



Wilds of Assateague

OCTOBER 1-5, 2009

A visit to Assateague is a refreshing reminder that wilderness and wildlife can flourish on our crowded Eastern Seaboard. This narrow barrier island is refuge for not only its famous ponies but for a host of other wildlife. In the fall the island is famous for its migration of peregrine falcons and other raptors. The back-bay fills with waterfowl and even the ocean is alive with migrants. Discover the hidden marshes and lagoons, the unique challenges of the ponies, and the sublime beauty of this important national treasure.

Highlights

ASSATEAGUE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE—Assateague Island National Seashore consists of a 37-mile-long barrier island along the Atlantic coasts of Maryland and Virginia, and includes adjacent marsh islands and waters up to one-half mile from shore.

MISTY OF CHINCOTEAGUE—Discover the history and folklore behind the famous ponies of Assateague and Chincoteague Islands. Meet with local park ecologists to learn about the impacts of these horses and the new strategies for managing the population while protecting their island home.

BIRDS OF PREY—The shape of the Mid-Atlantic's Eastern Shore serves as a natural funnel for migrating birds. In the fall, raptors follow the coastline as they migrate southward. Assateague is famous for the passage of a great variety of birds of prey and during early October high numbers of peregrine falcons that can be easily observed.

ABOVE: WOMAN LOOKS OUT FROM ASSATEAGUE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE, MARYLAND © THESUPE87/DREAMSTIME.
OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT: PONY ON BEACH OF ASSATEAGUE ISLAND, MARYLAND © NICOLE HEATON/NPCA; USCG LIGHTHOUSE ON ASSATEAGUE ISLAND, MARYLAND © TERRIBERRY/DREAMSTIME.

Trip Details

NPCA MEMBER TRIP PRICE:

\$1,794 per person double occupancy;
\$280 single supplement.

PRICE INCLUDES:

Airport transfers, transportation during the journey, all accommodations, meals specified in the itinerary (B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, and D-Dinner), professional guide services, park and other entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses.

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

Roundtrip airfare to and from destination; items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone, or drinks from the bar; or gratuities for portage, professional guides, and personal services.

PAYMENTS/CANCELLATIONS:

Space is confirmed by calling the NPCA at 800.628.7275. A \$300 per person deposit is due at registration. Final payment will be invoiced separately and is due 60 days prior to departure. Cancellation notice must be submitted in writing and is effective upon date of receipt. Cancellations up to 60 days prior receive a refund, less a \$200 per person handling fee. Cancellations within 60 days of departure could result in the loss of 100% of your total cost.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:

To protect yourself from the loss of deposit and cancellation fees, you are encouraged to purchase travel insurance. Ask your travel advisor for more details.

ARRIVE/DEPART:

Salisbury, MD

LENGTH:

5 days/4 nights

PACE:

Easy and at your own pace. Level walking on sandy soil and trails up to two miles in length.

Itinerary

OCTOBER 1: SALISBURY TO CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND

Meet your NPCA group in Salisbury, Maryland, and transfer to Chincoteague Island. Following a quick check-in we will have a brief orientation and head off to the visitor center at near-by Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. We will take a relaxing walk on the beach, scan the sky and sea for migrating wildlife and become acquainted with the ecology of this beautiful barrier island. Gather with your group for a welcome reception and tour orientation this evening. *Best Western—Chincoteague Island (D)*

OCTOBER 2: ASSATEAGUE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

We begin our pre breakfast bird/nature walks today, and then we are off to Assateague Island National Seashore. After stopping at the visitor center for an orientation, we will walk several trails exploring the ecology and natural history of the island. Each short trail through the marsh, forest, and dunes will highlight the diverse flora and fauna of the island. The famous wild ponies are easy to see and are an important component of the island ecosystem. *Best Western—Chincoteague Island (B,L,D)*

OCTOBER 3: CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND

After our morning nature/bird walk we take a long walk along the remote beach section of Assateague Island. We will be beachcombing, wildlife watching, and just enjoying one of the wildest and remote spots on our crowded Eastern Seaboard. In the early afternoon we will return to our hotel for a little relaxation and some free time to discover the small town charm of Chincoteague. Later we will have a back-bay boat cruise for an entirely different perspective of this exciting preserve. *Best Western—Chincoteague Island (B,L,D)*

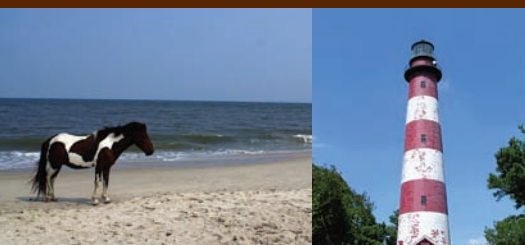
OCTOBER 4: ASSATEAGUE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE & SNOW HILL

After our morning stroll and breakfast we are off again to the National Seashore for a special National Park ranger-led program. Later in the afternoon we will stop by the historic tidewater town of Snow Hill for some free time to explore this interesting part of the Eastern Shore. In addition, we will visit a nearby nature preserve to experience one of the northernmost cypress swamps in North America. Late in the afternoon we will return to our hotel for our farewell dinner. *Best Western—Chincoteague Island (B,L,D)*

OCTOBER 5: CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND TO SALISBURY DEPARTURE

After our usual pre-breakfast walk we will begin our homeward journey. Transfer to Salisbury, Maryland, for departures. (B,L)

NOTE: With fewer than 8 participants, a small-group surcharge (typically \$100-300 per participant) will apply.



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