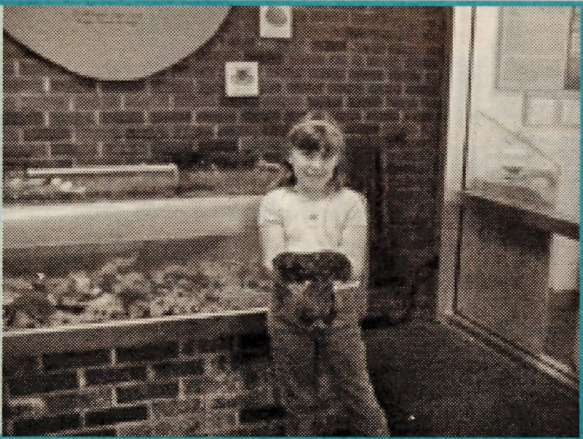
Mini Ranger - For children 4-5 years old. Pick up a Mini Ranger booklet at the Barrier Island Visitor Center. When you have completed the activities in the booklet and attended one ranger-guided program you'll earn a certificate and badge.

Visitor Center Explorer - Children ages pre-school and older can earn a sticker by completing a worksheet about the visitor center exhibits.



Barrier Island Visitor Center

The Barrier Island Visitor Center is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and provides exhibits, educational brochures, nature films, a marine aquarium, lost & found, and emergency services. Visitor Center staff are available to answer your questions and assist you in planning your stay. The center is the starting point for the park's one-hour driving tour by cassette tape. Aquarium feeding occurs daily. Check program schedule for times. Come join us! For more information, call (410) 641-1441.



Map Guide

- 1 - Barrier Island Visitor Center

2 - Bridge Parking

3 - North Ocean Beach

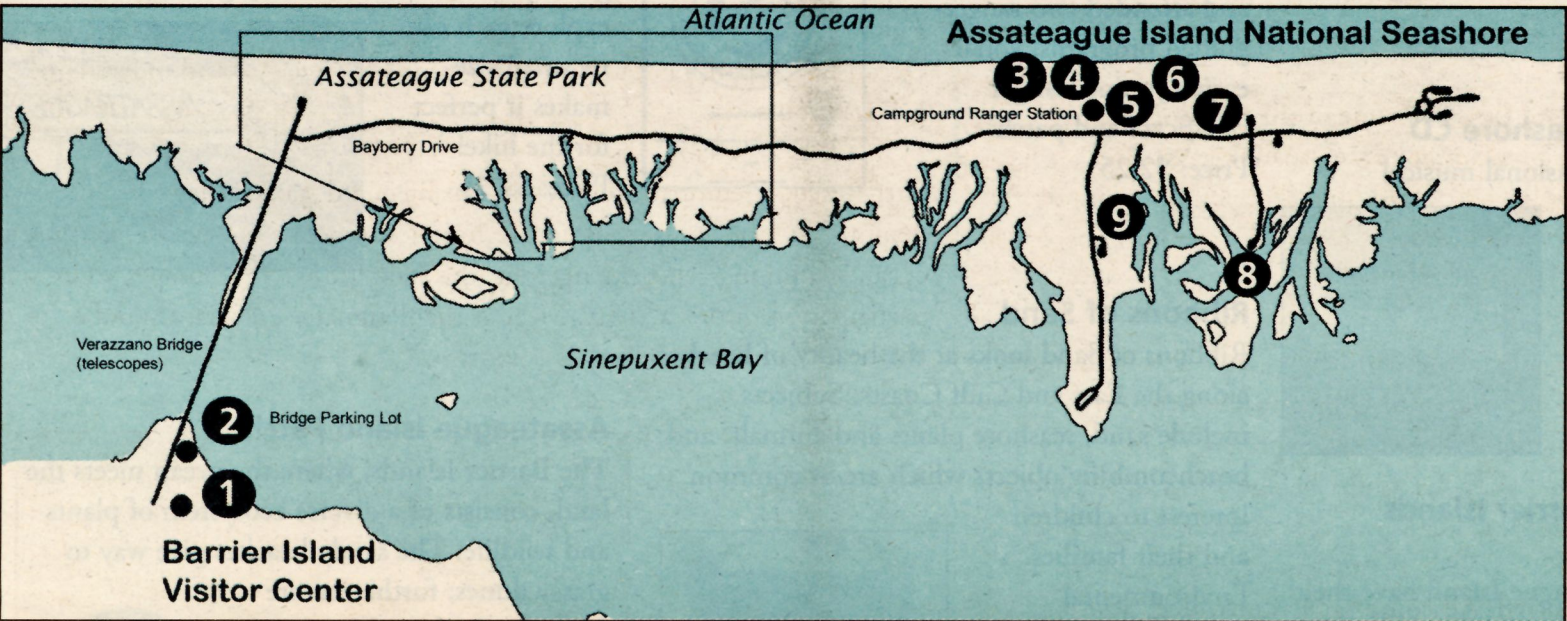
4 - Lifeguarded Beach

5 - Campground Ranger Station
- 6 - 200 yards south of North Ocean Beach Parking lot

7 - History Exhibit Parking Lot

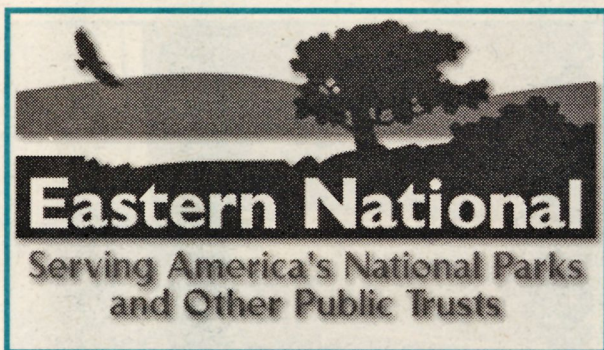
8 - Old Ferry Landing

9 - Life of the Marsh Trailhead



Maryland District Activities

Location	Map Code	Program	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
History Exhibit Parking Lot	7	Birds Across Assateague (1 - 1 1/2 hours)					7:30 am		
Old Ferry Landing	8	Canoe Trips (2 hours)	9:00 am	5:30 pm	4:00 pm	4:00 pm	4:00 pm	5:30 pm	9:00 am 5:00 pm
North Ocean Beach	3	Surf Fishing Demonstration (1 - 1 1/2 hours)	9:30 am					9:30 am	
Bridge Parking	2	Lost Beach Mystery (1 1/2 - 2 hours)					9:30 am		
Visitor Center	1	Aquarium Feeding (45 minutes)	3:00 pm	3:00 pm	10:00 am	10:00 am	10:00 am	10:00 am	10:00 am
Lifeguarded Beach	4	Surf Rescue Demonstration (1/2 hour)		10:00 am			10:00 am		10:00 am
Old Ferry Landing	8	Shelfishing Demonstration (1 hour)	1:30 pm	1:30 pm	2:30 pm	1:00 pm	2:30 pm		
Old Ferry Landing	8	Bay Discovery (1 hour)			1:00 pm			2:00 pm	2:00 pm
Bridge Parking	2	Seashells & Shore Life (1 1/2 hours)				2:30 pm			
Campground Ranger Station	5	A Walk at Dusk (1/2 hour)		8:00 pm				8:00 pm	
See Program Description	6*	Campfire Program (1 hour)		8:30 pm				8:30 pm	

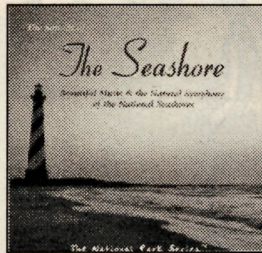


Eastern National, chartered in 1948, is an association operating in more than 130 national parks and other public trusts. We see our mission as a double opportunity to offer quality educational materials and services to park visitors and the general public at fair prices, and to aid the National Park Service with the income derived from these activities. Since 1947, we have donated over \$54 million to the National Park Service.

The Sounds of the Seashore CD

Come along on a 3-dimensional musical journey as we explore the incredible coastal regions of the Eastern Seaboard.

Price: \$14.95



Wild Ponies of the Barrier Islands Poster

The feral Ponies of Assateague Island have their own reasons for seeking relief in the surf of the Atlantic. This colorful large-format poster features the ponies charging out of the wild surf; suitable for framing. Price: \$8.95



The following items may be purchased at the Barrier Island and Toms Cove Visitor Centers and by calling (410) 641-1443 ext. 246 for a mail order form. Some items are available online at www.eparks.com

Assateague Island Junior Ranger Program, For Kids Ages 6-14

Make your visit an Assateague exploration and learn more about the seashore. Purchase a Junior Ranger booklet at the Toms Cove or Barrier Island Visitor Center.

When you have completed the activities in the booklet and attended two ranger-guided programs, you'll earn a Junior Ranger certificate and patch.

Price: \$2.25



Ribbons of Sand

Ribbons of Sand looks at the beauty of beaches along the East and Gulf Coasts. Subjects include sand, seashore plants and animals, and beachcombing objects which are of common interest to children and their families.

Environmental concerns of the sensitive seashore habitat are also explored.

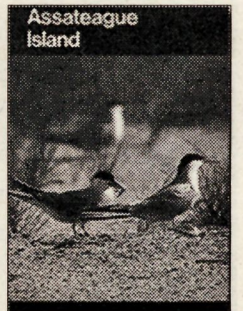
Price: \$7.95



Assateague Island Handbook

The U.S. Department of the Interior presents the authoritative guide to Assateague Island. Features many full-color photographs and presents the full story of the seashore and its impact on the island's many inhabitants.

Price: \$7.95

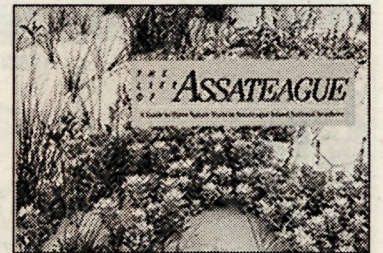


The Life of Assateague

Life of the Dunes - Life of the Forest - Life of the Marsh. Three different journeys offer three different views of life on Assateague Island. This guide presents three half-mile guided tours to explore each one.

Its small size makes it perfect for the hike!

Price: \$2.25



Assateague Island Patch

The Barrier Islands, where the ocean meets the land, consists of a diverse ecosystem of plants and wildlife. The sandy beaches give way to grassy dunes; further on are forests and salt marshes. Celebrate the beauty of this wild landscape with this colorful patch.

Price: \$2.50

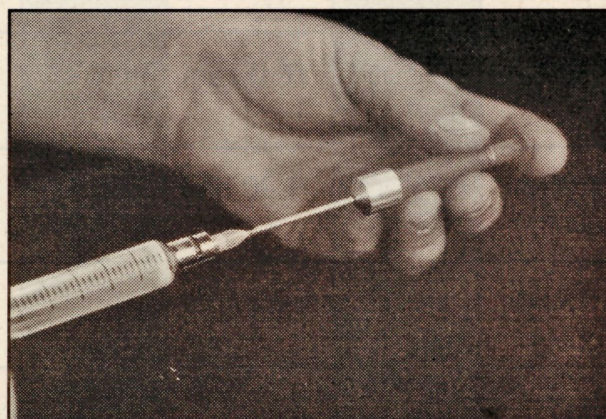


A Sustainable Contribution

What do herds of South African elephants and Assateague's wild ponies have in common? Last April a small group of researchers and resource managers gathered on a crisp weekend morning at the Barrier Island Visitor Center. It was a typical Saturday and the visitor center was becoming busy. People milling about the group probably noticed nothing unusual, except perhaps that some in the party had British sounding accents. What they could not have suspected was that several were wildlife biologists who manage free-roaming elephant herds in South Africa. Others in the group included wildlife biologist Dr. Jay Kirkpatrick, Director of Science and Conservation Biology at Zoo Montana, the National Seashore's Chief of Resource Management, Carl Zimmerman, and the Seashore's Biological Science Technician Allison Turner. Why had some traveled so far to visit Assateague? In South Africa they use a form of wildlife population control on elephants that was first tested and used on wild ponies on Assateague Island.

The "Chincoteague Ponies", who live on the

Virginia end of Assateague, belong to the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department. They are rounded up and sold each year as part of a fundraiser for the Fire Department. In Maryland the horses remain free roaming with their population managed by a contraceptive vaccine developed by Dr. Kirkpatrick. Each



spring since 1986 Dr. Kirkpatrick, along with Ms. Turner, ventures out into the marshes of Assateague to locate mares of breeding age. From a distance they monitor their health, and using small darts shot from capture guns, they

inoculate them. The vaccine shot from the guns stimulates a mare's immune system, and creates antibodies that prevent sperm from fertilizing her egg. The vaccine does not use hormones and does not affect the health or behavior of the horse. The effect is reversible and each mare is allowed to foal at least once in her lifetime.

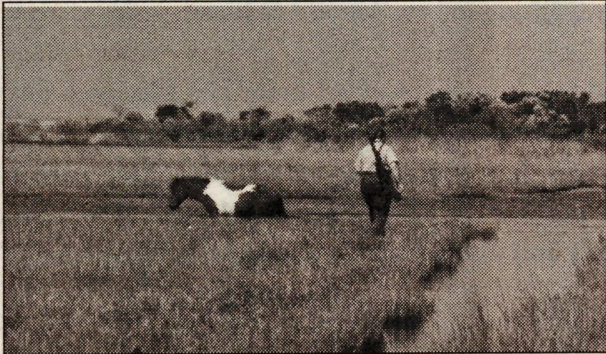
Managing horse herds at populations below their current number is critical if the park is to protect other species and barrier island natural systems. Without this program the horse population will continue to grow to levels that would be unsustainable for the island, but with it, horses and other wildlife can co-mingle and thrive. This method of population control has far reaching implications, and it is now being used worldwide on other animals, including elephants (albeit in much larger doses). In effect, the ponies of Assateague have made an important ongoing 'sustainable' contribution to the world.

- Robert Fudge,
Chief of Interpretation



The Watcher

Every available scrap of her workspace is pasted with photos of horses. She can identify every horse in the Maryland herd and describe a bit of its history. Allison Turner monitors the lives of these extraordinary animals. It is her job and her passion.



When I first approached Allison about doing an interview for the summer newspaper her immediate reaction was much like a wild creature looking for an escape route. "Just so the article is about the horses and not me," she said. However, these two stories are intertwined. Her first memories of visiting the island as a child in the late sixties with her parents did not include wild horses. There was the traditional stop at Shockley's store for banana popsicles before cruising across the bridge and down the dirt road leading to the beach. Shockley's is gone now and the road is paved but no doubt each visitor, whether local or from far away, has special rituals that swell the anticipation of arrival and say, "We're almost there!" The family enjoyed typical beach activities and Allison's first memory of an Assateague visit is sadly watching her "kite fly away over the ocean with a broken string."

It is no wonder Allison did not see horses during her first visits. There were fewer than 30 horses on the north end of the island in the mid-sixties. The National Park Service accepted these feral animals as part of the rich cultural history of the Eastern Shore. Having once been domesticated and used in all manner of local life, the horses were originally released onto the island's naturally fenced pastureland to escape taxing and fencing laws. Free roaming, the horses returned over time to behaviors most associated with their wild ancestors. The population increased at 10 to 15% each year and by the time Allison became a National Park Service employee there was building concern that a growing population of horses would

ultimately become a problem for native plants and animals and perhaps for the horses themselves. Today there are over 170 wild horses on the Maryland end of the island and it is the rare circumstance in which a visitor leaves Assateague without a glimpse of these prominent citizens.

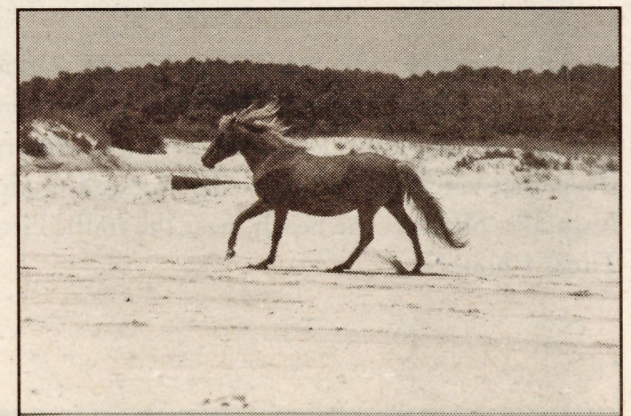
Allison Turner now visits Assateague as a National Park Service employee. A member of the resource management division, she monitors and meticulously records information on band dynamics, range, breeding behaviors, and impact on the local environment. On her daily rounds she has witnessed a variety of visitor interactions with horses that are cause for some distress, if not downright alarm. Horses, she says are intelligent in the manner of 2 or 3-year-old children. They are extremely responsive and quickly learn new behaviors. This marvelous ability to adapt, which has served them well in the harsh environment of the barrier island is not always in their best interest when it comes to learning from people. They want what they want when they want it, very much like a toddler, and quickly learn any behavior that will get them a treat. An occasional cookie for a youngster is fine, not so for a wild horse. Every interaction of this type reinforces behavior that may lure the animal to roadsides and danger or make it an aggressive mugger looking for an opportunity to plunder a picnic or camp dinner. Whose fault is that? The horse? Or those who teach it to associate people with food?



Allison would like us to know horses as she does, from a distance, watching and observing. In this manner we might develop an appreciation of wildness for its own sake and invite the experience of a lifetime. We might witness horses engaged in mutual grooming, a

case of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." This proposal to groom by a subordinate horse may well be turned away with a bite or kick, normal band behavior. Sometimes a horse will scratch its own itch on a bush or tree, or roll in sand for relief. As this is contagious behavior, other band members may also decide a little rolling in sand feels mighty good. Perhaps we will observe a nursing foal receiving real nourishment from its mother rather than a handout. A foal may lie down to nap in the grass, asleep under the watchful eyes of band members. Can we resist our own impulses for physical contact with these enticing creatures and choose to protect the idea of wildlife?

And what about the growing population of horses on the Maryland section of Assateague?



The swim and auction continue on the Virginia end of the island, sponsored each year at the end of July by the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department. In Maryland the solution is birth control, which Allison administers by dart gun. Over time herd numbers will slowly be reduced as natural mortality takes its toll. Overgrazed marshes will experience rebirth providing food and shelter for birds and other wildlife. Beach grasses left ungrazed will do their job of holding dunes in place. There will still be horses for wildlife watchers.

Most of us will struggle with a desire to reach out, to touch and claim, a piece of 'wild' for ourselves. For Allison Turner there is no such conflict. The spirit of a wild creature cannot be claimed.

- Rachele Daigneault,
Maryland District Ranger, Interpretation

Foster Horse Program

You can help support wild horse management and protection activities by becoming a Foster Parent. Participants receive a photograph and information on the horse they 'foster' and a certificate in an attractive binder. The \$20 contribution goes directly to education, long-term population monitoring, and a contraception program to manage herd size. This helps to protect both the horses and their fragile island habitat.

'Fostering' a wild horse can only be done in person in Maryland's Barrier Island Visitor Center.



Gretchen Knapp



Monday, June 17 - Saturday, August 24

Guided Explorations

For The Birds - (Advanced registration required-limit 25.) This stroll to beach, freshwater and salt marsh habitats is designed for the beginning bird watcher. A limited number of binoculars and bird guides are provided. Meet at the Toms Cove Visitor Center. Distance: 1/2 mile. Time: 2 hours.

Marine Explorers - Join a naturalist and take a close look at marine organisms from beach to bay. Wear clothing that you don't mind getting wet! This program involves active participation. **A snug pair of wading shoes is required - no flip-flops.** Meet at the south end of parking lot #5. Distance: 1 mile. Time: 2 hours.

The Changing Beach - Have you ever wondered why Assateague looks different every time you visit? Learn more about barrier island ecology, wildlife and how and why the island is moving. Meet at the Naturalist Shack at the beach, near the traffic circle. Distance: 1/2 mile. Time: 1 hour.

Nature's Nursery -The Salt Marsh - Come wander in our wetlands and learn about where your seafood dinner came from. Become acquainted with the unique plants and animals of this important environment. **Wear shoes that you don't mind getting wet and muddy.** Meet at the Naturalist Shack at the beach, near the traffic circle. Distance: 1/2 mile. Time: 1 hour.



Evening Programs

Glimpses of the Past - Over the centuries the calm waters of Toms Cove have been plied by scows and barges, cutters and schooners. As the sun sets, look back into the rich history of this fertile cove. Meet on the Toms Cove Visitor Center deck. Time: 30 minutes.

Beach Campfire - A campfire on the beach recreates the mood of days gone by on Assateague. Join park naturalists for a fun and educational program covering a variety of topics on the rich cultural and natural history of Assateague Island. Bring marshmallows, a roasting stick and a flashlight. Meet at the north end of parking lot #5, south of the lifeguarded beach. Time: 45 minutes.

Night Hike - As you wander along the beach after sunset, travel back in time to the days of shipwrecks, surf cars and supermen. Join a Ranger on a leisurely stroll along the surf to hear tales of disaster, heroism and the U.S. Lifesaving Service. Bring a flashlight and insect repellent. Meet at the Naturalist Shack at the beach, near the traffic circle. Time: 45 minutes - 1 hour. Distance: 3/4 mile.

Recreational Demonstrations

Surf Rescue Demonstration - Join our lifeguard staff as they demonstrate the equipment and techniques of ocean surf rescue. Because ocean swimming can be dangerous, the staff strongly encourages your participation in this activity. Meet at the main lifeguard stand on the beach, at the north end of parking lot #5. Time: 1/2 hour.

Surf Fishing - (Advanced registration required-limit 25.) Designed for those with limited surf fishing experience, this program includes demonstrations of equipment, bait and casting techniques. Equipment is provided, however, actual practice time depends on group size. **Program is limited to those 12 years and older.** Meet at the south end of parking lot #5. Time: 2 hours.



Nature Talks

Aquarium Talk - The marine aquariums in the Visitor Center contain a microcosm of life from the underwater world of Toms Cove. Join a naturalist for this talk as the residents of the aquarium are fed. Time: 1/2 hour

Creature Feature - Gather 'round the naturalist and today's mystery guest. Learn the life and lore of a special island inhabitant during this informal discussion. Meet on the Toms Cove Visitor Center deck. Time: 15 minutes.



For Young Naturalists

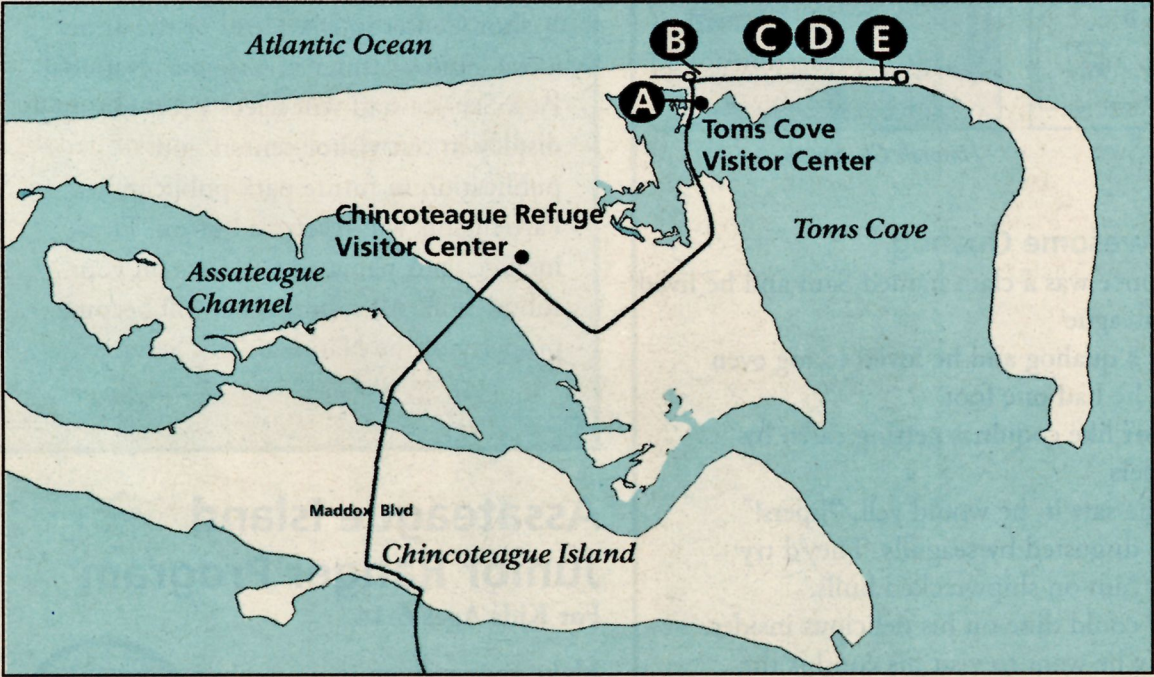
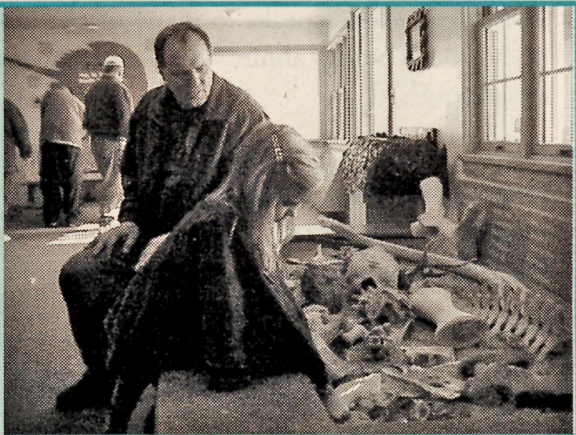
Junior Ranger - For children ages 6-14. Make your visit an Assateague exploration and learn more about the seashore. Purchase a Junior Ranger booklet at the Toms Cove Visitor Center. When you have completed the activities in the booklet and attended two ranger-guided programs, you'll earn a Junior Ranger certificate and patch. Participants planning to attend the 3:00 pm Junior Ranger Awards Ceremony need to turn their booklets into the Toms Cove Visitor Center staff by 2:00 pm.

Mini Ranger - Children 4-5 years old can become a Mini Ranger. Pick up a Mini Ranger booklet at the Toms Cove Visitor Center. When you have completed the activities in the booklet and attended one ranger-guided program you'll earn a certificate and badge.



Toms Cove Visitor Center

The Toms Cove Visitor Center is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and provides exhibits, educational brochures, permits, a marine aquarium and touch tank, lost & found and emergency services. Visitor Center staff are available to answer your questions and assist you in planning your stay.
For more information, call (757) 336-6577.



Map Guide

- A - Toms Cove Visitor Center
- B - Naturalist Shack
- C - Lifeguard Protected Beach
- D - Lot #5 - North
- E - Lot #5 - South

Virginia District Activities

Location	Map Code	Program	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Toms Cove Visitor Center	A	For the Birds* (2 hours)	7:30 am					7:30 am	
Lot #5-South	E	Marine Explorers (2 hours)			8:00 am				8:00 am
Protected Beach	C	Surf Rescue Demonstration (1/2 hour)		10:00 am		10:00 am		10:00 am	
Naturalist Shack	B	The Changing Beach (1 hour)		10:30 am					10:30 am
Naturalist Shack	B	Nature's Nursery - The Salt Marsh (1 hour)			10:30 am		10:30 am		
Toms Cove Visitor Center	A	Aquarium Talk (1/2 hour)	1:30 pm	1:30 pm	1:30 pm		1:30 pm	1:30 pm	1:30 pm
Toms Cove Visitor Center	A	Junior Ranger Awards (15 minutes)	3:00 pm	3:00 pm	3:00 pm	3:00 pm	3:00 pm	3:00 pm	3:00 pm
Toms Cove Visitor Center	A	Creature Feature (15 minutes)				3:30 pm		3:30 pm	3:30 pm
Lot #5 - South	E	Surf Fishing Demonstration (2 hours) *					6:00 pm		
Toms Cove Visitor Center	A	Glimpses of the Past (1/2 hour)		7:45 pm					7:45 pm
Naturalist Shack	B	Night Hike (45 minutes - 1 hour)				8:30 pm			
Lot #5 - North	D	Beach Campfire (45 minutes)	8:30 pm					8:30 pm	

* Advance Registration Required. Sign up at the Toms Cove Visitor Center.

Special Note: The National Park Service assists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in interpretation and recreation management, but only on Toms Cove Hook. The Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge provides many other activities throughout the refuge.
Contact the Chincoteague Refuge Visitor Center for program details.



Assateague Island speaks to many of our visitors and last year over 70 visitors shared essays, poems or drawings about what Assateague means to them. Here are just a few 'Voices of Assateague'.

One of the Last, Greatest Places in the World: Assateague

Where the Sandpipers peep
And Pelicans swoop
This is Assateague

Where the horses graze
And Sika deer hide
This is Assateague

Where the mosquitos bite
And jellyfish sting
This is Assateague

Where waves crash
And Osprey fly
This is Assateague

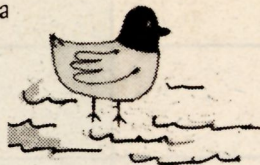
Assateague is a place
Where you can see many things
- Myles Finlay, Grade 1

Through the misty air of morning
Fly, lonely seagull, fly
Whilst the ponies and the egrets
Hear your plaintive cry

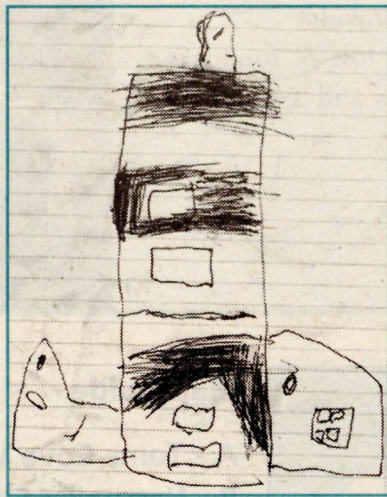
Fly o'er the pale blue ocean
And across the sandy shores
Above the salty marshlands
To a place you can call yours

Now sit and watch the waking land
An isle to call your home
The rising dawn of Assateague
Ever more to roam.

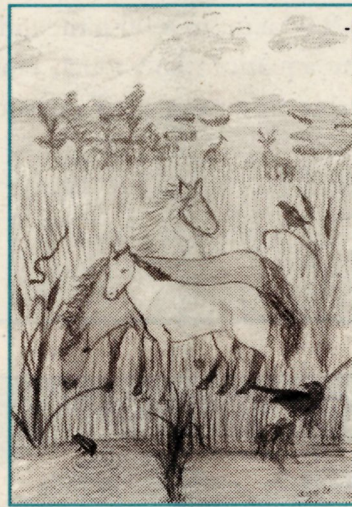
- Wanda Crockett



Sika Deer Prancing
Wild Ponies dancing
Lots of crabs scurrying
No one hurrying
Wind Blowing
Plants growing
All on Assateague
- Perri McSpadden



- Stephen Tate, age 5



- Hannah Goodmuth, age 11

The Awesome Quahog

There once was a clam named Sam and he lived on Assateague

He was a quahog and he loved to jog even though he had one foot

He didn't like coquinas getting eaten by sandpipers

When he saw it, he would yell, "Jipers!"

He was disgusted by seagulls, They'd try to drop him on shipwrecked hulls.

So they could dine on his delicious insides.

One day he went to visit his cousins the barnacles who lived on a hunting blind's poles.

Hey guys how've ya been? I've been great so has my kin.

We've been super old Sam ol' buddy but we've got one problem, Our poles are all muddy! We try to stick on with all of our might But whenever we try, we fall off in a fright.

That sounds so sad guys, now if you help me get rid of this midge I'll let you come live with me on the Assateague bridge.

So they packed up their bags and went along with that clam. They met so many new friends that they just had to thank Sam.

A jellyfish, a pipefish, a puffer or two
They loved their new home they were such a happy crew!

- Ian Lewis, Age 9

Got a Favorite Assateague Memory?

Remember your first glimpse of the ocean? How about the camping trip right after a mosquito hatch? Or that breathtaking sunset over the marsh?

Write an essay, poem or draw a picture about your favorite Assateague memory that you will take away with you. Submit it in person, at either the Barrier Island Visitor Center in Maryland or the Toms Cove Visitor Center in Virginia. National Park Service staff will select a few for display in our visitor centers and publication in future park publications. Participants will receive a button. Please include your name and address on your submission. All submissions will become property of the National Park Service.

Assateague Island Junior Ranger Program For Kids Ages 6-14

Make your visit an Assateague exploration and learn more about the seashore. Purchase a Junior Ranger booklet at the Toms Cove or Barrier Island Visitor Center. When you have completed the activities in the booklet and attended two ranger-guided programs, you'll earn a Junior Ranger certificate and patch.



Thank You!!

The National Seashore staff thanks the many visitors who drop a dollar or some loose change into the Barrier Island or Toms Cove Visitor Centers' donation boxes. These funds have made substantial contributions to the aquariums, exhibits, special programs, and many free publications possible.

