

This News Release can be published as-is, or as the basis for a new article. The story will appeal to people and organizations interested in: nature, wildlife conservation, photography, tourism or economic development.

60 top-quality nature and wildlife images by the Pro-Tour photographers are available to accompany the News Release or a new article. All images must include photographer credits. Low-resolution images are now online, and high-resolution images are sent upon request. To browse these images, visit <http://imagesforconservation.org/media.html>

John Martin and several Board and Staff members of our organization are available for interview. Contact us at (956) 381-1264 or icfprotour@aol.com

News Release

For Immediate Release

July 28, 2005

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95 Landowners Apply to Participate in Pro-Tour of Nature Photography

(JULY 18, 2005) -- Ninety-five landowners have applied to participate in the first Images for Conservation Fund Pro-Tour of Nature Photography, a world-class championship event series that will match top nature photographers with private landowners. The Pro-Tour's first event will be held in the Texas Hill Country during April 1-30, 2006. The Pro-Tour is the world's first all-professional tournament of nature photography.

"The number of landowners applying is a clear indication of the growing interest in conservation for economic reasons," says John Martin, Founder and Chairman of the Images for Conservation Fund.

"The Images for Conservation Fund was formed to foster greater wildlife conservation through the promotion of photo tourism income for private landowners," Martin said. "This organization and the Pro-Tour will unite private landowners to attract nature photographers from around the world to enjoy and support biodiverse regions throughout North America."

The Pro-Tour's landowner applicant pool will soon be narrowed from 95 applicants to the 20 finalists who will be matched with the 20 professional wildlife photographers who have already been selected for the event.

"Nature photography has the unique ability to preserve habitat permanently by making it profitable," Martin said. "In 1996, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service estimated that more than 28 million Americans photographed wildlife — the same number of people who played golf that year! Golfers spend billions of dollars on

their pastime and support thousands of golf courses around the world. Nature photographers have the potential to generate tremendous income for private landowners who lease professionally designed photo sites on prime habitat. When landowners profit from conservation, we will see the long-term preservation of entire natural ecosystems.”

Landowners for the 2006 Pro-Tour must have at least 500 contiguous acres of wildlife habitat located partly or wholly in any of the following 19 counties: Bandera, Bexar, Blanco, Burnet, Comal, Edwards, Gillespie, Hays, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Llano, Mason, Medina, Real, Travis, Uvalde and Williamson.

Teams will be competing for a share of up to \$200,000, and landowners will receive a copy of their team's portfolio. The prize money will largely be funded by corporate and individual sponsors who share the belief that photo-tourism is the next big economic boom for rural communities or who share a stake in creating the nature-tourism industry.

The Pro-Tour has been endorsed by The Conservation Fund, Conservation International, Environmental Defense, The Nature Conservancy, the North American Nature Photography Association, Texas Parks & Wildlife, the Texas Travel Industry Association and the Wildlife Habitat Council.

The Images for Conservation Fund is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization based in Texas. For more information regarding sponsorship opportunities or to learn more about the Tour, visit www.imagesforconservation.org or call Executive Director Sam Mason at (956) 381-1264.