



## **GUARDAPARQUE**

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**Guardaparque** is a publication prepared bi-monthly (every other month) and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), an organization of non-governmental and governmental ranger organizations from around the world. If you have a submission for **Guardaparque**, please send it to Editor Bill Halainen ([Bill\\_Halainen@nps.gov](mailto:Bill_Halainen@nps.gov)).

Thanks to the many people who sent in submissions or helped with the translations for this issue.

### **News About Rangers**

#### **Democratic Republic of Congo – Okapi Wildlife Reserve Rebels Murder Six Rangers, Okapi Herd Destroyed**

IRF member Jobogo Mirindi has sent along this report about the June killing of rangers at Okapi Wildlife Reserve by Mai Mai militia:

Early on the morning of Sunday, June 24th, park headquarters was attacked by the rebels who are operating in the Northern Province under the command of Paul Sadala Morgan from the Simba Mai Mai group. Six rangers were killed, many others were injured, some women from the surrounding community were raped, buildings were burned, and wildlife were killed. A ranger was kidnapped, but managed to escape and was assisted by pygmies.

All the work done to establish this reserve was wiped out in one day. Thirteen okapis were killed, but probably by others because rebels never kill them. From what we know about the Congo, there are many armed groups operating in the forest and killing large mammals – but they respect the okapi because it is their totem.

In 1996, these okapis survived during the war backed by Rwanda and Uganda, I personally do not believe it was in the interest of the Mai Mai rebels to kill these beautiful okapi.

Rangers have been deployed in the area to protect the remaining wildlife while the army conducts operations in Ituri forest.

More information: <http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/18875532/poachers-attack-okapi-wildlife-reserve>

## **Republic of South Africa – Enseleni Nature Reserve Two Rangers Drown In Lake Nhlabane**

Rangers Mbazwani Mhlongo, 57, and Phumlani Mthembu, 34, drowned in Lake Nhlabane in Enseleni Nature Reserve on June 23rd. They were attempting to paddle a dugout canoe across the lake. They had confiscated the homemade vessel — thought to belong to illegal fishermen — while patrolling the area with two other colleagues, who had walked to a rendezvous point and never saw the two rangers again.

More information: [http://www.witness.co.za/index.php?showcontent&global%5B\\_id%5D=83395](http://www.witness.co.za/index.php?showcontent&global%5B_id%5D=83395)

## **Nigeria – Kamuku National Park Rangers Killed By Armed Robbers**

Rangers Lawal Nagwaggwo and Muhammad Hassan were killed by armed robbers while on patrol in the park in late June. Other rangers, police and the military began tracking the killers, but there's no news yet about whether they were successful.

More information: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201206200150.html>

## **France – Massif du Vercours Ranger Dies In Accidental Fall**

Patrick Leonard, 57, a wildlife ranger for the National Office for Hunting and Wildlife, fell while on patrol on July 3rd. His colleague immediately called for assistance and a helicopter flew to the scene, but efforts to save his life were unsuccessful.

More information (in French): <http://www.ledauphine.com/isere-sud/2012/07/04/le-garde-chasse-decede-dans-le-vercors-etait-gapencais>

## **United States – Mount Rainier National Park Climbing Ranger Killed In Fall From Mountain**

Just a few months after Ranger Margaret Anderson's murder in Mount Rainier National Park last January, the park lost another ranger. Ranger Nick Hall fell approximately 2,500 feet down the Emmons Glacier on Mount Rainier on Thursday, June 21st, during a rescue attempt in which four climbers fell into a crevasse on the glacier. Climbing rangers assisting in the rescue of the four climbers were able to reach Hall several hours after he fell, and upon arrival found that he had died in the fall.

More information: <http://www.nps.gov/applications/digest/headline.cfm?type=Announcements&id=12268>

## **Kazakhstan – Ile-Alatau State National Park Ranger And Ten Others Killed In Park**

Eleven people, including a forest ranger, were found stabbed to death in early August in a national park near the capital city of Almaty. The victims included relatives and co-workers of the ranger, Panayot Zaharopulo, 76, at Ile-Alatau State National Park. No suspects were identified, but officials said a blood-stained car at the scene belonged to a son of Zaharopulo. The son was missing. Two months earlier, a forest ranger and 14 border guards were killed in the same region, and a border guard was charged in the slayings, Radio Free Europe said Wednesday.

More information: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/08/14/kazakh-police-hunting-killers-11-people-in-park/>

## **United States – World Ranger Day National Newspaper Carries Photos Of Rangers From Around The World**

*USA Today*, a major national newspaper in the United States, ran a photo essay entitled “Park Rangers At Work Around The World” in honor of World Ranger Day. IRF is trying to get permission to use some of those images on its new web page. Meanwhile, you can see the photo essay at this link:

<http://mediagallery.usatoday.com/S215968#.UBhfMnmnk5k.mailto>

## **Law Enforcement And Emergency Services**

### **Africa – Parks and Protected Areas Increased Elephant Poaching Continues**

IRF member Wayne Lotter has sent more stories about the terrible attacks continuing against elephants in Africa:

- Vietnam – Customs officers at a Ho Chi Minh City port recently seized 2.4 tons of ivory from a container labeled as having “cow leather.” The container belonged to Thai Minh Export-Import Limited Company and supposedly contained cow leather imported from Mozambique. The shipment arrived in late June but company representatives failed to show up to collect it despite repeated reminders, so customs officers then decided to open it. They found 158 elephant tusks hidden in 28 wooden barrels, worth an estimated US \$5 million. More information: <http://www.thanhniennews.com/index/pages/20120801-2.4-tons-of-ivory-seized-at-hcmc-port.aspx>
- Tanzania – A sophisticated international criminal syndicate is reportedly decimating elephant populations in the country. Figures show that 42 per cent of elephants, equal to 31,348 jumbos, have been killed in the Selous Game Reserve and Mikumi National Park in the past three years. “The situation is very, very alarming,” said the deputy minister for natural resources and tourism. He said statistics indicated that a quarter of tusks seized in the world between 1989 and 2010 originated from Tanzania. More information: <http://thecitizen.co.tz/news/4-national-news/24761-international-syndicate-reported-to-decimate-tanzanias-jumbos.html>

### **United States – Denali National Park Six Climbers Die On Mountain During 2012 Climbing Season**

The annual climbing season on the very popular Mt. McKinley has come to a close and all registered climbers are now off the mountain. A total of 1,223 climbers attempted the mountain this year and 498 made it to the summit for a success rate of 40.7%. This was the second lowest summit rate in the last 25 years. Six of them died:

- On the afternoon of Friday, May 18th, a member of a three-person climbing team fell from the West Buttress route. The un-roped team had just reached the top of a section of the West Buttress route when one of them fell 1100 feet while attempting to recover a backpack that had started to slide downhill.
- A 36-year-old Finnish mountaineer died from injuries he received in a fall while descending Mt. McKinley on May 23rd. He was skiing down a very steep slope known as the ‘Orient Express’ with two teammates when he fell from an elevation of 17,800 feet. He tumbled through snow, ice, and rocks, coming to a stop in a crevasse at 15,850 feet.
- An avalanche on the West Buttress during the early morning hours of June 14th claimed the lives of four Japanese climbers. A five-member expedition was descending when an avalanche swept them all downhill – only one survived. The five were travelling as one rope team,

More information: <http://www.nps.gov/dena/parknews/newsreleases.htm>

## **New Zealand – Tongariro National Park Mount Tongariro Volcano Erupts**

Mount Tongariro, a long-dormant volcano in Tongariro National Park on New Zealand's North Island, erupted in early August, creating a column of ash more than four miles high. Though it caused problems for air travel, shut down highways and closed two popular hiking trails and huts in the surrounding national park, tourism operators in the area have reported an increase in interest in the park that could well outweigh current disruptions.

More information: <http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/372108/20120809/new-zealand-volcano-eruption-tongariro-national-park.htm>

## **Species Management**

### **United States – National Park Service National Parks Continue “BioBlitz” Species Inventory Projects**

Over recent years, the National Park Service has held “bioblitz” projects in a number of parks to determine the number of species in either one specific genus or many of them. In a “bioblitz” – a word made up from “bio” for the English term “biology” and “blitz” from the German word for quickness – many volunteers and park staff spend a day or several days in an intense, focused count of species across the park. These have proven to be very effective in finding species previously unknown in a park or for finding habitat.

This year, three parks – Rocky Mountain National Park, Acadia National Park and Great Basin National Park – have held these events. The report on the first is not yet available, but here are links to the other two:

<http://www.nps.gov/applications/digest/headline.cfm?type=Announcements&id=12459&urlarea=npsnews>  
<http://www.nps.gov/applications/digest/printheadline.cfm?type=Announcements&id=12365>

## **Parks And Protected Areas**

### **Finland – National Park System New National Parks Proposed For Finland**

Sixteen new national parks have been proposed for Finland, which currently has 37 national parks. The Minister of the Environment is reviewing the proposals and in September will announce which ones will be actively considered.

More information:

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Sixteen+candidates+for+new+national+parks+in+Finland/1329104573683>

## **Park Management**

### **United States – California State Parks Director Resigns Following Funding Scandal**

The director of California's state parks resigned and a deputy was fired in July after officials learned that the department held on to nearly US \$54 million in surplus money for years while parks were threatened with closure over budget cuts. Ruth Coleman, director of the state Department of Parks and Recreation, stepped down, and chief deputy Michael Harris was let go amid questions about the underreported funds that date back 12 years.

California operates 279 parks, which include everything from famous beaches to redwood forests. The parks that were at risk of closure got a reprieve last month after the governor signed a bill allocating new funds for the parks system for the next year. The state has also reached agreements with nonprofits, local governments and others to keep 40 parks open for at least a few years.

More information: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0712/78782.html>

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Prepared and published by the International Ranger Federation as a service to rangers around the world.

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