



World Ranger Day 2018

Right around the globe, from the savannas of Africa to the South American Amazon, from the tropical forests of Asia to the outback deserts of Australia, Rangers carry out their vital work as Earth's guardians. These conservation heroes are tasked with the increasingly dangerous and difficult job of defending the world's wildlife and wild places. They often risk and lose their lives in the line of duty, with one Ranger killed, on average, every three to four days.

The Thin Green Line Foundation, as the charity arm of the International Ranger Federation, is the only global organisation dedicated to providing Rangers with critical grassroots support in the field. We ensure frontline Rangers receive training, equipment and funding. And we provide urgent financial lifelines to the families of the fallen.

On World Ranger Day 2018 we at The Thin Green Line Foundation and International Ranger Federation, along with our supporters worldwide, honour those who've paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, and we celebrate those who, thankfully, lace up their boots each day and head out on patrol to protect the natural world for all of us.

Of all the many thousands of Rangers, we've selected below a small group who symbolise the hard work and dedication of all their colleagues across the planet.

Please join us in honouring and recognising Rangers this July 31 on World Ranger Day.



Ranger: Dode Heim Myline Houehounha

Location: Benin, Africa

My favourite part of the job:

"The best part of being a Ranger is seeing animals in the wild, camping in the bush, interacting with local communities and have the feeling of protecting our natural capital for the future generation. It's amazing to be able to take care of communities' livelihoods and protect wildlife and their habitat.

The biggest challenges:

"Seeing Rangers injured or attacked by poachers when protecting our common natural heritage is terrible. The loss of life is the worst. Most of the Rangers are working hard, but insignificantly paid compared to the amount of risks they encounter every single minute to save wildlife and wildlands for humanity – without any life insurance. It is a daily high risk for those heroes of nature."

My message on World Ranger Day:

"Equip our Rangers with appropriate materials, build their technical capacities and encourage our government and institution to fully support the rangers."

"We are doing the best job ever in this world. Let us keep the commitment and one day – very soon – the world will stand up and say, "they are so incredible and without their commitment the world would have lost its natural capital."



Ranger: Erdenetuya Chulcem

Location: Mongolia, Asia

My favourite part of the job:

“My favourite part of the job is taking photos of the many birds that visit the lake and talking with and educating students about the natural environment. Looking back, I’m proud of the work I’ve done to keep the Ugii Lake area clean and free from illegal hunting that took place in the past.”

The biggest challenges:

“The long patrols that keep me away from the children and family for many days at a time are sometimes difficult, as well as having to travel in sub-zero temperatures by motorcycle on the wintertime patrols. Meeting with people who can be quite rude to park staff can be a challenge as well, but is part of the job. And lastly, seeing the countryside in drought due to no rain or snow, drying the grasses and making it difficult for wildlife.”

The job would be easier if the public had a better attitude toward the environment and wildlife protection and treated the natural environment better.”

My message on World Ranger Day:

“We always need ongoing training and exchanges between Rangers and to always educate myself to build my knowledge to do the job better. This is important because we deal with the public all the time I have to have a good attitude, build my experience and knowledge. Ongoing training gives me the confidence and knowledge to do this work.”

On behalf of all Mongolian Rangers, I want to give a big greeting to Rangers worldwide who are doing their job with their heart and protecting the environment for the future. I congratulate them on their honourable work.”



Ranger: Hrafnhildur Ævarsdóttir

Location: Iceland

My favourite part of the job:

“Being a park Ranger gives me a unique opportunity to work and live in a paradise, with the stunning wilderness in my backyard.”

The biggest challenges:

“It can be heart-breaking to see nature slowly deteriorate when number of tourists are too high for us rangers to maintain the areas properly.”

My message on World Ranger Day:

“I am a proud Ranger. Becoming a Ranger was one of the best decisions that I have ever made in my life. I’ve come to know numerous great people and made good friends during my time as a Ranger and eventually ended up travelling the world, visiting protected areas and National Parks in different countries.”



Ranger: Joseph Kotoke Meikoki

Location: Kenya, Africa

My favourite part of the job:

“Working with my community to preserve and conserve!”

The biggest challenges:

“Arresting the lion killers – he might be one of close relative or friend or in-law. I have arrested a lot of poachers. We had one notorious poacher which we arrested and fought us back and he managed to escape away, but through our good intelligence and working closely with the community we got him and booked him and later jailed for four years.”

My message on World Ranger Day:

“My family are proud of me and being out there to protect and conserve is something very important to the community at large. Rangers must have self-respect, trust, confidence, working hard and being honest. To conserve for the better future. It is very important to live harmonically, peacefully with different tribe and different cultures.”



Ranger: Remmy Papae

Location: Solomon Islands

My favourite part of the job:

“Travelling inter-island to check and do monitoring could be a tiring job, but I like it because this is where we get to know each Ranger better, aware of their situation, hear their concern, making connection, friendship and telling stories when sitting around fire warming ourselves in the cool breeze.”

The biggest challenges:

“Sacrifice with your own will to protect nature is hardest thing about being a Ranger. Many of our Rangers are not well paid, low qualification and understood by different local people that have different perspectives towards the work we are doing. Sometimes

you are alone, work independently with limited supervision or availability of limited resources. We lack monitoring equipment and go overtime, restless at night when patrolling the MPA or Forest reserve area. This is what I call sacrifice with your own will. But we always like to be an example every day in our own life, family, kids and other community members around us.”

My message on World Ranger Day:

“I would like to thank you everyone who keep working extra hard around the world saving the planet earth that we all share and live it. Thank you for your hard work. My sincere sympathy to those who lost their loved ones this year 2018, words cannot explain how deep these loved ones concern for the planet to be a safe place for all of us. You left good family behind and you made us all proud. For all Rangers across the world keep doing the great work that you have done. We all are champions for the better planet. I humbly salute you all. Happy World Ranger Day.”



Ranger: Tatiana Espinosa Quiñones

Location: Peru, South America

My favourite part of the job:

“The moments of the day when I breathe deeply and I feel that I am part of the whole, when I can forget my worries and I remember that the work of conserving the forest is reciprocal since the trees are my protectors in this wonderful place.”

The biggest challenges:

“The risk that comes with knowing that the activities that take place in the surroundings are harmful to the ecosystem and are contrary to our work. There are illegal loggers, hunters, gold mining, land invaders for monocultures, among other latent threats. Another difficulty is the scarce work equipment, we have only the indispensable that we can afford.”

My message on World Ranger Day:

“We protect and take care of LIFE and we do it with the heart. Today, more than ever, Mother Earth needs us.”



Ranger: Imran Paddy

Location: East Kimberley, Australia

My favourite part of the job:

Fire management. We go out and burn the land, protecting areas from big fires and regenerating areas which provides food sources for wildlife. Looking after land as old people did. Our fire operations allows us to employ Kija people to work on their traditional areas. It's hard work, but is also fun and rewarding to complete properly.

The biggest challenges:

Right now, funding cuts have been really hard with my group. We have gone from seven to just two rangers, including myself, in the last six months. We can't do the amount of work we were doing in the past.

A new ute would be great for my group. We've had the same Troopys (Troop Carriers) for some time, which are really worn out and not particularly functional for loading and transporting work gear.

More rangers would make everyone's job easier and we'd be more productive.

My message on World Ranger Day:

Without Rangers there'd be no country, no wildlife. Rangers are as important as the President of the United States!



Ranger: Werhner Atoche Montoya

Location: Peru, South America

My favourite part of the job:

What I like to do most is to be able to do projects for the support of the inhabitants of the buffer zone, always maintaining the focus that the relationships and involvement of the Communities that live in the buffer zone and influence is key for sustainability and the achievement of the conservation objectives of the Protected Areas of the Region.

The biggest challenges:

The most difficult thing for me to be away from my family is my wife and daughter.

In the activities of control and surveillance to protect natural resources, Rangers face complex and reckless situations, such as when a truck-full of wood is intervened and the locals, instead of being in favor of the Rangers, are in favor of loggers. I've almost suffered a lynching by these angry mobs to try to make a confiscation. Then you are considered persona-non-grata for some time in the sector. So, for some people you are the bad guy and for others the good guy for having done this action that protects the planet.

My message on World Ranger Day:

The challenges and risks facing Rangers have increased significantly in recent years. Illegal trade in wildlife is reaching a scale that threatens wildlife, people and their livelihoods. These crimes are being increasingly committed by criminal groups.

However, these Rangers, firm and faithful to their ideals, perform their functions with determination, often without the reward assigned to their counterparts from other security agencies. The dedication and commitment shown by these Rangers who work so hard and honestly every day deserve public recognition.

As a South American representative, I join the rest of the world in congratulating the Ranger men and women who work so hard and serve on the frontline.



An honorary mention

On this World Ranger Day, we must acknowledge the sad death of former Vice President of the International Ranger Federation and former Thin Green Line Foundation board member Wayne Lotter.

Wayne was a man of extraordinary talent. A conservation warrior. A man of vision and conviction, who always stood up for what he believed in. Whether it was facing down a bull elephant or an illegal poacher, he never took a backward step. He was also a Ranger. A man who loved the wild places, who worked tirelessly to protect the animals and their environment in his beloved Africa and who was always happiest out in the bush.

In August 2017, Wayne's vehicle was stopped in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and he was fatally shot. Conservation has lost a true hero and we have lost one of our greatest Rangers. Wayne never hugged the limelight, choosing always to give credit to others for his amazing work, but when people like Dr Jane Goodall come out and say he was one of her heroes, it is a testament to how significant a person he was.

Rest in peace Wayne. You will be remembered as an extraordinary man who achieved extraordinary things for conservation and the protection of your beloved elephants. May you continue to inspire us all to do great things.

A message from Inge Lotter – Wayne's wife

"Wayne was a man that lived out the purest of human characteristics, and not for his own gain, but always in service of others and nature he loved so much. His love for nature was matched by an equal love and dedication to his family and friends. Always a silent hero, he fought harder than most for the right to do good in this world and I have never known anyone else with the same dedication, perseverance and work ethic. He never shied away from a challenge and always found solutions to even the toughest of problems. He loved well, lived honestly, fulfilled his destiny and died an absolute hero and example to all. We are forever proud and privileged to have known and loved him."

A message from Wayne's children

"My dad was a funny, passionate, caring, intense, larger than life type of person. He wasn't like everyone else and he didn't see the world that way either. He was, and always will be, my real life super hero." -- Cara Jayne Lotter

"My dad... Where can I start, he was an amazing man who still lives inside all of us! I have a better understanding of what he did especially now that I work with elephants. It's a hard thing to do because I always asked him for advice or told him what I've learnt, I still do, he may not be here to hear it, but I write it all down. My dad was like no other person out there, one of a kind and I am so thankful to be his daughter. He had a great sense of humour that no one could say was dull. I loved how passionate he was for the bush and I am so glad I have that in me. I love that he used to play the drums as loud as he could for a few hours and just watch him play and see how happy it made him. He was a unique man and I will always love him." -- Tasmin Lotter.
