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

## **National Wildlife Refuge Association Announces Photo Contest Winners** *Keith Ramos of Alaska Wins Top Prize for Photo Taken at San Bernard NWR, TX*

**Washington, DC** – A photo of a young bobcat peering through the foliage at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge in Texas has received top honors in a contest seeking to raise the visibility of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world’s largest wildlife conservation program. Taken by Keith Ramos of Galena, Alaska, the photo captures a curious bobcat just released into the wild by a wildlife rehabilitator. Ramos, who serves as Deputy Manager of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Koyukuk/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge Complex, took the photo when stationed at San Bernard.

“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 David Houghton, 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.”

For his winning photo, Ramos will receive the Southwest Airlines Adventure Package which includes \$2,000 and four round trip tickets, valued at \$3,600.

“As the Official Airline of the National Wildlife Refuge Association and lead contest sponsor, 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 Marilee McInnis, Senior Manager at Southwest Airlines. “Southwest shares the Refuge Association’s passion for conservation, and we believe this contest is a great way to share the importance of protecting our wildlife.”

Other top winners in this year’s contest were:

- **Second place:** Carol Grant of Clearwater, FL, for her photo of two manatees at the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), FL.
- **Third-place:** Les Zigungske of Scales Mound, IL, for his photo of two bald eagles in the midst of an aerial conflict at the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, IL.
- **Fourth-place:** Betsy Kellenberger of Tallahassee, FL, for an image of a yellow warbler perched among late-summer flowers taken at Florida’s St. Marks NWR in the Crawfordville, FL area.

A complete list of prizewinners in this year’s contest, along with their winning images, can be found at NWRA’s 2012 photo contest homepage at <http://refugeassociation.org/people/photo-contest-2012/>. The contest would not be possible without the tremendous generosity of our sponsors: Southwest Airlines, Eagle Optics, Wild Bird Centers, Orvis, NatureShare and Zenfolio. 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.

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*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](http://www.refugeassociation.org)