

# News Release

## *Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge*

8231 Beach Road

Chincoteague Island, VA 23336

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### The Daily Pass is Back at Chincoteague! *Refuge announces change in entrance fees*

**Chincoteague, VA** - Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR) offers many unique recreational and educational opportunities to the visiting public. A flagship of the National Wildlife Refuge System, this iconic barrier island refuge on the Mid-Atlantic Coast is a mecca for over one million outdoor enthusiasts annually. The refuge welcomes wildlife-watchers, photographers, cyclists, hikers, anglers, hunters, and beach-goers. As of June 11, 2020, people seeking these experiences now have the new, low-cost option of a \$10 Daily Pass.

Back by popular demand, the return of the daily entrance pass is part of a change in entrance fees implemented to maintain consistency with the Weekly and Annual Passes offered by Assateague Island National Seashore (ASIS) in Maryland. The change in fees comes after seeking and considering public input, including overwhelming requests from visitors and local community members to bring back a Daily Pass.



Although ASIS is located in Maryland and CNWR is in Virginia, the agencies share management responsibilities of recreational lands on the Virginia portion of Assateague Island. Therefore, CNWR and ASIS have a reciprocal agreement which allows visitors to use passes issued by both agencies at either site. To provide some consistency in these fees, the Weekly Pass (valid for 7 days) is now priced at \$25 and Annual Passes (good for 1 year) cost \$45. At CNWR, the entrance fee will continue to be waived for passengers of local courtesy shuttles, such as those typically used by hotels and motels and hikers and cyclists enter free of charge.

If you carry a Federal Duck Stamp (\$25), you can access the recreational beach by purchasing the \$20 Annual Beach Parking Permit (making the combined cost of the permit and stamp equal to the \$45 price of a Refuge Annual Pass). This permit is an expanded amenity recreation fee and is required for visitors who hold a Federal Duck

Stamp and wish to access the recreational beach at CNWR or ASIS in Maryland.



Although fees are currently waived and no pass is required to visit, new entrance pass prices will go into effect soon after the suspension of entrance fees is lifted. Eighty percent of all entrance pass sales are used to maintain and improve the visitor experience. Your pass purchase helps support visitor health and safety services, including CNWR Law Enforcement who help ensure year-round public safety and seasonal ASIS lifeguards at the beach. The funds also go towards repairs to the

historic Assateague Lighthouse, special events, ranger programs, and annual maintenance of roads, facilities and trails.

A significant portion of these funds go toward your beach experience. Due to their proximity and vulnerability to the Atlantic Ocean, the beach parking lots are frequently over washed and sometimes destroyed by storms and waves. This amenity is co-managed by CNWR and ASIS, whose maintenance teams would be unable to make the much needed and frequent repairs to the beach parking lots without the collection of entrance fees.



As an astonishingly beautiful gem of the Atlantic Coast, CNWR is a treasured outdoor destination for 1.3 million visitors every year. According to the 2010 Banking on Nature report, visitation to the refuge generates \$155 in local economic activity for every \$1 Congress appropriates to run it. Your entrance pass purchase supports the high-quality visitor experience at CNWR, while affording you the added opportunity of exploring Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).*