

Latin American Ranger Meeting

Regional diagnosis of the employment situation of Rangers in Latin America



Baños de Agua Santa – Ecuador

November 5th to 10th, 2018

Prepared by Technical team and facilitators
Guardaparque (*Ranger*) Óscar Carvajal Mora
Guardaparque (*Ranger*) Laura Pastorino Ladereche
Psicólogo Organizacional (*Organizational Psychologist*) Victoriano Suárez Álvarez

Reviewed by: Comisión Técnica Latinoamericana de Guardaparques (*Latin American Technical Commission of Rangers*)

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Technical team and facilitators

No.	Nombre	País	Correo electrónico
1.	Laura Pastorino Ladereche	Uruguay	laura.pastorino1@gmail.com
2.	Victoriano Suárez Álvarez	España	victoriano@ioi.ngo
3.	Óscar Carvajal Mora	Ecuador	omcarvajal@hotmail.com

Latin American Technical Commission of Rangers.

No.	Nombre	País	Correo electrónico
1.	Roberto Pereyra Lobos	Argentina	pereyalobos@gmail.com
2.	Julio César Vergara Zapata	Chile	jcesarvergara@gmail.com
3.	Mario Torales Medina	Paraguay	marioramentoralesmedina@gmail.com
4.	Rosa Restrepo Fernández	Colombia	rocal7@hotmail.com
5.	Juliett González Méndez	Cuba	juliett.mendez@snap.cu
6.	Ignacio Sánchez	Perú	nachitoperu@hotmail.com
7.	Luciano Menezes	Brasil	tcheluciano@gmail.com
8.	Jhon Pereira Gómez	Venezuela	yhonpereira.jp@gmail.com
9.	Augusto Granda Guamán	Ecuador	augusto.granda.g@gmail.com guardaparquesecuador@gmail.com
10.	Mariana Pirez	Uruguay	mpirez23@gmail.com
11.	Francisco Machado Gálvez	México	freammach@gmail.com
12.	Christian Robles Puchi	Costa Rica	christianpuchi@gmail.com

Participants of Latin American Ranger Meeting

No.	Nombre	País	Correo electrónico
1.	Rodolfo Arias	Ecuador	rodol_arias@hotmail.com
2.	Paz Itamar Córdova Torres	Ecuador	cordovaitamar58@gmail.com
3.	Marco Bustos Salazar	Costa Rica	marco.busto@sinac.go.cr
4.	Ricardo Cárdenas Godoy	Chile	ricardo.cardenas@conaf.cl
5.	Carlos Angulo Ríos	Colombia	parcologo@gmail.com
6.	Miguel Madrigal Hernández	Costa Rica	mimahe@gmail.com
7.	Mayra Licuy Chimbo	Ecuador	mayra.licuy@ambiente.gob.ec
8.	Patricio Cachumba	Ecuador	patricio.genio@hotmail.com
9.	David Lerma	México	david.lema@conanp.gob.mx
10.	Pablo Martínez	Perú	arriero_6666@hotmail.com
11.	Manrique Montes Obando	Costa Rica	manrique.montes@sinac.go.cr
12.	Vilma Lucero	Ecuador	vilma.lucero@ambiente.gob.ec
13.	Isidro Bautista	Ecuador	chuilaisidro@hotmail.com
14.	Gonzalo Larrobla Di Fiore	Uruguay	bichocandado@yahoo.com
15.	Ronald Timana	Perú	ronalddtimana@hotmail.com
16.	Lady Ulcuango	Ecuador	mulcuango@yahoo.com
17.	Lineth González	Ecuador	linequito@gmail.com
18.	Martha López Hernández	México	marthalopezhernandez@gmail.com
19.	Teresa Guananga	Ecuador	mibebe201210@gmail.com
20.	Nelson Montiel Maldonado	Paraguay	nelsonmontiel@hotmail.com
21.	Luis Yupa	Ecuador	luisfabian.yupa@gmail.com
22.	Werhner Atoche	Perú	Werhner2016@gmail.com
23.	Yolanda Basurto	Ecuador	sayamorenagaia@hotmail.com
24.	José Villa	Ecuador	jvillaesparza@yahoo.es
25.	Fabián Méndez	Ecuador	fabian.mendez@ambiente.gob.ec
26.	Milton Marchan	Perú	miltonm.libra@gmail.com



Executive Summary

Protected areas are essential to conserve biological and cultural diversity in addition to the environmental goods and services they provide (water supply and quality, clean air, ecotourism, food, controlled hunting, protection against natural events, medicinal plants, among others). They are essential for the well-being of humans and the planet. Rangers are the people involved in the practical protection and conservation of all aspects of wilderness areas, historical and cultural sites.

The present and future of protected areas in the world is directly associated with the employment situation of rangers in several aspects: training and professional preparation, responsibilities (role of the ranger), distances in work sites (remote places), legal support to fulfill their duties (legal framework according to the type of work), dangers they face (job security, in the world, from July 2017 to July 2018, 129 lives of rangers were lost according to IRF), services provided tangible and intangible (not only to the direct users of the protected areas, but also to the surrounding communities - a socio-environmental service that is not quantified), infrastructure and equipment that they have to carry out their activities. However, these types of considerations in the work of rangers are rarely considered by the State, the administrators of the protected areas and the community.

Rangers from twelve Latin American countries who experience this situation met in the city of Baños de Agua Santa - Ecuador from November 5th to 10th in 2018. The aim: obtaining agreed inputs for the preparation of a technical document with potential solutions to the problems that they face. Moreover, the participants reached commitments to be presented to Ministries and authorities related to the protected area management in each country, at the III Latin American Congress of Protected Areas in Peru, at the World Rangers Congress in Nepal in 2019 and in other relevant instances to rangers as well as to society as a whole.

The methodology used to collect this information involved workshops on the development of proposals based on the following cross-cutting thematic lines:

- 1- Rangers: occupational health and safety.
- 2- Rangers: job stability and social problems in their functions.
- 3- Rangers: education, training, and recognition of the profession by higher education institutions. Regional goals.
- 4- Rangers and associations.

The 4 themes are cross-cutting and encompass several related sub-themes that were also covered. It is important to highlight that the theme was proposed by rangers from several Latin American countries through surveys, which indicates that even though these are issues that have been discussed for two or more decades, they are still valid, because they have not had a definitive solution due to the lack of application or absence of policies in labor and conservation areas.

In addition to analyzing the main regional problems, suggestions with concrete actions are proposed in this document in order to find solutions in the short, medium and long term, which can be immediate or progressive.

Rangers from Mexico, Costa Rica, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador participated in this Meeting. It had the technical endorsement of the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador, the support of the International Ranger Federation, The Thin Green Line Foundation, Ecogestión, International Conservation, Fonag, CUBAMAR, DUMAC, Galapagos Conservancy, Fundación IOI, UNESCO, World Wild Fund (WWF), CAMAREN and IUCN.



BACKGROUND

The Asociación de Guardaparques del Ecuador – AGE (*Ranger Association of Ecuador*) set out and fulfilled the goal of developing the Latin American Ranger Meeting in Ecuador in 2018, which was of regional significance due to the presence of rangers from several countries and the results obtained.

The event was developed as an alternative to the Latin American Ranger Meeting that could not be held in October 2018 in Panama. However, due to the importance of having relevant information on the labor situation of rangers in the region, AGE decided to organize the Latin American Ranger Meeting in the city of Baños de Agua Santa, in the province of Tungurahua, between the 5th and the 10th of November. The methodology consisted of permanent participation workshops based on the information provided by the ranger groups.

The Latin American Ranger Meeting in Ecuador was a unique and exclusive space for rangers in which they were able to express and obtain their own conclusions about their employment situation, compare it with other countries in the region and propose solutions to the problems.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- Prepare a technical document with potential solutions to the problems faced by the Latin American ranger community and present it at the World Ranger Congress in Nepal 2019, the III Latin American Congress of Protected Areas and the Caribbean in Lima (Peru), as well as in other governmental and non-governmental bodies considered relevant.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Exchange of experiences (work and personal) between rangers in Latin America from various countries to strengthen proposals on cross-cutting issues that affect the collective of rangers in the region.
- Establish a core group of rangers from Latin America to carry out priority technical work when required.

METHODOLOGY

Activity	Participatory workshops with ranger worktables for analysis of cross-cutting issues and development of proposals (group dynamics).
Themes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rangers: occupational health and safety.2. Rangers: job stability and social problems in their functions.3. Rangers: education, training, and recognition of the profession by higher education institutions. Regional goals.4. Rangers and associations.

The group of rangers that participated at the Latin American Ranger Meeting represented 12 countries, 28.95% were women, 79% belong to an association in their country, and they work in different types of protected areas (national, state, provincial, municipal, private and community). This guaranteed a high diversity of participation and opinion. It was possible to collect important information on the employment situation of the ranger collective in the region -including political processes- of which the rangers are part of.



DEVELOPMENT

Cross-cutting Theme 1. Rangers: occupational health and safety.

1.1. Use of firearms (risks and benefits).

Problematic:

The use of firearms by rangers within protected areas does not have a comprehensive legal framework in most Latin American and Caribbean countries. One of the main drawbacks for its portability is the lack of definition of the activities in which it can be used for the management of the conservation units.

One of the main arguments for rangers to carry firearms is personal protection, this is due to the high risk in daily work in the field (wild fauna, poachers, illegal loggers, illegal plantations and routes of drug trafficking, irregular armed groups). In addition, weapons are also a useful management tool, especially for the control of invasive and introduced species such as large mammals (control and eradication with firearms) and birds or small mammals (control and eradication with air weapons).

Recommended solutions:

- Carry out a joint analysis between authorities, administrators and rangers, to find out the need to use firearms according to the particular problems of each country and each protected area, and with this define and propose a legal framework for their use.
- Comprehensive training on the use of weapons (fire and air) in the event that it is determined that their use is necessary for protection or management purposes.
- Deliver enabling documents to rangers for the use of weapons once they have passed the psychotechnical tests and certified the necessary skills, learned in the training received.

1.2. Legal protection in operations (responsibility of the State and/or employer).

Problematic:

The lack of a legal framework for the fulfillment of their functions in the field results in rangers not being able to carry out effective control, patrol and inspection activities (detention of flagrante offenders), which leads to the situation that various civil and criminal processes cannot be started or concluded. On several occasions, the operations or patrols must be carried out in conjunction with other institutions (national police, environmental police, army or navy of each country), so that arrests, confiscation and/or boardings (in the case of work at sea, rivers or lagoons) or access to private property have legal validity. However, it is not always possible to have personnel from these institutions to do these jobs.

Another of the deficiencies observed is the weakness that exists in the legal areas or departments such as the State Ministry or secretariat, provincial or state, departmental or regional directorates, local directorates and administration of the protected area in various aspects, are: the reduced number of personnel (number of lawyers to attend cases), lack of availability for attention and advice (many problems or infractions occur on non-working days), lack of legal capacity in advice (training and diversification of the legal team), poor distribution of advisory personnel to attend cases nationwide (greater number of personnel in central offices), reduced regional or local and economic resources to face long-term cases.

The consequences are the legal problems that can involve rangers if the operations or patrols do not have an adequate legal framework if there are no established institutional legal procedures and if there is no specialized legal advice (provided and paid for by the employer) before and after those who perform these jobs.



Recommended solutions:

- Work together with the relevant institutions for the generation, socialization, and approval of a Law on Rangers, which should define and improve the role of rangers in control and supervision work within the protected area.
- Improve inter-institutional links (other State agencies: army, navy, police, among others, and NGOs) to optimize resources (human, material, and time) in control and surveillance activities.
- The State, Ministry or the administrator of the protected areas must strengthen the institutional legal departments by providing and guaranteeing the economic and human resources necessary for their proper functioning on a permanent basis, so that in this way the processes do not stagnate or cannot be concluded. However, there is always the possibility that there aren't any resources, so one of the most common mechanisms to solve this type of problem could be through cooperation agreements between the State, Ministry or administrator and other organizations (NGOs, universities and their faculties of jurisprudence, bar associations and even some private legal studies) so that they can provide legal advice (at no cost) to rangers before, during and after in the cases needed.

1.3. Rangers: health and life insurance for high-risk jobs (employer's responsibility).

Problematic:

Field work in remote areas should be considered high risk, however, in several Latin American countries rangers do not have life and health insurance commensurate with the activities they carry out. From July 2017 to July 2018, there were 129 deaths of rangers in the performance of their duties (Source: IRF), many of them were attacked by wild animals that they protect within protected areas, others due to work accidents (traffic, use of machinery and equipment) and some (not a few) killed by hunters, loggers and illegal armed groups.

The death of rangers not only brings pain to their colleagues, friends, and family, but also leads to a socioeconomic problem for families who -in many cases- are left without their main source of income. This inconvenience is solved on certain occasions momentarily by the Government (very little or nothing), NGOs and/or money collections by family, friends and co-workers, which helps, but it does not solve this inconvenience in its entirety.

However, life insurance continues to be a simple economic palliative for a very complex situation and diverts attention from the underlying problem of preventing or minimizing deaths of rangers in the performance of their duties. The responsibilities for these types of events to decrease are shared between the employer and rangers. The State or the private company must provide the ranger with all the legal facilities (regulations for support and protection) and structural facilities (number of necessary personnel, appropriate uniforms, adequate infrastructure, field and technological equipment, vehicles and machines) so that they can work at remote sites. However, rangers must also learn to manage criteria and make decisions at critical moments, especially in the field when work is carried out that has a medium or high risk. They must even take precautionary measures when they carry out mobilizations in motorized vehicles, since many fatal accidents occur in these means and due to the drivers' inexperience.

Moreover, there are many functions that rangers perform within protected areas which have health risks (without involving immediate risk to life) and which -currently- are not recognized by the employer. This means that on many occasions rangers do not have basic safety implements/equipment to work with, for example: lifting and moving garbage, cleaning bathrooms or places with a high amount of dust, handling wildlife, etc.



Recommended solutions:

- The employer hires life and health insurance for rangers with family coverage. It is important that the insurance contracted guarantees coverage to the family for a determined or indefinite time after an accident or death of the ranger.
- Strengthen employers (public and private companies), ranger organizations (associations and unions) and institutions that work with rangers (NGOs), analyzing the possibility of creating trust funds (worldwide through IRF and other NGOs, regional through the IRF and its representatives, or national through the IRF and member organizations, or with governments through their corresponding ministries or corporations), so that they can count on financial resources in the event that it is necessary to support families of rangers who died in the line of duty. These funds can be state, private (ranger organizations) or mixed.
- Carry out a joint analysis between administrators and rangers of the state of the working conditions in which they are working in the field: number of personnel necessary (optimal number to cover shifts or roles), adequate infrastructure (booths with all the necessary implements to live), uniforms (appropriate for the climate and the tasks performed), field and technological equipment (especially communication for remote areas), vehicles (terrestrial or aquatic) and machines, in order to reach institutional commitments to improve gradually in the items in which there are deficiencies.

Cross-cutting Theme 2. Rangers: job stability and social problems.

2.1. Long working hours (due to lack of personnel), rotations within the national system of protected areas and social problems of rangers and their families (absence at home).

Problematic:

The working hours in the protected areas are not fixed due to their distance and the activities that take place, which in many cases does not allow them to return to the towns or cities where rangers live in several days.

This work dynamic makes the groups of rangers work in shifts or roles of several days in the field and have a physical presence 24 hours a day inside the protected areas. This implies that in most countries 3 shifts of 8 hours and in others 4 shifts of 6 hours often covered with field meals (monetary or food) by the institution and, in other occasions, covered by the rangers with their salary (despite being an institutional designation) which causes a salary decrease at the end of each month. However, the main problem in this case, is that the extra hours worked in the field (16 extra hours per day) are not recognized by the employer, who usually only grants days off or extra pay (in cases where the law or the budget supports it) for the hours or days worked on weekends or holidays.

Moreover, in some countries of the region there are ranger rotations within the national system of protected areas (ranger movements to different types of conservation units for defined times), which allows them to acquire new skills depending on the management programs that are being implemented in the conservation units. However, rotations also bring certain inconveniences when they are not agreed upon or the sites do not have the infrastructure and equipment to accommodate the designated number of people, and even when the rotation is for a long time, there are no sites to accommodate families of rangers. This implies social problems (absence of the father or mother in the home for a long time, temporary separations of the couple and, in extreme cases, divorces), in the medium and long term.



Recommended solutions:

- Draft within the Law on Rangers (which will be worked on jointly with other institutions) various options for working hours so that they can be adapted to the different realities of the national system of protected areas, for example:

Item	Working period (days)	Hours per day	Rest period	Observations
1	5 days	8 or 6 hours	Weekends and public holidays	
2	8 days	8 or 6 hours	2 or more free days	Days off for weekends or holidays worked. Daily work without spending the night away from home.
3	8 days	24 hours	8 free days	Days off for weekends or holidays worked. Daily work without spending the night away from home.
4	15 days	24 hours	15 free days	Days off for weekends or holidays worked. Daily work without spending the night away from home.
5	20 days	24 hours	20 free days	Days off for weekends or holidays worked. Daily work without spending the night away from home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food (money or food) in the field must be paid by the employer. • Transfers to work sites must be paid by the employer. • The days transfer of the personnel will be within the working days 				

- If rotations are implemented within the national system of protected areas, each site must have the appropriate infrastructure and equipment for the ranger group that works in those places. In addition, the rotations must be agreed upon and planned between administrators and rangers. In addition, his or her family must be considered if the transfer is longer than 3 months.

2.2. Salary according to functions, risks and labor benefits.

Problematic:

The salaries of the rangers are not commensurate with the functions and risks that their jobs imply, this is mainly because the rangers are within the lower categories in the labor scales of the majority of the countries of the region, partly due to lack of recognition of this profession at the state level.

This causes rangers to look for extra activities to complement the low income they receive from their profession or decide to look for other, better-paid jobs, with which the institution loses personnel that trained for years.

Recommended solutions:

- Carry out an analysis between authorities and ranger organizations (associations and unions) of the cost of the market basket of each country and compare it with the average income received by the ranger group, to seek a progressive increase of salary until reaching a balance that is fair and equitable.
- As part of the recognition of the general occupational risk of the ranger profession and the situation of each protected area, which due to its location are considered high-risk areas due to various factors: geography, wildlife, poachers and fishermen, armed groups, isolation during some periods in remote sites (on many occasions alone), among others, it would be the delivery of monthly salary supplements (monthly economic bonuses), which must be a percentage of the monthly salary received.



- Considering that state institutions do not always have a budget to carry out salary increases or deliver economic bonuses, extra rest days can be recognized due to the functions and risks involved in the work of rangers in the field.

2.3. Permanent staff, fixed-contract staff and volunteer rangers.

Problematic:

The deficient number of rangers seriously affects the effective management of protected areas because other related problems that arise from this, such as: long working hours, forced and unplanned rotations within the national system of protected areas and the absence of rangers at home.

The few permanent personnel who work in protected areas demonstrates the limited interest of the states in the issue of conservation, which directly affects several fundamental aspects for its effective management:

- Priority activities for the conservation and restoration of fragile ecosystems are not developed or are suspended (monitoring of native and endemic species, control of introduced species of flora and fauna), which affects the objectives and values of any protected area.
- Delay in maintenance of infrastructure, trails, and signage on the main routes for visitors and rangers. This type of work must be permanent due to the types of environments or microclimates that the protected areas have.
- Due to the lack of personnel, many officials carry out several activities at the same time and that are not planned, which does not allow having defined functions and meeting the objectives of the management programs.
- Loss of personnel trained by the institution (in the event that the same personnel are not hired).
- Linked to the previous item, re-processes are carried out for the training of new rangers.
- ***Demotivation and lack of concentration of rangers to fulfill their duties, due to the job instability they face (a social and psychological aspect rarely considered by the employer).***

Moreover, the selection of personnel does not have adequate procedures to choose the suitable candidates (trained and qualified) to work within the national system of protected areas as rangers in several countries of the region, but rather they are handled with conventional processes that are not consistent with the type of functions (often very specific) that are carried out in this profession.

Recommended solutions:

- Formulate a strategy along with the competent institutions to reduce fixed term contracts or temporary contracts, to gradually increase the number of permanent rangers, which would provide job stability and maintain processes within protected areas.
- Jointly define management programs and products between administrators and rangers to know which is the ideal personnel in each protected area, which would help its effective management.



- Involve ranger organizations to form part of the selection committees for field personnel who will work in protected areas so that officials with more knowledge and experience can formulate selection criteria, evaluation parameters and qualifications required of those who apply for the positions.
- Strengthen institutional links with NGOs, universities, and other protected areas to have volunteer rangers to obtain specific products for the management of conservation units. Without delegating control and surveillance activities.

2.4. Gender equality (job opportunities and similar treatment in the position).

Problematic:

Due to the nature of the work of rangers in the field (mostly men), women rangers have not been given the importance that is due within the national systems of protected areas and neither at the international level. No meetings of women park rangers have been held at the Latin American level, where the gender issues that affect their daily work are discussed.

One of the most frequent problems that affect rangers in their work environment is when they are pregnant or lactating, this is due to the different types of long and/or special working hours that are managed to develop activities in the field or in rural areas. On many occasions, the decisions to define what and when the conferences should be held depend on the will of the immediate superior, and in some cases, they are not framed in regulations that can be followed, demanded, and respected.

Moreover, the lack of knowledge by a large part of rangers of the wide scope of the gender issue (it is not only a matter of sexual or labor harassment), may be the cause of the lack of a more in-depth analysis of the real situation of rangers in personal and work environment.

Recommended solutions:

- Hold a Latin American meeting of women rangers (proposal that was conceived at the Latin American Ranger Meeting in Ecuador), where the profession is addressed from a gender perspective.
- Include within the Rangers Law an article that refers to special working hours for pregnant or lactating ranger women, so that the work they do is consistent with their status and in appropriate places.
- Carry out scheduled and systematic training for rangers on gender issues.

Cross-cutting Theme 3: Rangers: education, training and recognition of the profession by higher education institutions.

3.1. Importance of the training and formation of rangers for the management effectiveness in protected areas. Regional centers for capacity building and training in the management of protected areas and their certification.

Problematic:

The training (courses, workshops, talks, congresses, and symposiums) and training (school studies, baccalaureate, technical, university or postgraduate) of rangers is of the utmost importance for the



development of the institution, motivation and professional growth of the work team and direct and indirect benefits for the community where they live.

The deficient interest that the institutions (employers) have to increase capacity and train rangers and to improve management effectiveness in protected areas and professionalize their staff, is reflected in the little or no budget designated, in the absence of plans (or its application) for capacity building and, in the limited institutional support (both financial and in times of permits) to participate in training, and in the lack of places and / or spaces (formal education centers and entities) for the specific training of rangers.

Recommended solutions:

- Create, through the State or private higher education institutions (universities or technical institutes), a Ranger School within the formal education system of each country with international certification and common basic curricular design for the entire region. The ranger organizations of each country and of the region can contribute with technical, theoretical, and practical inputs for the development of the base of the study program.
- Develop jointly between administrators and rangers training and capacity building plans according to the realities of each protected area, which must have an annual budget allocation.
- Work among the administrators and the ranger organizations for the appointment of personnel to international training; a joint selection based on criteria that must be defined.

3.2. Legal framework for recognition of the ranger profession.

Problematic:

For many years the work carried out by the different groups of rangers has been based on empirical methods given the non-existence of the ranger career in most of the countries of the region. This methods -in some way- worked when the protected areas were created and the first management steps were taken and many of these methods have been maintained to this day. However, this empirical knowledge and other types of training (according to the profession) are not recognized by any formal educational institution or by the State.

This lack of recognition of the ranger profession within the job scale system of each country causes a stagnation or impasse in professional growth, both in promotions within the institutions where they work and therefore in salary improvements.

Recommended solutions:

- Include within the Rangers Law an article that refers to the recognition of the ranger profession, validating the training carried out, highlighting the importance of empirical knowledge and experience for years of exercising this type of work and receiving the timely technical certification once demonstrated and evaluated their skills already acquired. This knowledge and experience accreditation system will be valid for those who are developing the profession until the Ranger School is created.



Cross-cutting Theme 4. Rangers and Associations.

4.1. Role of the Associations and/or other Ranger organizations in the National Systems of Protected Areas.

Problematic:

Civil and independent organizations integrated by rangers were created with the aim of seeking collective benefits in Latin America. These organizations are of vital importance in disseminating the work developed by their members (on several occasions also from non-members) in the countries where they exist currently. In addition, by their nature they promote labor and personal ties between colleagues (both inside and outside their countries), which strengthens and increases the capacities of the ranger collective not only to fulfill their daily obligations but can also exercise the role of advisor in the state or private spheres within the systems of protected areas.

However, currently these organizations are not relevant in making crucial decisions in the protected area malmanagement since (in most cases) their opinions and technical criteria are not considered or not even consulted by the institutions responsible for the national systems of protected areas. This has resulted in irreversible effects on fragile ecosystems and has caused problems for rangers (who are the base of the conservation in these places) on several occasions.

Recommended solutions:

- Create, through associations and/or other ranger organizations in each country, a technical advisory team for decision-making regarding rangers and the management of protected areas.
- Develop inter-institutional agreements between associations and/or other ranger organizations and the administrators of the protected areas so that the technical advisory teams have a voice and vote in the decision-making worktables.

4.2. Strengthening of Ranger Organizations: management and financing

Problematic:

Ranger organizations were created with the objective of seeking collective benefits for their members. One of the main problems they face is the integral management of the organization since those who preside them do not always have the experience to manage information, funds, and personnel.

The information that reaches the board usually remains only at that level, so it does not reach the bases (it is not collectivized) and this results in a lack of trust from the members. The resolutions of assemblies or meetings are frequently not shared with the members who cannot attend, which does not allow issuing criteria or points of view of the decisions that are made on behalf of the group -which although they cannot be changed- are subject to subsequent revisions in case they are not emergent or definitive.

Similar happens with the management of funds. Often the knowledge of how the funds is used only remains at the management level even though the money with these organizations work comes from contributions from their members. This usually causes internal problems that lead to the breakup of the group and therefore to the weakening of the collective and, in more serious cases, to the dissolution of the organization.



Moreover, any civil and independent organization is generally maintained by the income coming from their members. However, many of these members are not encouraged in this aspect which causes the institution to not have the necessary funds to function, limiting its action in time and space and allowing it only to act at very specific moments and in locations that do not reach where all its members are.

Recommended solutions:

- Train the members of the elected board(s) in information management, funds and human resources.
- Establish efficient mechanisms for collecting external funds through cooperation agreements with NGOs and/or government entities related to the conservation work that rangers carry out in protected areas.
- Empower or encourage the members of ranger organizations to make their economic contributions in a timely manner, demonstrating through the directives a transparent management of the funds and that the results obtained by the management of the organization benefit the entire group.

4.3. Cooperation between ranger organizations: twinning agreements and actions without borders for regional and global action opportunities.

Problematic:

The strengthening of ranger organizations to meet their institutional objectives is based on the financing they have for their operation. To achieve this they seek for national and international strategic alliances with NGOs and similar organizations. In this way, twinning agreements and actions of rangers without borders have been reached (support from rangers in other countries on issues related to the profession or management of protected areas, depending on the capacities of the ranger).

International ranger agreements and actions must define whether they will be permanent programs or specific projects, and which institutions (governmental or not) can support these initiatives, due to the funding that must be available to maintain them over time.

Recommended solutions:

- Promote and strengthen twinning agreements and/or actions without borders so that they become permanent programs.
- Develop short, medium, and long-term action plans with a logical framework that allows the evaluation of twinning agreement programs and/or actions without borders, so that they do not become paper agreements, but that their actions transcend for the collective of rangers in the region. Also, this will help to raise funds at all levels.
- Establish efficient mechanisms for collecting external funds through cooperation agreements with NGOs and/or government entities so that ranger organizations can develop proposals for twinning agreements and/or actions without borders.



4.4 Role of the International Ranger Federation (IRF) in meeting the new challenges of rangers in the region.

Problematic:

The International Ranger Federation has the following objectives:

1. Promote professional standards for rangers throughout the world.
2. Advance the goals of the IUCN World Conservation Strategy.
3. Share knowledge and resources with and for rangers.
4. Establish global communications between ranger associations and organizations.
5. Professional exchanges between rangers.
6. Organize and carry out regular international ranger meetings, including a World Ranger Congress every 3 years.
7. Carry out joint activities to directly support ranger operations when necessary and feasible.
8. Work closely with its collaborating arm, the Thin Green Line Foundation, to train, equip, and support rangers and ranger widows who have been killed in the line of duty (2016 Cooperation Agreement).
9. Represent the interests of rangers through close cooperation with other international organizations, such as the IUCN/World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

These objectives have been met with ranger groups in several countries around the world. However, due to several factors in the Latin American region (*lack of regional representation in the IRF, lack of management of regional representatives, isolation in decision-making due to lack of language knowledge, lack of knowledge of IRF statutes, statutes developed according to realities other than Latin America*) has not managed to "benefit" from the support of the IRF and the Thin Green Line Foundation.

On the other hand, although it is true that it is the governments' responsibilities to attend to the needs of the protected area systems -including rangers- and they should be strategic allies for many of the actions that the IRF undertakes in the region, it is important to maintain independence and work more directly with the ranger organizations of each country. These organizations can collaborate independently with governmental and non-governmental entities for the development of any type of activity without the need for endorsements (which in many of cases become political tools).

Another problem that the ranger community has in the region is that ranger organizations (associations, unions or ranger corps) are not formed or are not active in all countries, which leads to two negative aspects:

- Lack of organization and legal entity within the group to have formal recognition before government authorities and other organizations.
- Isolated actions of small ranger groups at the national or regional level, which is reflected in the lack of results in the search for solutions to common problems.

Recommended solutions:

- Review and adapt the statutes of the International Ranger Federation to adapt them in the articles, where possible, to the reality of the Latin American region.



- Request to the International Ranger Federation that the internal Board meetings or Assemblies have Spanish simultaneous translation, which would be the most widely spoken in the region. Additionally, the leaders of the ranger organizations should start with training to improve their knowledge of the English language (both spoken and written) which will not only serve to maintain a more active participation in international events, but also that will improve your professional level within your usual place of work.
- Recommend to the International Ranger Federation, through its regional representatives, that the search for links with governments be through the ranger organizations of each country, and in the case that there is no organization, direct the contacts through local NGOs that work with and for rangers.
- Promote the creation and activation (if they exist and are not working) of ranger organizations (associations, unions, or ranger corps) in the countries of the region (through the IRF Central America and South America Representatives), articulating this initiative with organized ranger groups but who are not yet formalized and/or with ranger groups or leaders of ranger groups that have inactive organizations.

NOTE: This was a voluntary translation from IRF staff and may have some grammatical errors. If you have any questions, please contact directly: guardaparques.federacion@gmail.com