



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 27, 2010
Media Contact: Patrick Woolford
(202) 739-1047
pwoolford@refugeassociation.org

Note to media: High-resolution files of the winning images are available upon request.

Christopher Balmer of Idaho Falls Takes Prize in National Wildlife Refuge Association Photo Contest

Washington, DC – A photo of a Black Bear taken at the Camas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Hamer, Idaho, has earned Christopher Balmer of Idaho Falls one of three third-place prizes in the 2010 Refuge Photography Contest sponsored by the [National Wildlife Refuge Association \(NWRA\)](#). Balmer will receive a bird feeder donated by Wild Bird Centers of America, and a pair of HaberVision sunglasses, and his photo will be featured along with those of the other prizewinners, in a [contest gallery](#) on the NWRA website.

Carole Robertson of Tallahassee, Florida, won the first place award of \$2,000 cash and two round-trip airline tickets from Southwest Airlines, the contest's premier sponsor and the official airline of the NWRA. She also will receive two pairs of sunglasses from HaberVision. More than 800 images submitted by photographers in 44 states competed for prizes in this year's fifth annual contest—testimony to the allure of wildlife refuges as places to experience wildlife and enjoy a wide variety of recreational activities, including photography.

“Each year, photographers from across America capture images of wildlife and landscapes that tell the story of our [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) and the unparalleled wildlife and recreation heritage it protects,” said Evan Hirsche, President of the Refuge Association. “The [gallery of winning images](#) illustrates why it's so important for us to protect and conserve these special places for future generations.”

“As the Official Airline of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, we're proud to be a part of this photo contest that encourages people to capture and share the beauty of our country's wildlife,” said Debra Benton, Southwest Airlines Director of Charitable Giving and Community Relations. “Southwest shares the Refuge Association's passion for protecting our wildlife, and we believe this contest is a great way to spread the message of conservation of such precious environments and creatures.”

Other prizes in this year's contest were:

- **Second place** (A pair of binoculars donated by Wild Bird Centers of America, and a pair of HaberVision sunglasses): Michael Dougherty of Clarkston, MI, for his photo of a Yellow-crowned Night Heron at the J.N. “Ding” Darling NWR in Florida.
- **Third place** (A bird feeder donated by Wild Bird Centers of America, and a pair of HaberVision sunglasses): In addition to Balmer, third place prizes went to Susan Dimock of Bandon, Oregon, for her photo of a Little Blue Heron taken at the J.N. “Ding” Darling NWR in Sanibel, Florida, and to Carol Grant of Clearwater, FL, for her photo of a West Indian Manatee at the Crystal River NWR in Florida.
- **Four fourth-place awards** (A pair of HaberVision sunglasses): Mike McBride of Afton, WY, for his photo of an Ermine at the Camas NWR in Idaho; Donna Tolbert-Anderson of Easton,

MD, for her photo of a Great Blue Heron at the Blackwater NWR in Maryland; Daryl Marling of Fort Worth, TX, for his photo of a Black-tailed Prairie Dog at the Wichita Mountains NWR in Oklahoma; and George Dawson of Tallahassee, FL, for his photo of an American Alligator at the St. Marks NWR in Florida.

- **Fifteen Honorable Mentions** (A copy of the book, *Bayshore Summer* by Pete Dunne, donated by the publisher, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt): winners' names and their images can be found on the contest [gallery page](#).

The contest photo gallery is generously hosted by Zenfolio, a premier photo-hosting site. The annual Refuge Photography Contest showcases digital photography that best captures the stunning scenery and wildlife of America's 552 national wildlife refuges. The [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) is the world's premier system of protected public lands, encompassing more than 150 million acres in every U.S. state and territory.

###

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to conserve America's wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect, enhance, and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries that secure its ecological integrity. NWRA works across the U.S. to conserve the most biologically sensitive landscapes, enlisting the support of local citizens and diverse state and federal partners. In addition, NWRA provides training and guidance to more than 250 local refuge "Friends" volunteer groups that are vital to creating public support for national wildlife refuges and wildlife conservation.

www.refugeassociation.org