

Assateague Pony Shot

Written by Fran Severn

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I don't hunt, mostly because I am a lousy shot, so this is not a rant against hunters. But some idiot shot and killed an Assateague pony in mid-January. Nobody's sure exactly when it happened but a hunter found the carcass of the mare on January 15. THAT person had a legal permit to be hunting on the National Seashore. There are a limited number of permits issued and a two-day hunt is held in January to keep the herd of Sika deer at a manageable level. Since there are no predators on the island, without a regular culling the deer will over-populate and very quickly overstrip the forage available.

Park officials say it appears the mare died almost immediately, so this is not a case of someone shooting the animal and then not being able to track it.

Checking records, the bay mare was 28 years old and had delivered several foals. There's a \$1,000 reward for information leading to finding the person who did this. Depending on the circumstances of the shooting, the person could face charges. If you have information, please call 410-629-6055 or e-mail Chief Ranger Ted Morlock at ted_morlock@nps.gov.