

MEDIA RELEASE
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BIRDING EVENT HONORED WITH STATEWIDE ECO-TOURISM AWARD
~ Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival ~

SUFFOLK, VA: The Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival has garnered a prestigious Virgo Travel and Tourism Award for sustainable eco-tourism. Presented annually by the Virginia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, the award pays tribute to individuals, groups, businesses and destination marketing organizations that significantly contribute to the Commonwealth of Virginia's economy through tourism promotion and development.

The Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival is a collaborative effort of local, state and federal governmental agencies united to promote the value of the Great Dismal Swamp's fragile eco-system and to instill a respect for the birds and other creatures that reside or migrate through the Refuge. Developed by the Great Dismal Swamp Coalition, the City of Suffolk Division of Tourism, the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the festival educates and entertains participants about the significance of habitat preservation, the pleasure of wildlife observation and the protection of the natural eco-system which includes over 200 species of birds.

This year's festival is scheduled for May 6-8, 2010, and includes the celebration of International Migratory Bird Day. Guided bird walks, narrated bus tours, owl prowls, nature-related exhibits, children's crafts are all part of the planned activities. The three-day festival is free and open to the public with access to workshops featuring biologists, authors, native plant experts and wildlife photographers.

Reservations for guided walks and tours are required and are made by calling the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge at 757.986.3705. For general information, contact the Suffolk Visitor Center at 757.514.4130 or visit at 321 N. Main Street in the historic Prentis House. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and around the clock at www.Suffolk-Fun.com.

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