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

## **Florida Wildlife Refuges, Photographers are Big Winners in National Wildlife Refuge Association Photo Contest**

***Carole Robertson of Tallahassee Wins Top Prize for Photo Taken at Florida's St. Marks NWR***

**Washington, DC** – Photos taken at some of [Florida's National Wildlife Refuges](#)—a number of them by Florida photographers—were among the top prizewinners in the 2010 Refuge Photography Contest sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWR). A stunning close-up of a green tree frog sitting atop an echinacea blossom, photographed by Carole Robertson of Tallahassee at the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), took the top prize in the contest, earning Robertson \$2,000 cash and two round-trip airline tickets from Southwest Airlines, the contest's premier sponsor and the official airline of the NWR. Robertson's prize also included two pairs of sunglasses from HaberVision, another contest sponsor.

Photos taken at Florida's J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR in Sanibel earned a second place award for Michael Dougherty of Clarkston, Michigan, for his image of a Yellow-Crowned Night Heron; and a third place award for Susan Dimock of Bandon, Oregon, for her photo of a Little Blue Heron. Photographer Carol Grant of Clearwater earned a third-place award for her image of endangered West Indian Manatees at the Crystal River NWR. George Dawson of Tallahassee won fourth place for his action photo of an American Alligator swallowing a snack of waterfowl at the St. Marks NWR.

Three of the contest's 15 Honorable Mention winners were Florida photographers whose winning shots were taken at Florida refuges. They included Donald Muallaney of Boynton Beach for his photo of a dragonfly at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR; Theresa Baldwin of Sanibel for her photo of White Pelican at Sanibel's J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR; and Michael Rosenbaum of Delray Beach for his photo of a Roseate Spoonbill at the "Ding" Darling Refuge.

"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." Southwest puts many of Florida's refuges in easy reach of out-of-state visitors with flights to Tallahassee and Panama City.

A complete list of prizewinners in this year's contest, along with their winning images, can be found in the [photo gallery](#) hosted by Zenfolio. HaberVision donated sunglasses to all first- through fourth-prize winners. Wild Bird Centers of America donated a pair of binoculars to the second-prize winner, and bird feeders to each of three third-prize recipients. Publisher Houghton Mifflin Harcourt donated a copy of the book, *Bayshore Summer* by Pete Dunne, to each of the 15 Honorable Mention winners.

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)