



STATE OF THE RANGER

Vol. 1



2024

Forewords

In the Chitwan Declaration that emanated from the 9th International Ranger Federation (IRF) World Ranger Congress (Nepal, 2019), it stated that ‘those who manage protected and conserved areas and employ Rangers, need to identify shortcomings and implement measures to improve outcomes’. To do this, we need empirical data to drive change in the global corridors of influence, which in the ranger sector, is hard to find. At the same time the IRF, with support from Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA), developed an action plan to guide the delivery of the ranger-developed declaration.

So, on the one hand, the objective was to get the data to understand the shortcomings and measures needed to improve outcomes for rangers. While on the other hand, it was to develop a baseline that could then measure the impact on the ranger sector of all investment aligned to the action plan. This report will ensure key organizations are better informed about the state of rangers globally so that any support is directed to where it is needed. The report also shows a sector that is becoming more organized and in a continual cycle of professionalization.

With thanks to the support of URSA, the IRF was able to resource the development of the first ever global *State of the Ranger* report. The

report would look to advance the work that was done in the *Life on the Frontline* report, by getting data and perspectives from both rangers and ranger employers. This document is the culmination of much deliberation and hard work, where great effort was made to set up the research in a manner that is replicable over time.

In its effort as the global ranger body to professionalize the ranger sector, the IRF believes the data will be a valuable tool to influence global and regional policy and effect positive change across the ranger workforce. We also believe that the level of investment into the ranger sector will determine whether the world will be able to achieve (or at least get close to) the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and some of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sincere appreciation must go to all who contributed to the formalization of this ambitious report. While this is a great achievement and a milestone for the ranger sector, it has to be seen as a point from which progress must be made from now to the next report, as the world and all its life can ill afford an ineffective ranger workforce.



Chris Galliers
President
International Ranger Federation

Our planet is facing enormous challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty and pandemics. These challenges are closely linked to a deteriorating natural environment. Meanwhile, one of our most important assets, rangers working in protected and conserved areas responsible for managing large tracts of the planet’s lands and waters, are fundamental to environmental security and human well-being, yet remain insufficiently recognized for their contributions.

The ranger workforce is vital for ensuring we achieve our global goals for protected and conserved areas. Yet many endure poor terms of employment and inadequate and hazardous working conditions. They risk and lose their lives, live under difficult conditions and spend long, arduous hours in the field to protect wildlife and secure protected areas.

The *State of the Ranger* report provides the first global baseline of the current status of the ranger profession and is an extremely valuable resource for national and global policy development to improve working conditions and professionalize the ranger workforce.

The findings from this report are critically relevant to building a skilled and professional ranger workforce that is fundamental to the recovery of nature and the successful implementation of global protected and conserved area targets.



Madhu Rao
Chair
IUCN World Commission
on Protected Areas

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Forewords

The welfare of rangers is an issue close to my heart. Good working conditions, robust training, fair pay and benefits, appropriate equipment, and infrastructure are all essential for the women and men who manage and safeguard protected and conserved areas. This means that global efforts to conserve nature and meet ambitious global biodiversity targets depend directly on the welfare of rangers.

This is something I learned early in my career, during my time as head of Costa Rica’s national park service. Protecting wild spaces is not just about hectares and dollars. It’s also about labor. Rangers are some of the most underestimated actors in nature conservation, and they carry out essential work for biodiversity in the face of all kinds of limitations.

This *State of the Ranger* report reflects that many rangers are working without the resources they need – including personnel, facilities, information, and technology.

There are also reasons for hope, and signs that more and more governments are making needed investments to ensure these essential workers are able to carry out their work with dignity and in safety. Benefits and provisions including regular pay, life insurance policies, uniforms, and access to hygienic sanitary facilities and clean drinking water are improving.

Most rangers are now paid at least minimum wage, with incomes adequate to cover basic needs. We are seeing an increasingly wide array of training opportunities available to rangers, covering topics including emergency response and first aid, field skills, and the use of equipment.

Women are making up an increasing share of rangers, and are reporting that they are paid the same as their male colleagues and have sufficient on-site measures to ensure their inclusion and safety at work.

There remains a great deal to do to ensure that rangers are recognized and supported fully for the important role they play, even in adversity. To be sustainable havens for wildlife and ecosystems, protected areas need solid workforce standards and humane and supportive working conditions.

The Global Environment Facility has been working for decades to build sustainable systems of protected areas around the world, including in the Amazon, in Central Asia, and in East Africa where I have had the pleasure of meeting rangers working against the odds to make a difference. The conversations I have had with these women and men during forest walks will stay with me always.

Behind each statistic in this report is a person working for all of us to protect nature and support local communities. We need government, donor, and civil society partners to prioritize continued improvements in ranger working conditions and welfare globally – a vital piece of the 30x30 puzzle.



Carlos Manuel Rodríguez
CEO and Chairperson
Global Environment Facility

As a public service specialist in the International Labour Organization (ILO), I congratulate the IRF for the publication of this report. Wildlife rangers carry out essential work to safeguard the health and safety of the population, which should be recognized by all governments and employers by providing them with the tools to carry it out and decent working conditions so they can enjoy safe and satisfying careers.

As the findings in this report indicate, much remains to be done to advance decent work for rangers. The ILO Conventions on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, 1949 (No. 98) and on Labour Relations (Public Service), 1978 (No. 151) provide a comprehensive framework for this purpose.

By guaranteeing the respect of their civil and political rights, their right to join worker organizations, with the facilities for these organizations to carry out their functions, to participate in collective bargaining and the channels to resolve disputes, these Conventions provide rangers with the tools to address the challenges identified in this report.

In addition, the ILO Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), which has been ratified by 158 governments, provides national worker federations with the means to advocate for the ratifications of Conventions No. 98 and 151 where they are still unratified, and for their effective implementation where they have been.

The ILO’s Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and recommendations has repeatedly asked governments to respect freedom of association for rangers. We invite national ranger federations to take advantage of these rights and to advocate for ratification of these Conventions. The ILO stands ready to assist in these efforts.



International
Labour
Organization

Carlos Carrion-Crespo
Specialist, Public Services and Utilities
International Labour Organization

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About the IRF

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) is a worldwide, non-profit membership-based organization, established to develop, advance, and promote the ranger profession. The IRF recognizes rangers and protected and conserved area workers, whether state, regional, communal, Indigenous, or private, as essential on-the-ground planetary health professionals that are responsible for safeguarding nature, cultural and historical heritage, and protecting the rights and well-being of present and future generations. The IRF is the standard-bearer for the ranger profession globally and the voice of ranger associations and rangers everywhere.

www.internationalrangers.org

Acknowledgments

State of the Ranger Vol. 1 is dedicated to all the rangers who, as planetary health professionals, dedicate their lives to safeguarding nature, and cultural and historical heritage, protecting the rights and well-being of present and future generations.

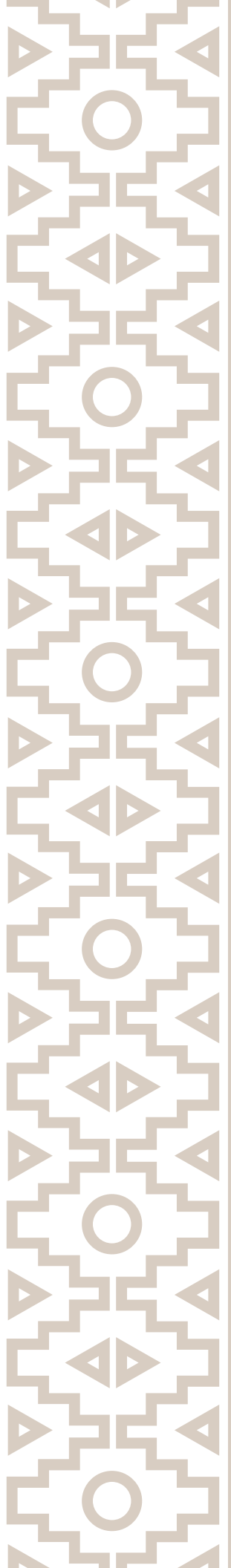
Sincerest thanks go to Professor William Moreto, Timothy Kuiper, Carrie Stengel for their work on the report, to Mónica Alvarez Malvido as Project Manager, and to the Action Working Group members for their support and contributions: Chris Galliers, James Slade, Rohit Singh, Olga Biegus, Carlien Roodt. Also, thanks go to the Advisory Committee, Experts and Regional Ranger Associations who provided important feedback in the development of the framework and all the voluntary translators so the surveys could be accessible to rangers worldwide (see Extended Acknowledgements).

Special thanks are due to those rangers and employers who participated in the surveys to make this reporting possible.

State of the Ranger Vol. 1 was supported by the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) and funded by Re:wild, Fauna & Flora, and WWF.



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Executive Summary

RATIONALE

State of the Ranger Vol. 1 summarizes the first set of findings drawn from ranger and employer surveys collected in 2023. The overall objective of the project was to establish the first global baseline of the current status of the ranger profession, including information on workplace needs, training, competency, benefits, provisions, and ranger associations, to name a few. This represents the first volume of what we envisage to be a series of reports that will provide longitudinal, cross-national data that can be compared, updated, and evaluated. The information collected will enable stakeholders in the ranger profession to make data-driven and informed decisions, while providing rangers with the opportunity to provide input that can directly impact their profession.

DATA & METHODS

A total of 1,286 ranger and 287 employer surveys were included. A total of 81 countries are represented in the ranger survey, while 65 countries are included in the employer survey. The survey instruments were translated into 17 languages and were administered in three data collection waves via Qualtrics using email listservs, social media, and the IRF website.

Most of the ranger participants were national or subnational employees (74.5%) and just over half of the employer respondents worked for national or subnational/local government. The average age of rangers was 42 years old. Most rangers (78%) had signed an agreement with their employer and held a permanent or open-ended contract (76%). Almost 80% of the ranger respondents self-reported as male and around 30% self-identified as an Indigenous person and/or as a member of an Indigenous Peoples group.

KEY FINDINGS

Recognition

- 65% of rangers and almost 60% of employers believe rangers are viewed as essential service workers by the public.
- 55% of rangers and employers said there is formal, in-country, education for rangers.

Conditions

- Most (86%) of rangers say they are paid at least minimum wage, however 37% say wages are insufficient to cover basic needs.
- Almost half (40%) of rangers say they do not have the right communication tools to do their job.
- 65% of employers do not feel the number of rangers operating in their area(s) is adequate.
- Both employers (71%) and rangers (86%) stated that individual assessments are used to evaluate ranger performance.
- Around half of ranger respondents noted they do not have opportunities for salary increases or promotion to a better position.
- Both rangers and employers were consistent in outlining the benefits, provisions and equipment provided. Both groups reported less than 40% of rangers have insurance and less than 60% have adequate health and safety training.

Competencies

- Rangers receive a variety of training opportunities, including an introductory course for new rangers, emergency response/first aid, law enforcement, use of equipment and resources, and field skills. However, there appears to be some discrepancy between the availability and frequency of such training, based on ranger and employer responses.
- 62% of ranger respondents received an introductory course, yet 83% of employers stated they offered such a course.
- When asked about refresher training, just

over half of employers stated that rangers received additional training. Less than 60% of both groups responded to have provided / received emergency response/first aid refresher training.

- 60% of rangers have completed a training needs assessment.
- About 80% of employers and rangers believe rangers are adequately trained for their duties. Despite this, rangers reported they feel more training is needed in all aspects of their profession.

Conduct

- Results were mixed as to whether a code of conduct has been adopted. 14% of rangers and 15% employers responded their organization has adopted and implemented (or is it in the process of doing so) the IRF's Code of Conduct
- Some employers and rangers are familiar with organizational policies or procedures to help create equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination. 61% rangers have not experienced discrimination; however, those who had experienced it, they believe this is due to several factors, including gender (7%), age (7%), or ethnicity (5%).

Inclusivity

- One in five employers reported that over 20% of rangers working in their area(s) are female.
- 72% of female rangers stated they are paid the same amount as their male colleagues, 67% do not feel they are excluded from specific roles because of their gender, and 62% feel their organization has sufficient on-site measures to ensure their safety.
- Just over half of the rangers feel they have reciprocal communication and/or opportunity to engage with communities. Half of rangers affirmed that there is a formal mechanism for communities to provide feedback. Only 22% of rangers who work alongside Indigenous Peoples and local communities have received training on the needs, lifestyle, priorities, or culture of people in their area to enhance collaboration.

Ranger Associations

- 62% of rangers are members of an association and believe membership has a positive impact. Rangers noted various benefits, including being a part of a community of rangers, interacting and engaging with other rangers, and attending events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments and Policymakers

- Recognize rangers as essential planetary health workers and their crucial role in achieving global commitments. The ranger profession needs to be recognized by the International Labour Organization.
- Provide opportunities for rangers to become involved in decision-making processes.
- Allocate resources to increase the number of rangers with a diversity of skills.
- Support protected area agencies and organizations who employ or work with rangers to professionalize their workforce.

Employers

- Enable rangers to maintain a balance between work and home life through fair working conditions.
- Improve the availability and quality of emergency medical care including insurance coverage for all rangers.
- Review and improve ranger training, ensure adequate and regular training and appropriate safeguards and policies.
- Resource and invest in rangers, including adequate resources, equipment and technology. Ensure access to basic services that can improve health and safety.
- Use and adapt available [IRF and URSA resources](#) and collaborate with ranger associations and organizations.

Rangers

- Establish functional ranger associations and/or strengthen existing ranger associations and organizations to create avenues for a united voice for rangers.

Background

WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE RANGER?

Across the world, rangers patrol thousands of protected and other conservation areas every day, playing an irreplaceable role as people at the frontline of safeguarding nature. Their work is as diverse as it is critical, from monitoring biodiversity and deterring illegal activity, to working with local communities and developing conservation strategies. To support rangers is to support the planet. So, how best can the global conservation community of governments, NGOs, private enterprises, and the general public serve rangers? An essential starting point is an evidence-based understanding of the state of their profession, from their basic working conditions and capacity to their relationships with communities and their own perspectives on the importance of their work. This is what *State of the Ranger* seeks to provide, now and into the future.

The objective of *State of the Ranger* is to establish global indicators on the status of the ranger profession to track progress, guide decisions and investments, and catalyze change to enhance rangers’ roles as essential planetary stewards.

This first report presents results from ranger and employer surveys conducted in 2023, and represents the first global baseline of where the ranger profession currently stands, including the assimilation of the best available, internationally comparable data on the ranger workforce. *State of the Ranger* will be published every 3-4 years during the IRF World Ranger Congress, allowing us to track the level of progress against global efforts and investments to improve the ranger sector. We envisage that these reports will not only inform, but stimulate change and influence decision-making at national and global levels, so that the ranger sector receives the evidence-based support that it deserves.

In 2019, WWF published *Life on the Frontline*, the first large-scale study examining the ranger profession. Based on surveys, the study explored various aspects of the ranger profession, including job stress, job satisfaction, community relations, and workplace environment, among other topics. The current study builds upon the foundation laid by *Life on the Frontline* and endeavors to create an in-depth assessment of the ranger profession. Additionally, *State of the Ranger* incorporates data obtained from employers, providing an added, and much needed, perspective.

Led by the IRF, this report is the inaugural *State of the Ranger*, an ambitious undertaking that stems from a collaborative partnership involving conservation NGOs, ranger organizations, academics, and other stakeholders.

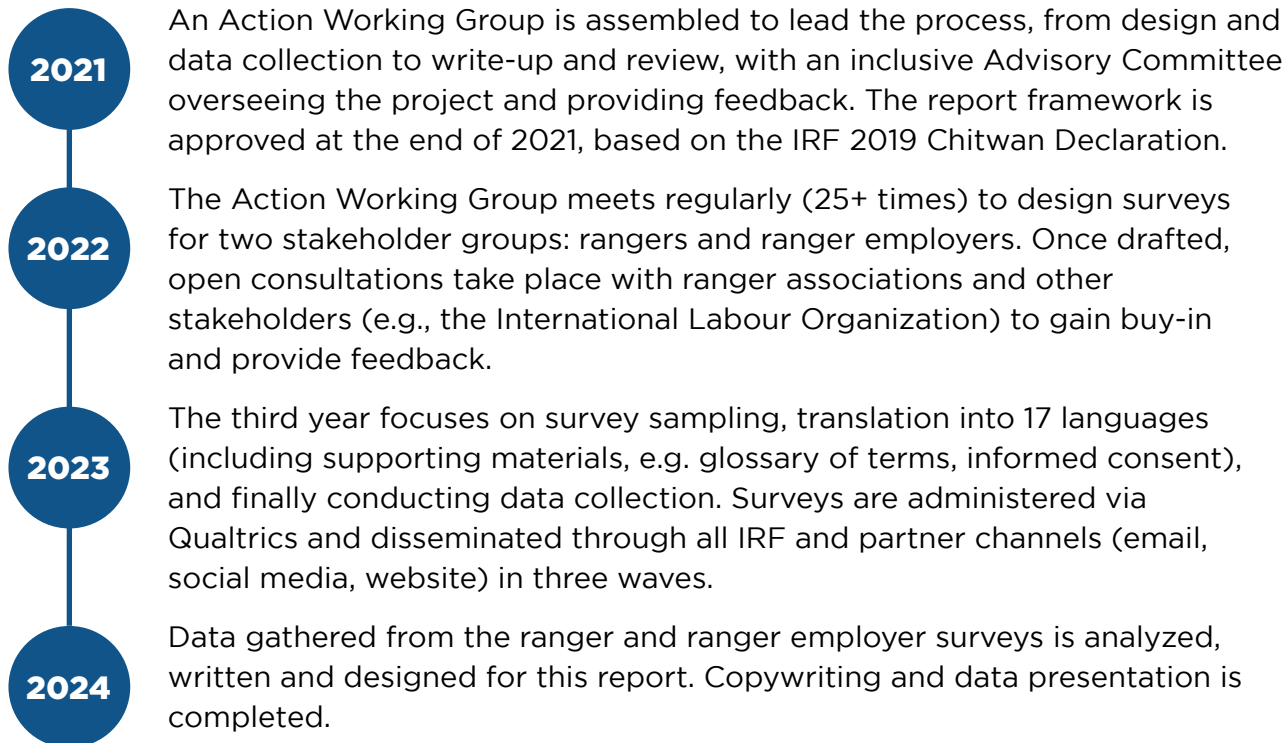
What is a ranger?

Rangers play a critical role in conservation; they are responsible for safeguarding nature, and cultural and historical heritage, and protecting the rights and well-being of present and future generations. As representatives of their authority, organization or community, they work, often for extended periods, in protected and conserved areas and wider landscapes and seascapes, whether state, regional, communal, Indigenous, or private, in line with legal and institutional frameworks. They should be dedicated and knowledgeable and should always act in a professional manner. Rangers also provide a combination of services. For more information visit the [IRF Code of Conduct](#).

For the purpose of this report, a **ranger employer** is any organization that a ranger works for, whether government, an NGO, a community authority, or a private entity.

METHODS A rigorous four-year process

The work behind this *State of the Ranger* report progressed over four years:



We acknowledge the limitations in this study, including sampling bias towards specific regions (in particular, Latin America), countries, organization types, and accessibility (i.e., access to mobile network and internet) to participate in the study. Careful consideration was made to balance the coverage and reach of the study with available resources and overall objective.

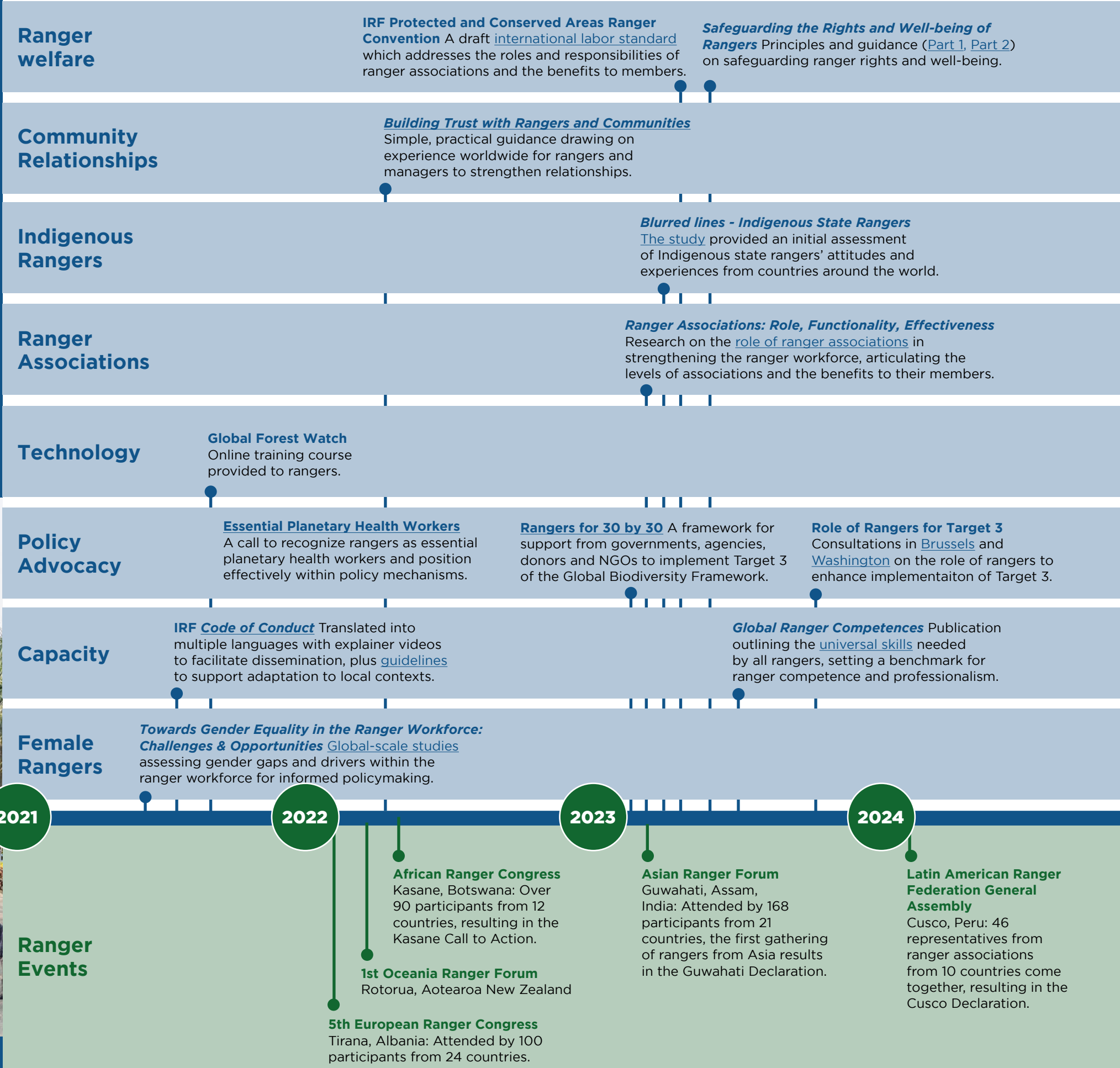
Chitwan and Beyond

IRF's [Chitwan Declaration](#) was a key outcome of the 9th World Ranger Congress, held in Chitwan, Nepal, in 2019. This pivotal document represents the voices of over 550 participants from 70 countries, many of whom represent a ranger association or conservation organization. The declaration underscores the vital role rangers play in protecting biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural heritage around the world. It calls for increased recognition, diversity of the workforce, support, and safety for rangers, particularly in light of the significant challenges they face, including threats to their lives from poaching, wildlife crime, and unsafe working conditions. The declaration also emphasizes the need for capacity building, resources, and collaboration to enhance conservation efforts worldwide.

Since the last World Ranger Congress, significant events have taken place to further promote the vital role rangers play around the world, and progress has been made along each of the themes of the Chitwan Declaration.

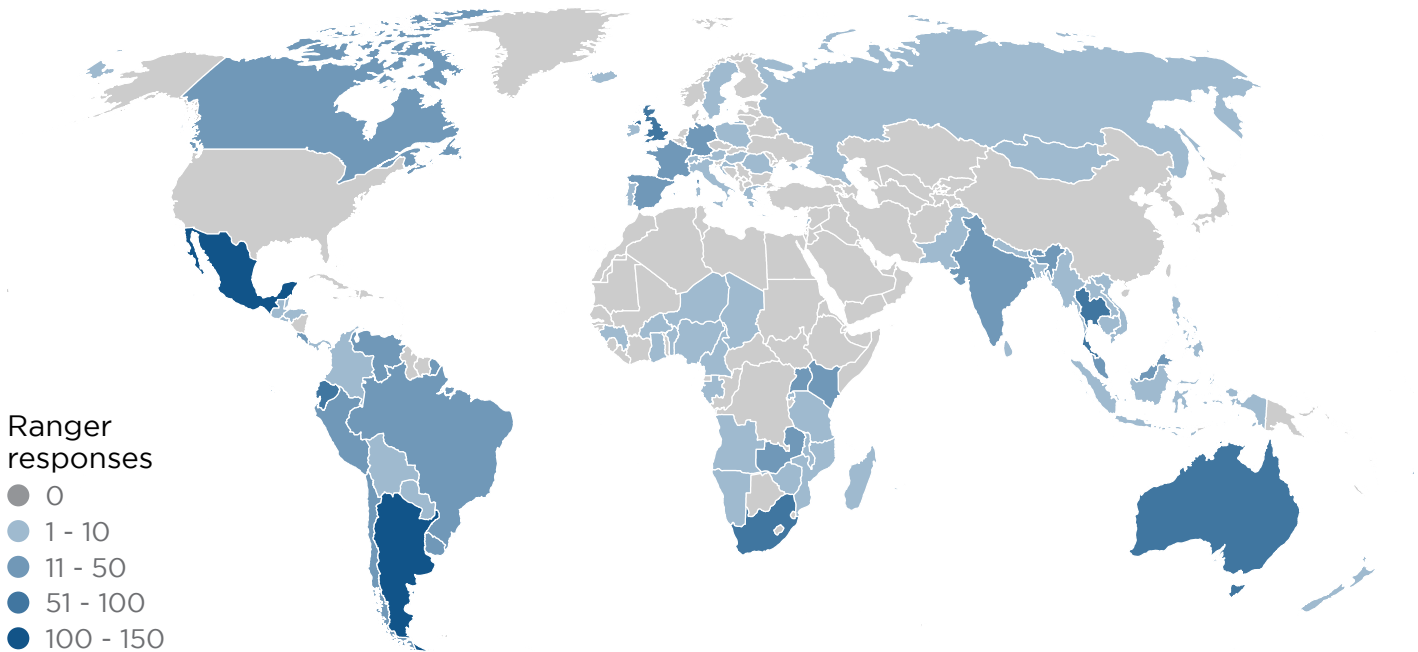


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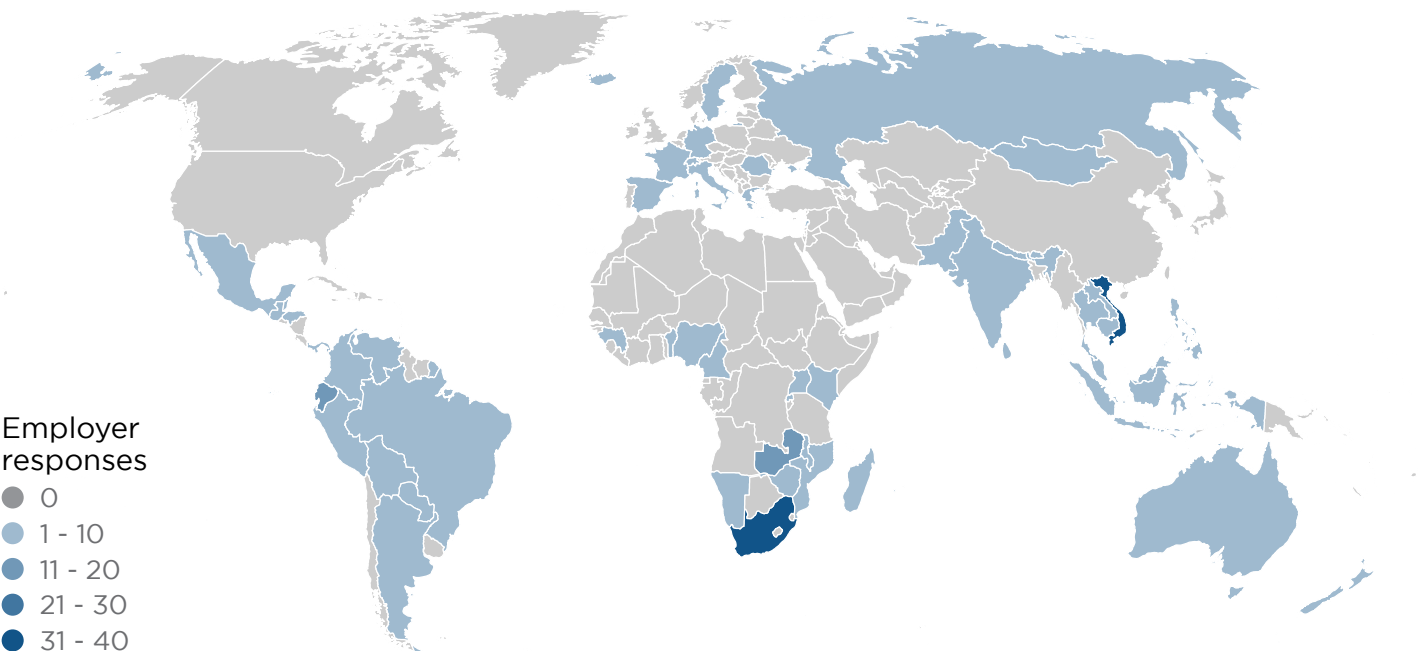


Demographics

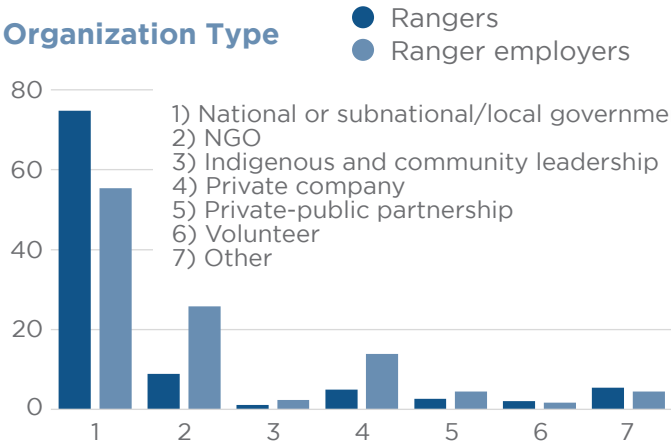
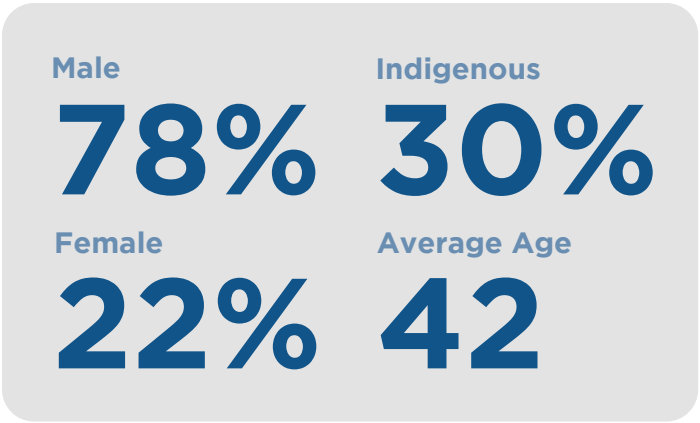
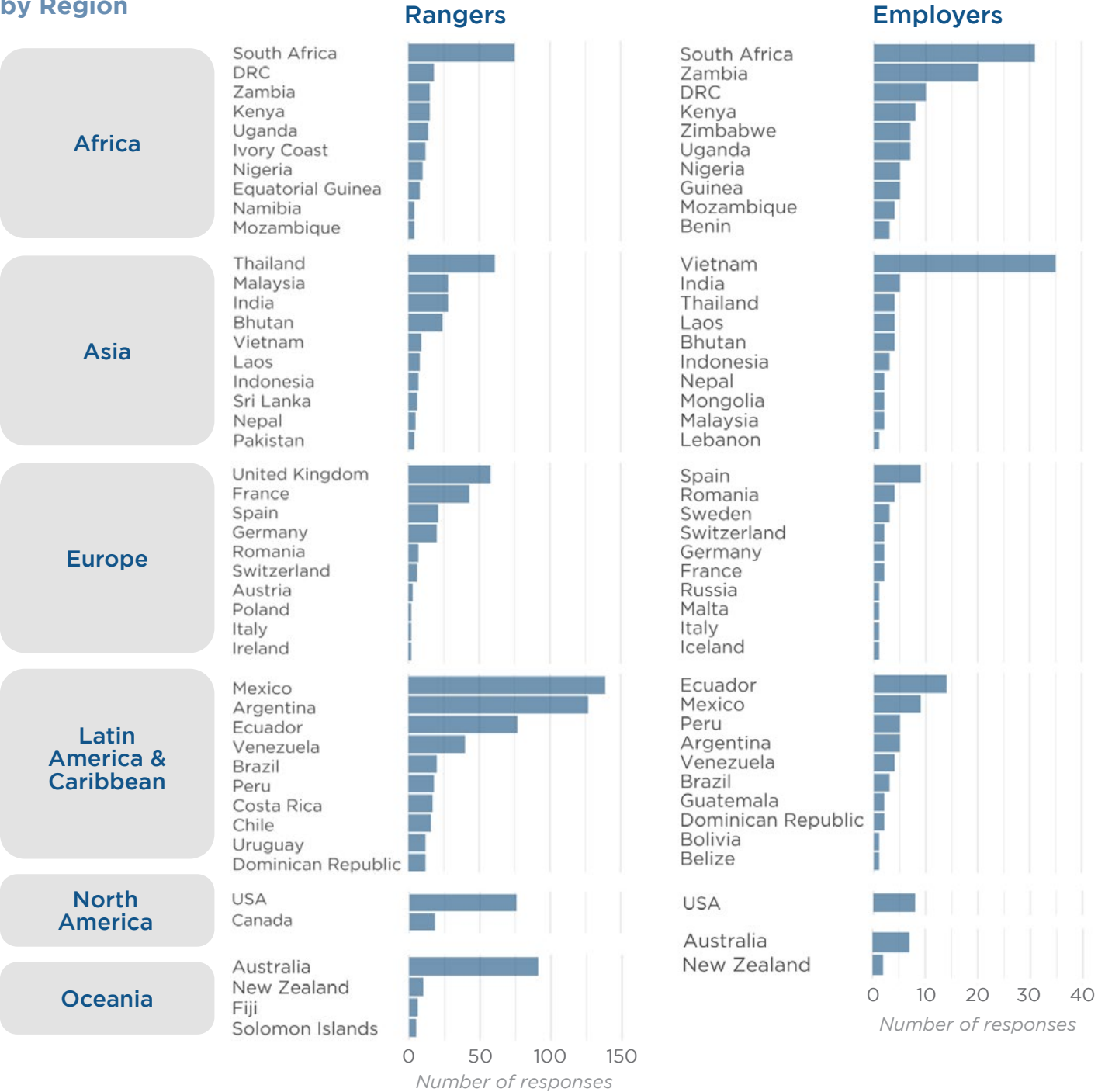
Rangers
1,286 survey responses
81 countries



Employers
287 survey responses
65 countries



Top 10 Countries by Region





State of the Ranger

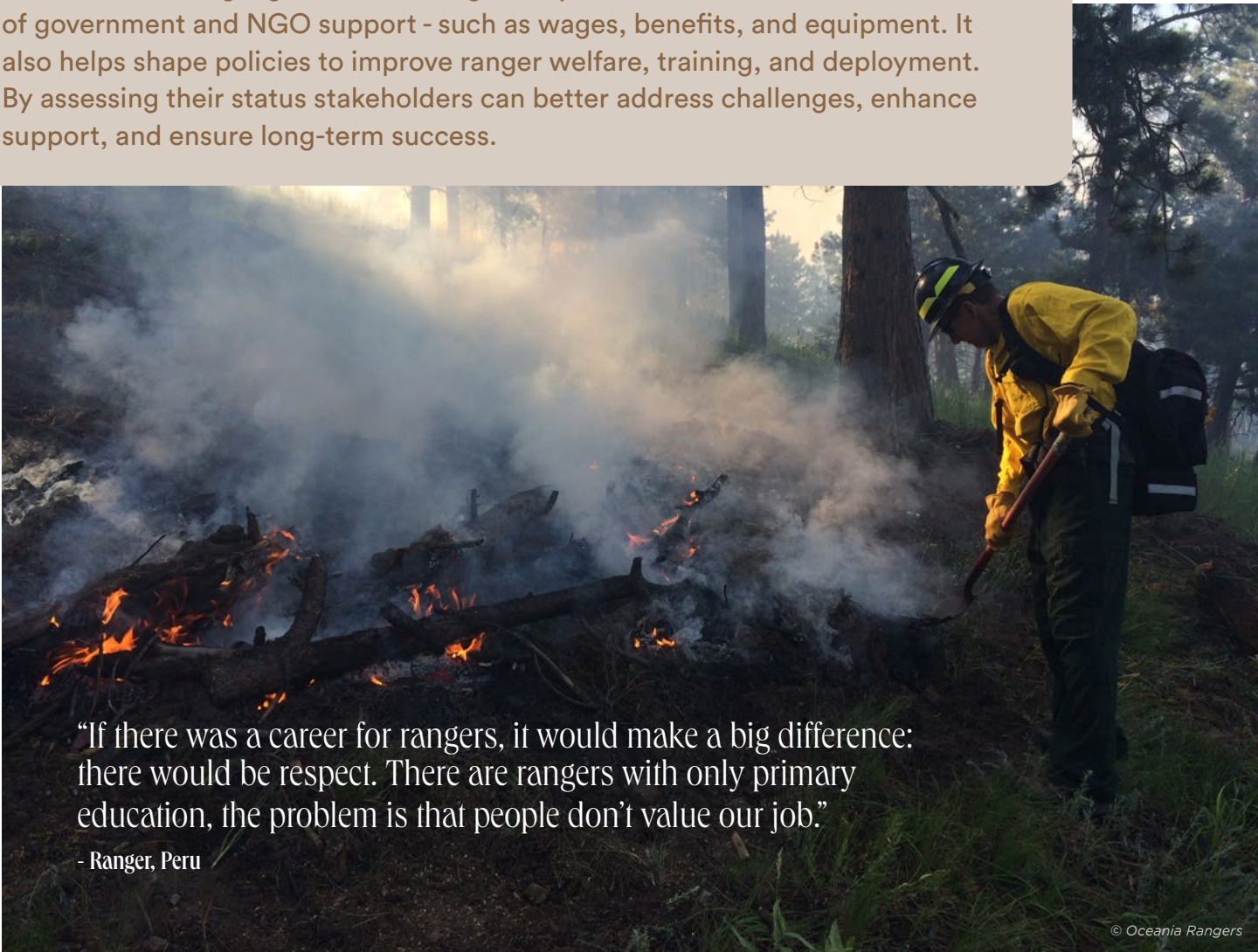


Recognition

Rangers and employers were asked how they feel their profession is perceived by the general public. When asked if rangers are considered to be workers who provide an essential service, like nurses, police, and firefighters, most believe so (65%). Employers echo this sentiment (59% agree). Additionally, there was overwhelming support by ranger respondents that the ranger profession should be recognized as an essential service (76%). When asked whether the ranger profession is an officially recognized profession, or recognized as an essential service, 36% of employer respondents said no.

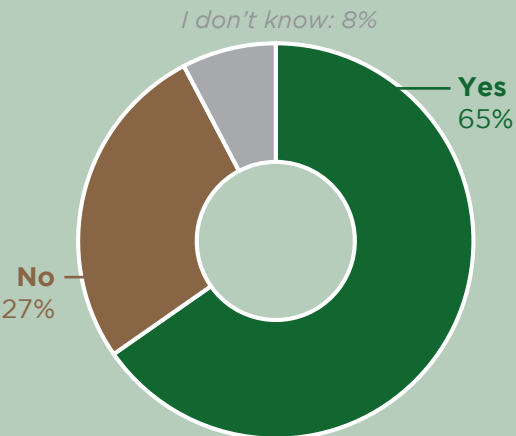
Why is understanding the status of the ranger profession important?

Rangers protect ecosystems vital for biodiversity, climate, and human health. They also preserve cultural and natural heritage, boosting tourism and local economies. Understanding the status of their profession gauges the effectiveness of their efforts, highlights the challenges they face, and reveals areas in need of government and NGO support - such as wages, benefits, and equipment. It also helps shape policies to improve ranger welfare, training, and deployment. By assessing their status stakeholders can better address challenges, enhance support, and ensure long-term success.



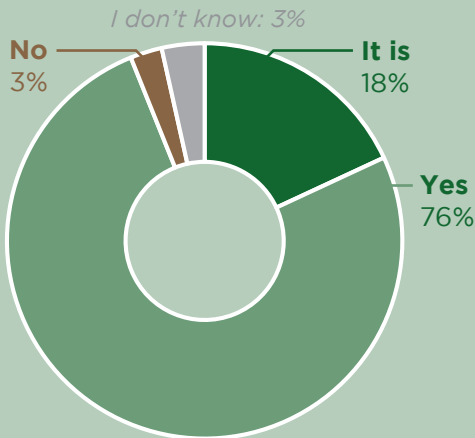
Rangers

Are rangers considered to be workers who provide an essential service* by the general public?

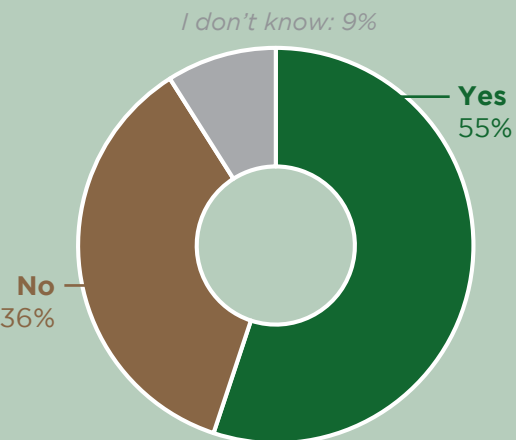


** like nurses, police, firefighters, etc*

Do you think your profession should be considered an essential service?



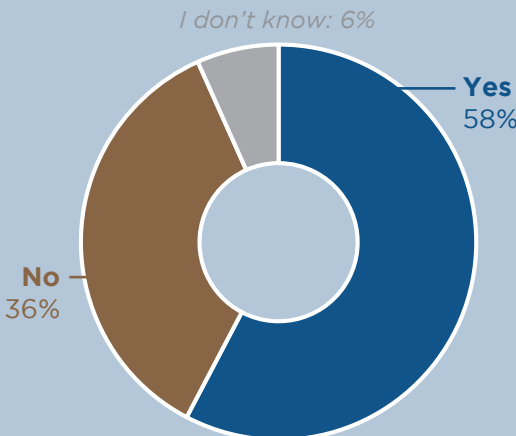
Is there formal education* specifically for rangers in your country?



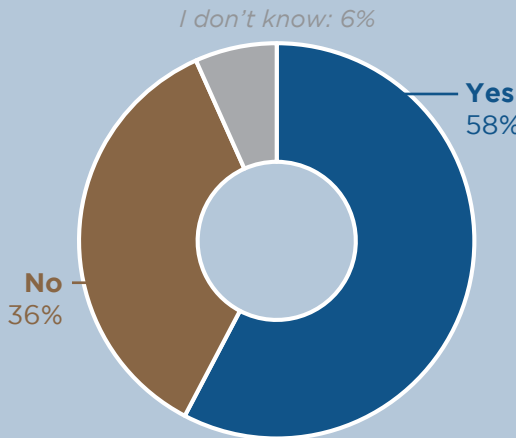
**i.e. by an institution, resulting in a degree/diploma/certificate*

Employers

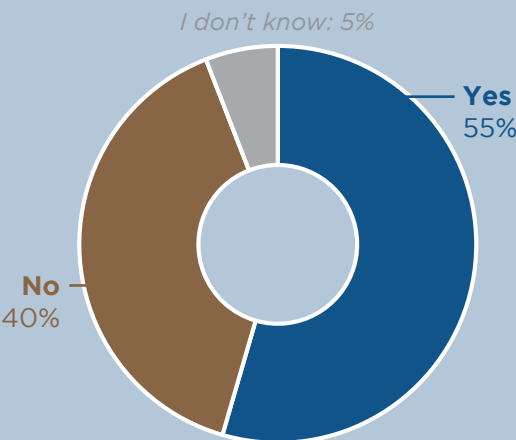
Are rangers an officially recognized profession in your country?



Is the ranger recognized as an essential service in your country?



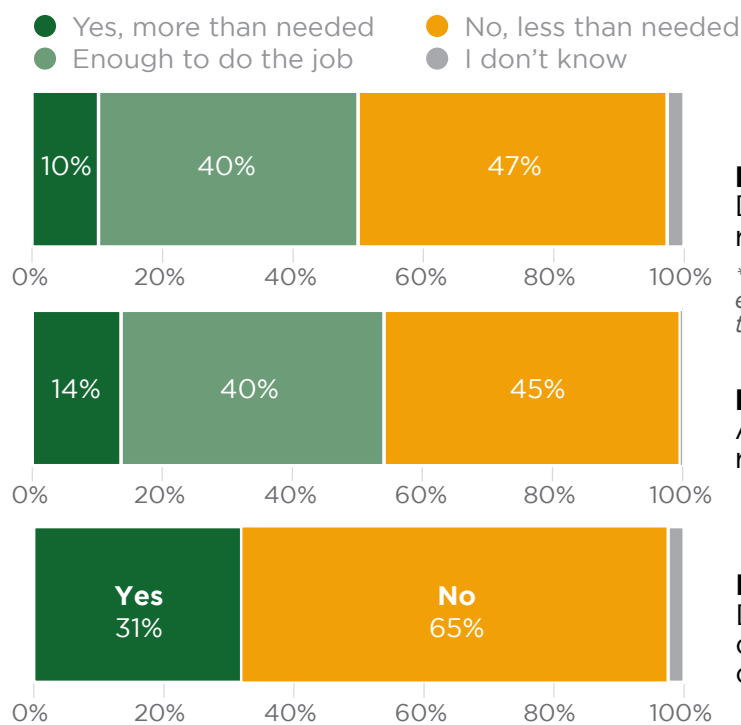
Is there formal education specifically for rangers in your country?



Conditions

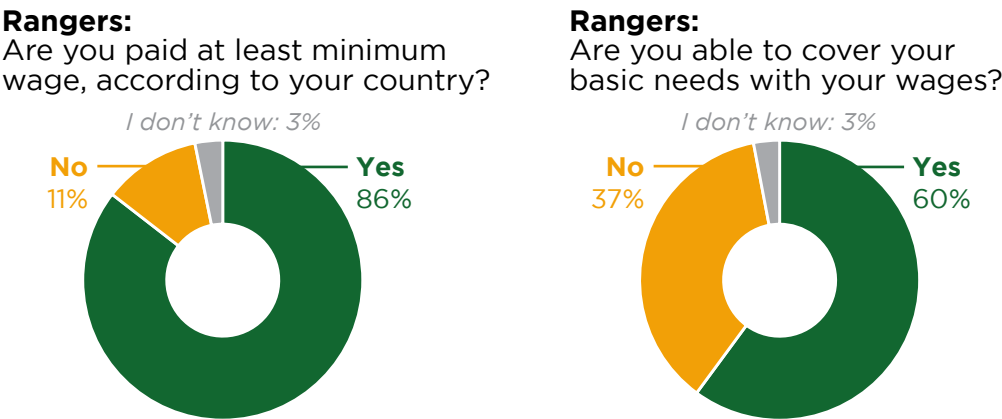
RESOURCES

Both rangers and employers were asked whether rangers, overall, have the right resources to perform their day-to-day activities (i.e., personnel, operations, training, equipment, facilities, information, technology, leadership, and budget). Half of all rangers say they have at least enough resources to complete their job, but 47% believe they have less than needed. These results effectively mirror the responses provided by employers, with 54% believing rangers have enough resources and 45% suggesting that rangers have less than needed. Notably, 65% of employers believe the number of rangers operating their area(s) is not adequate to carry out the responsibilities/tasks assigned.



WAGES

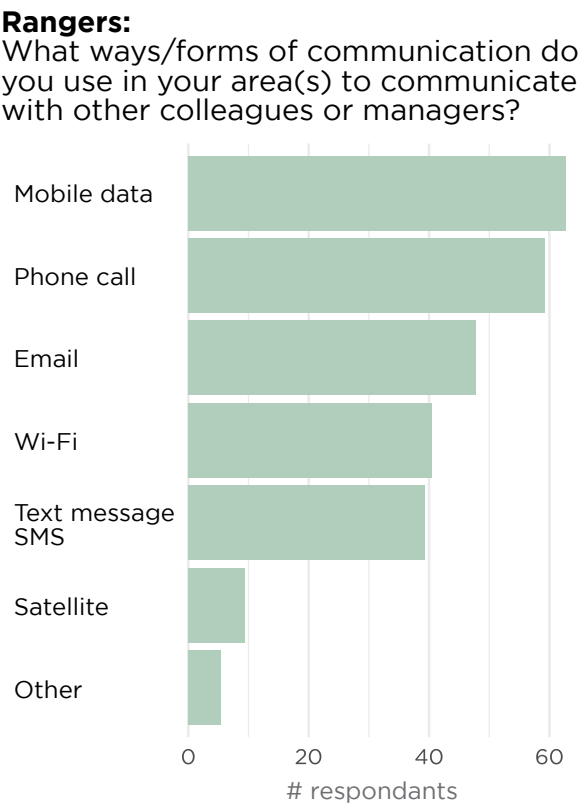
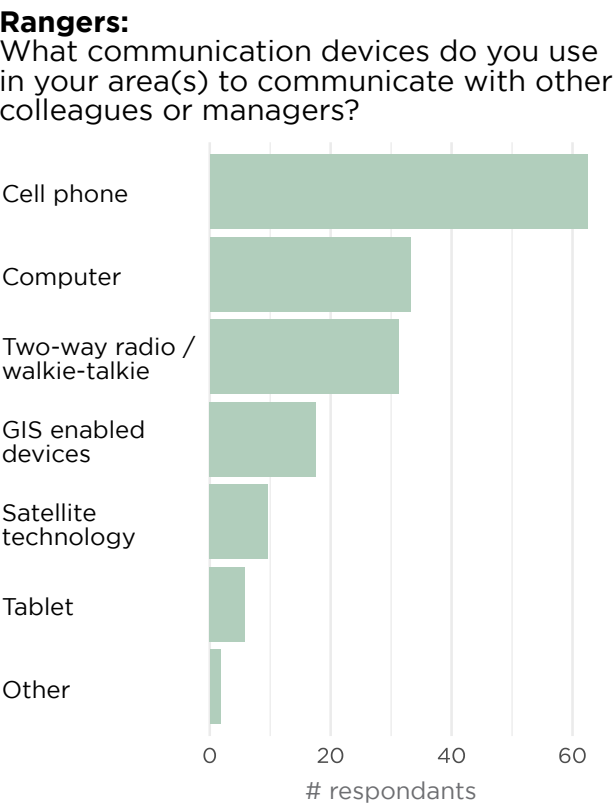
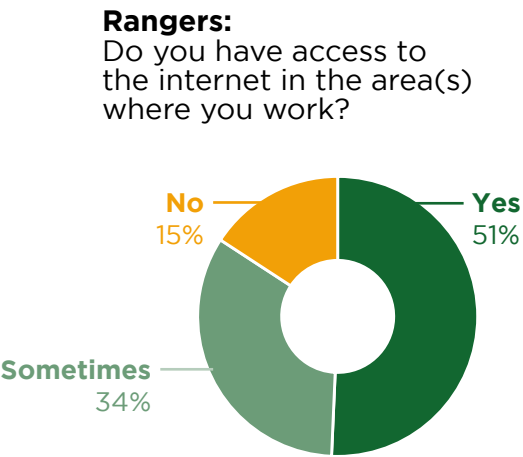
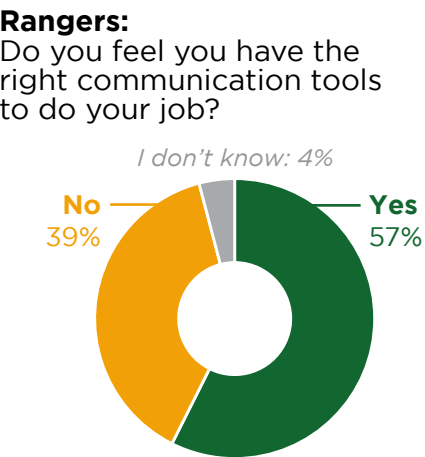
Over 85% of rangers affirmed that they are paid at least minimum wage, according to the country they work in. However 37% believe their wages are insufficient to cover their basic needs.



COMMUNICATION

Effective communication and access to communication devices is paramount for the ranger profession. 39% of rangers do not feel they have the right communication tools. Over 60% use a cell phone, and around 30% use a computer (fixed or portable) or a two-way radio/walkie talkie, respectively, to communicate with other rangers or managers.

Most rangers said that mobile data (63%) and phone calls (59%) are their main way to communicate with other rangers and managers. Just under 50% selected email, just over 40% selected Wi-Fi, while just under 40% selected text messages/SMS. Only half (51%) of ranger respondents said they have reliable access to the internet at their workplace.

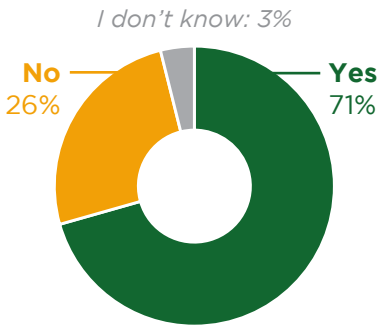


PERFORMANCE & ADVANCEMENT

Performance evaluation is an important element in assessing employees and assists in informing managerial decision-making, including for promotions. Over 70% of employers stated that there is an assessment process in place to evaluate ranger performance. Additionally, it appears that such performance assessments are being used, as over 85% of ranger respondents have had their performance evaluated.

Employers:

Is there an assessment process in place to evaluate ranger performance?



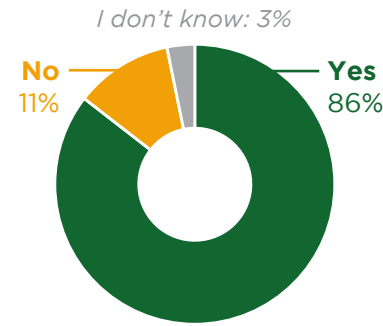
The potential for career advancement and professional development is recognized to be an influential element in employee morale and retention. When asked what kind of career growth opportunities were available, only 50% of rangers selected increased salary, 46% selected promotion to a better position, and 44% selected specialized or additional training.

Why is understanding the opportunities for promotion important?

The ability to advance and be promoted has been identified as a key factor in increasing ranger job satisfaction. Conversely, the lack of such opportunities results in increased job stress in rangers.

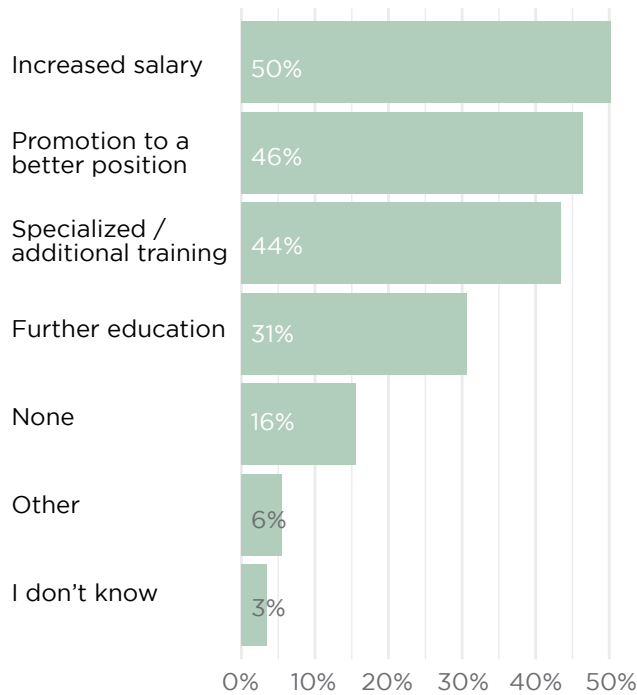
Rangers:

Have you done an assessment to evaluate your performance as a ranger?



Rangers:

What kind of opportunities for career growth do you have?

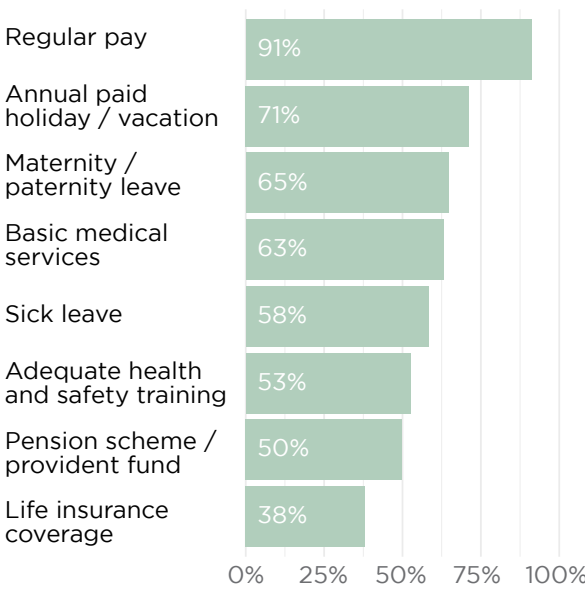


BENEFITS & PROVISIONS

Both rangers and employers were asked what type of benefits were provided to ranger employees. Comparing responses from rangers and employers suggests a high level of consistency for most of the benefits, particularly for regular pay, life insurance coverage, and annual paid holidays/vacations. There were, however, some differences in how rangers and employers viewed sick leave benefits.

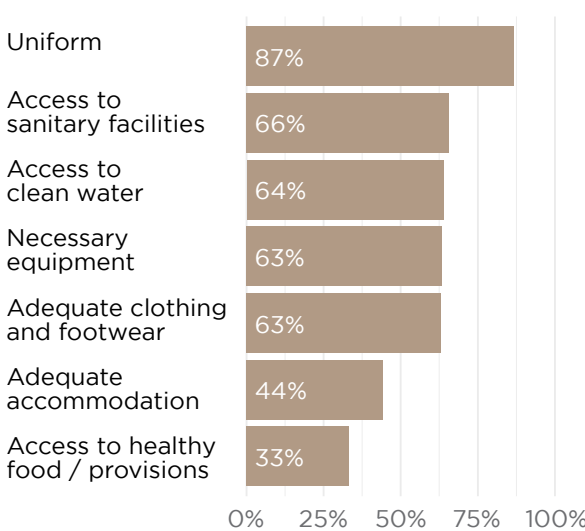
Rangers:

Does your employer provide any of the following benefits?



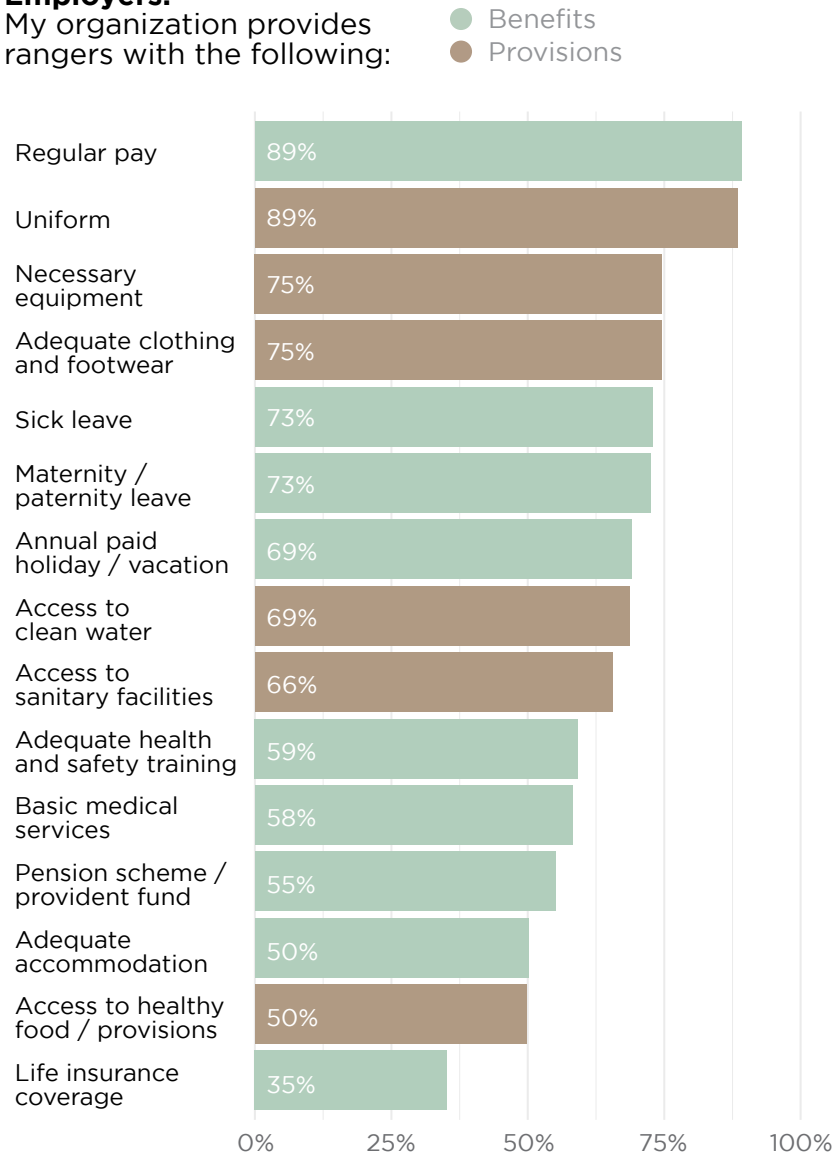
Rangers:

Does your employer provide any of the following provisions?



Employers:

My organization provides rangers with the following:



On provisions, there was consistency in terms of uniform, access to sanitary facilities, and access to clean water. Employers reported substantially higher percentages for several, including adequate clothing and footwear, necessary equipment, and access to healthy food and provisions.

A note on insurance

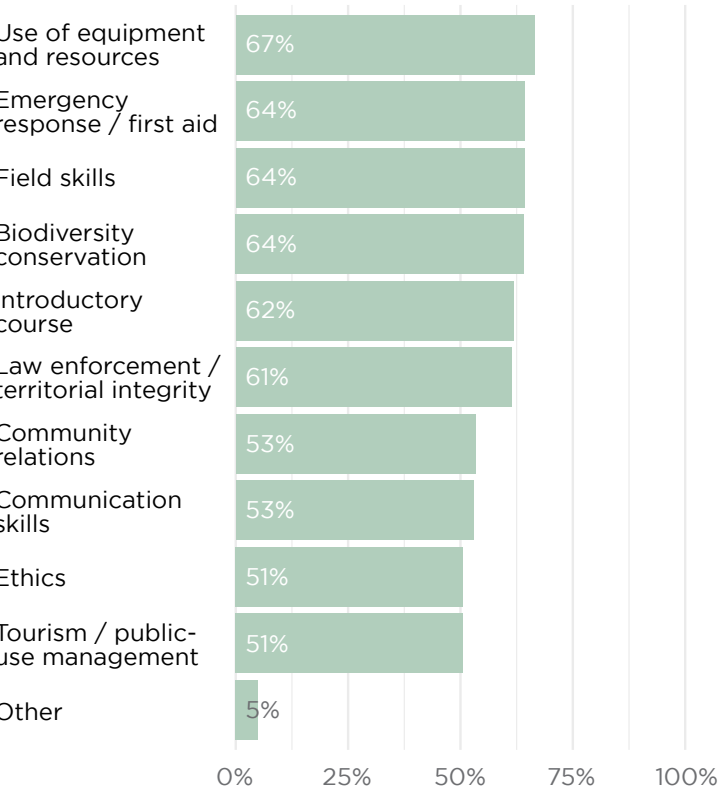
Prior research has highlighted the lack of insurance coverage, particularly in Africa and Asia. These findings are consistent, suggesting rangers have limited access to both health and life insurance.

Competencies

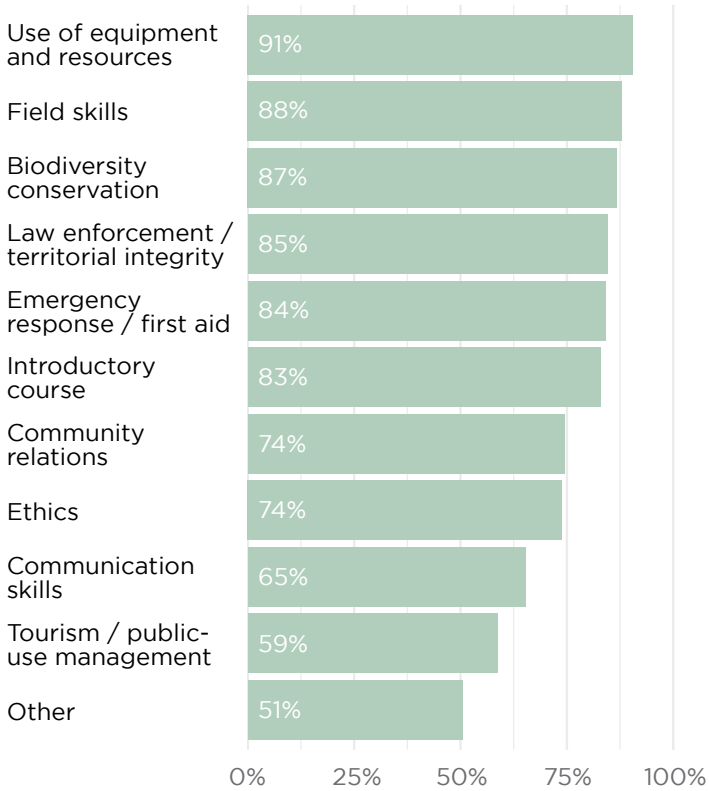
TRAINING

Adequate and regular training is essential for rangers to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Employers were asked what kind of field training they provide, as well as additional refresher training. Employers reported they provide several training opportunities, including an introductory course, emergency response/first aid, law enforcement, use of equipment and resources, and field skills. However, a considerably lower proportion of rangers reported receiving these same training opportunities. For example, while 83% of employers said they offered an introductory training course, only 62% of rangers said they have received one.

Rangers:
What kind of field training have you received, at least once?



Employers:
What kind of field training have you provided to the rangers in your area(s), at least once?

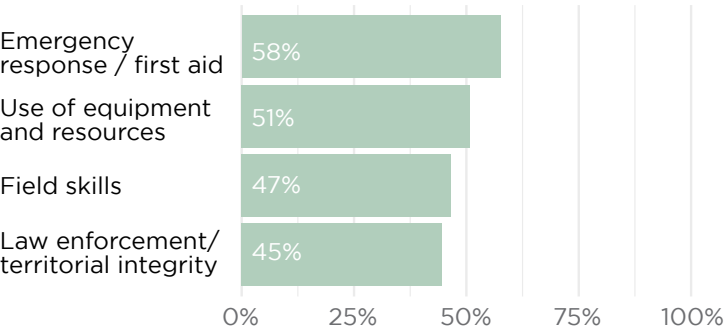


A note on communication

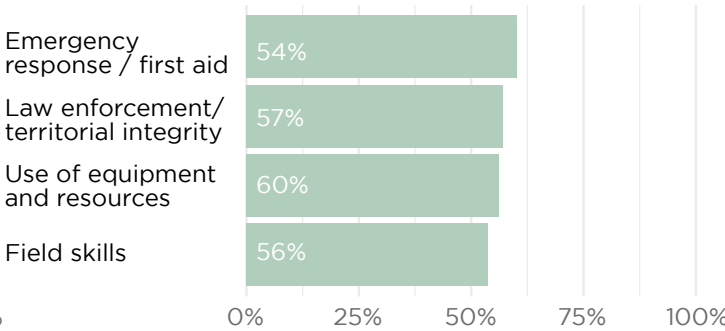
Just over half of the rangers in this study received communication skills training. The importance of effective communication should not be understated, especially since prior research has recognized its importance in the ranger profession.

When asked if refresher training is offered, just over half of employers stated that rangers received additional training. A higher percentage of employers said they offered refresher training than rangers said they received it on all topics except emergency response/first aid. Regarding the number of training days within the last 24 months, 23% of rangers did not receive training while 27% received less than a week. Notably, one in four rangers (23%) of rangers had not received any type of training within the last 24 months.

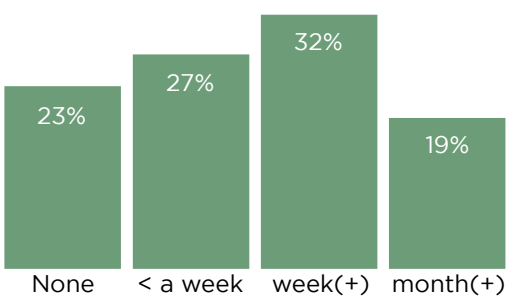
Rangers:
Have you received refresher training on any of the following?



Employers:
Have you provided refresher training to rangers on any of the following?



Rangers:
How many days of field training have you had within the last 24 months?

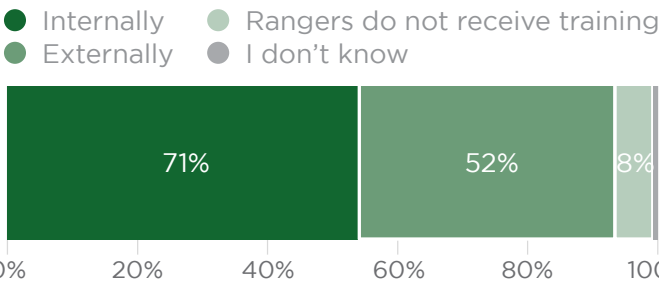


Further reading: preceptions on training

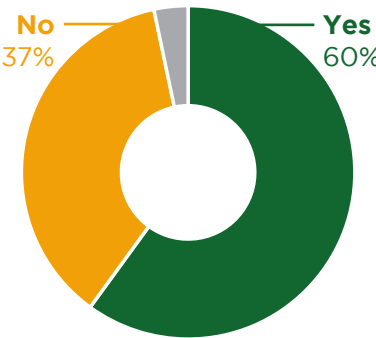
Assessing perceptions of training by ground-level personnel is key to understanding if such training is viewed as helpful. Researchers have examined ranger perceptions towards types of technology, tools, and strategies. This has been informative in understanding the adoption, implementation, and perceived value of technology, tools, and strategies.

When rangers were asked whether they had completed an assessment to identify their training needs, 60% responded that they had. Employers were asked the status of trainers in their area(s). Most have both internal trainers (71%), as well as external trainers (52%), and most trainers (64%) are formally accredited.

Employers:
Who trains the rangers in your area(s)?



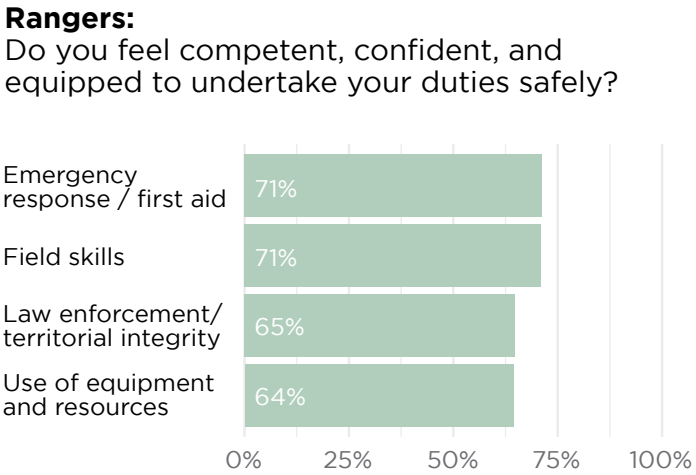
Rangers:
Have you done an assessment to identify your training needs?
I don't know: 3%



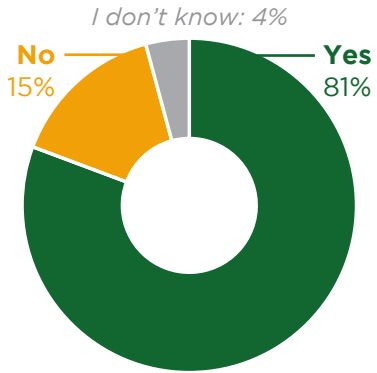
COMPETENCY

It is likely that training and competency are related to one another. Fortunately, it appears the training that rangers receive assists their ability to complete their duties. Most respondents agreed they feel competent, confident, and equipped to undertake their duties related to emergency response/first aid (71%), law enforcement/territorial integrity (65%), use of equipment and resources (64%), and field skills/field craft (71%). This is also supported by the fact that about 80% of employer and ranger respondents believe rangers are adequately trained for their duties. Despite this, rangers reported they feel more training is needed in all aspects of their profession.

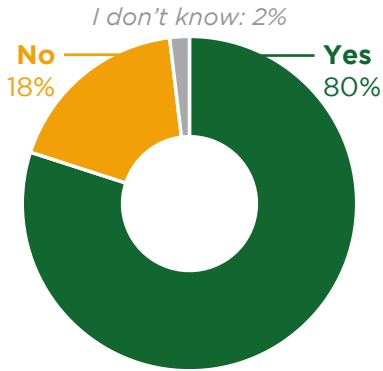
“Inside protected areas people think the ranger must solve everything since it’s the only authority they see. It’s important to train rangers in what their responsibilities are, and the limits of their position.”
- Anonymous Ranger



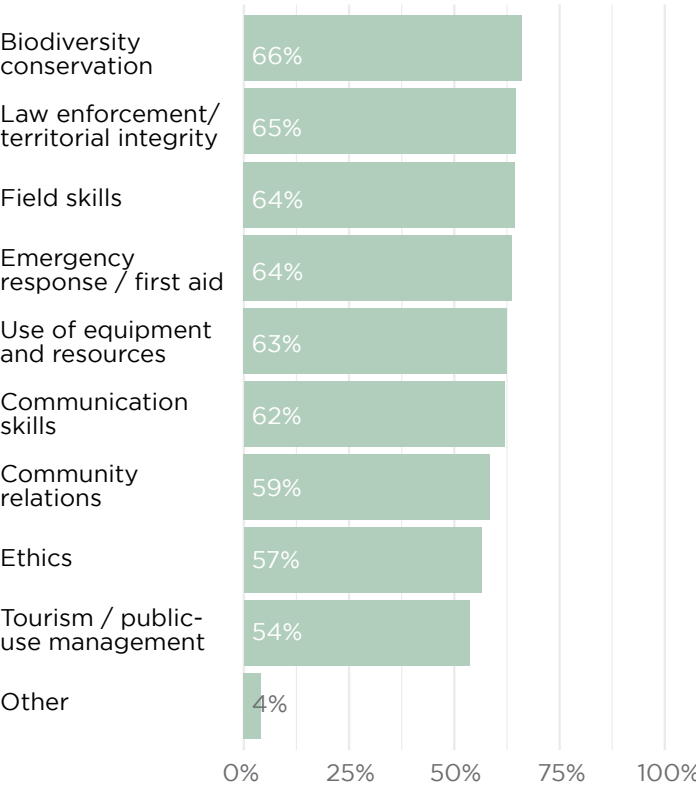
Rangers:
Do you feel you are adequately trained to perform your day-to-day activities?



Employers:
Are rangers adequately trained for the duties they are assigned?



Rangers:
Do you feel you need more field training in any of the following?



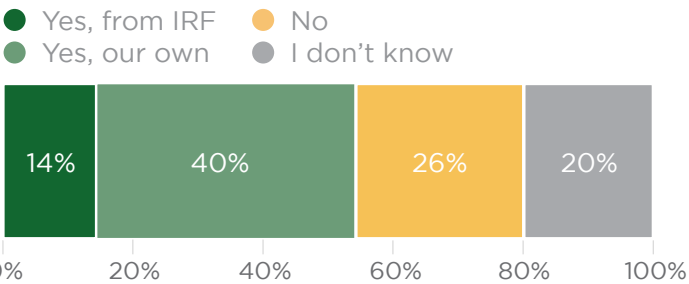
“Communication skills are very important: storytelling, junior ranger programs, conflict management, community engagement and image building. If no one realizes what we are doing it is complicated for us to evolve as rangers. We need strong communications skills, not only for communities and stakeholders but to promote our job within society.”
- Ranger, Spain



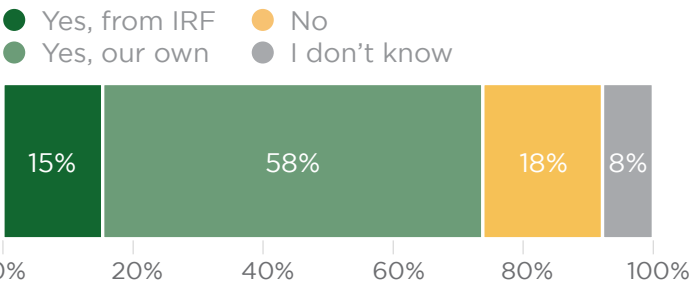
Conduct

There has been increased attention placed on establishing a code of conduct for rangers. Both rangers and employers were asked whether their organization had adopted and implemented (or is in the process of doing so) a code of conduct for rangers. While there was consistency on whether the IRF’s Code of Conduct had been adopted, there were differences on whether their own organization’s version had been adopted/implemented with 40% of rangers choosing “Yes” compared to nearly 60% of employers.

Rangers:
Has your organization adopted and implemented (or is it in the process of doing so) a code of conduct for rangers?



Employers:
Has the organization adopted and implemented (or is in process of doing so) a code of conduct for rangers?



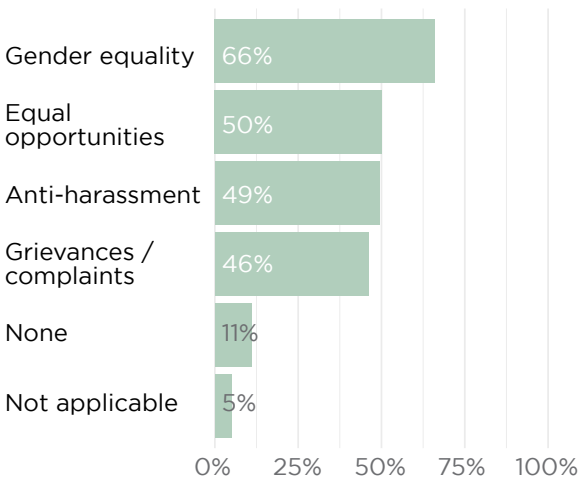
Why is having a code of conduct important?

During the 2019 World Ranger Congress, much discussion centered on how to best professionalize rangers. The establishment of a clearly defined Code of Conduct was one avenue that was identified as a way forward.

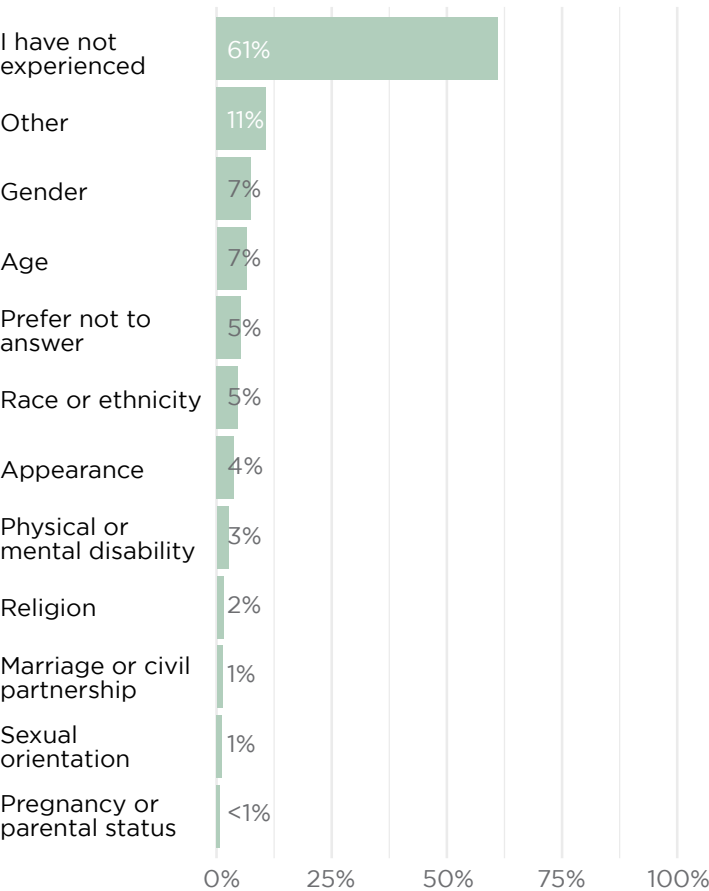
Relatedly, both rangers and employers were asked if they were aware of policies or procedures to help create equal opportunities for all employees and prevent discrimination. Responses were largely similar, although rangers appeared to be more informed of the existence of policies and procedures compared to employers.

Rangers were also asked if they themselves had experienced any discrimination, harassment, or violence within the last 24 months. Most respondents (61%) stated that they had not experienced any form of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Of those that had experienced such incidents, they were believed to be due to several factors, including gender (7%), age (7%), and race or ethnicity (5%). Over 10% of respondents noted “Other” in their response, while another 5% preferred to not answer.

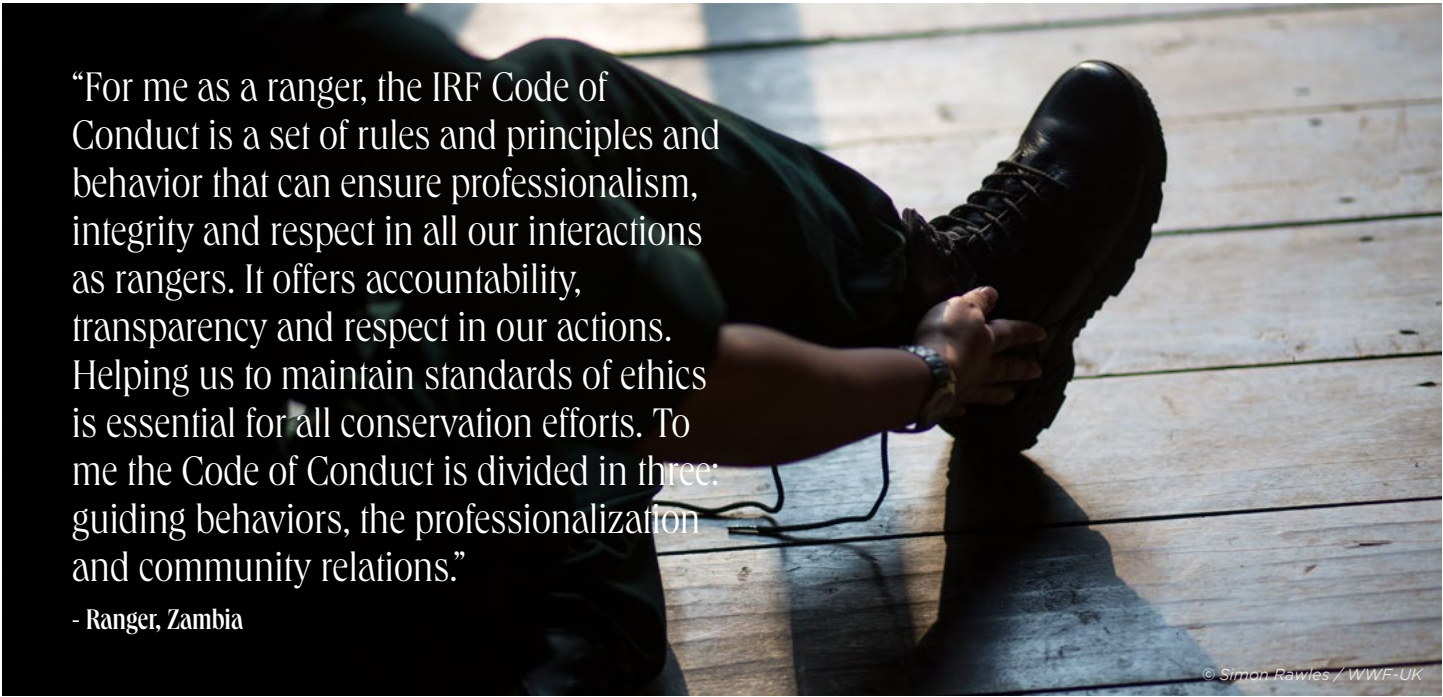
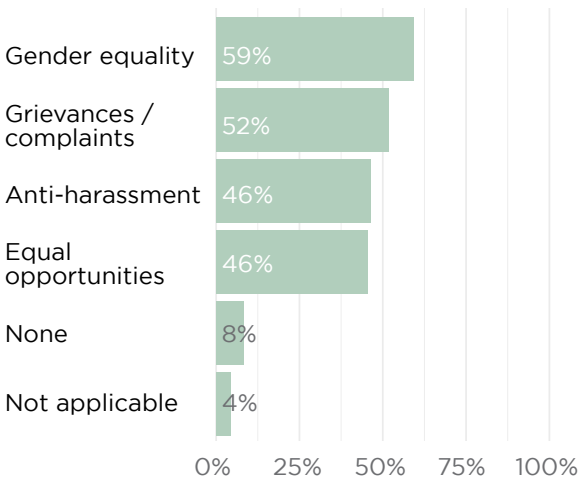
Rangers:
Are you aware of policies or procedures within your area of work to help create equal opportunities for all employees and prevent discrimination?



Rangers:
In the last 24 months, have you experienced any discrimination, harassment or violence at your workplace, based on the following:



Employers:
Are there policies or procedures within your area(s) to help create equal opportunities for all employees and prevent discrimination?



Inclusivity

GENDER

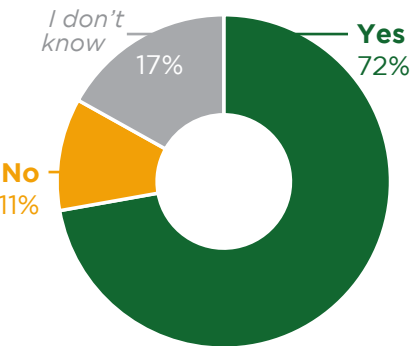
To date, the ranger profession is largely comprised of male professionals, with approximately 3-11% estimated to be female. This has been acknowledged in the academic literature and is reinforced in the current study. As a reminder, almost 80% of ranger participants are male in this study. This discrepancy is further reinforced by the findings. When asked what percentage of rangers working in their area(s) were female, one in four employers (24%) stated “None”, while just over 30% put the figure at 5%. About a quarter of employers had 5-20% female ranger employees.

Further reading: gender and rangers

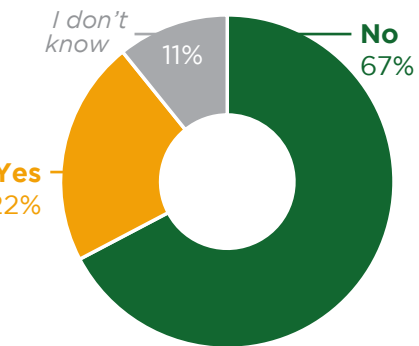
Most of the ranger research has not explicitly explored the gendered nature of the profession. There are, however, some exceptions. For example, [Seager \(2021\)](#) provided a scoping examination of ranger gender equality while [Elligson and colleagues \(2023\)](#) explored the perceptions of [female rangers in Latin America](#).

To further examine the role of gender in the ranger profession, female respondents were asked whether they were paid the same wages as their male counterparts. About 70% of female respondents believed they were paid the same. Additionally, when asked whether they believed that they had been unfairly excluded from specific roles because of their gender, two-thirds (67%) did not believe so. Finally, when asked whether they felt that on-site measures were taken to ensure their safety while doing their job, 62% agreed.

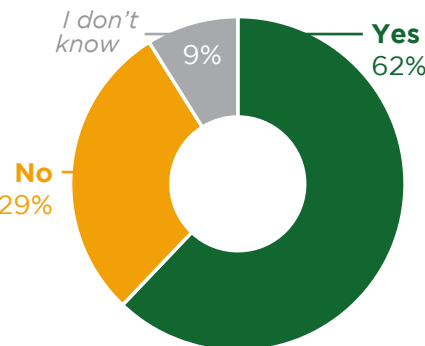
Rangers:
Are you paid the same wages as your male counterparts?



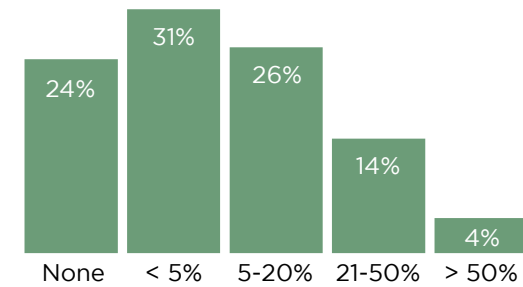
Rangers:
Are you unfairly excluded from roles based on gender?



Rangers:
Are on-site measures taken to ensure your safety?



Employers: 34
What percentage of rangers working in your area(s) are female?



“Few women apply as rangers, but they are not chosen, sometimes they do not even have the opportunity to meet female colleagues in the field because of the thought that she is a woman, she is getting married, she is going to leave or because she is leaving her comfort zone. This makes me feel uncomfortable as president of an association. We have been working on this issue”

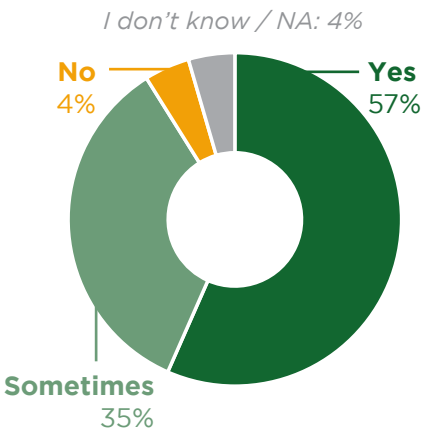
- Ranger, Ecuador



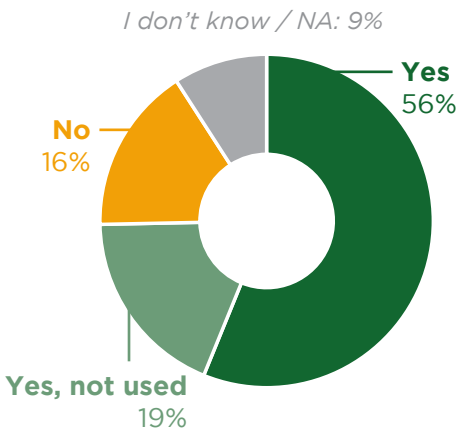
COMMUNITIES

Interacting with the local community has been an important topic surrounding the ranger profession. The complexity and importance of such interactions warrant close inspection. Most rangers (57%) felt that they have reciprocal communication/opportunity to interact or engage with surrounding communities. When asked whether they were aware of a formal mechanism in place to facilitate interaction, such as an advisory council, most (56%) said “Yes”. Notably, one in five rangers (19%) said that such a mechanism exists but is not used. Similarly, while 46% of rangers affirmed that there is a formal mechanism for communities to provide feedback on ranger activities, 15% said such mechanisms exist but are not used. Responses from employers largely echoed these results.

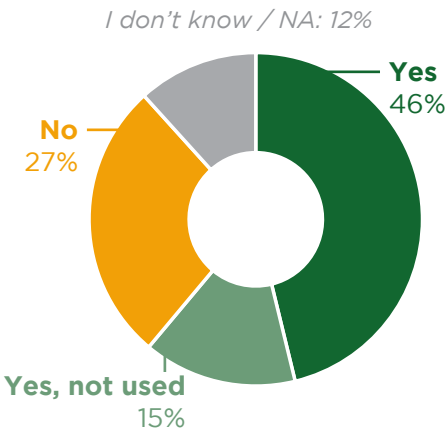
Rangers:
Do you feel you have reciprocal communication or opportunity to interact / engage with surrounding communities?



Rangers:
Are you aware of a formal mechanism in place to facilitate interaction with surrounding communities?



Rangers:
Are you aware of a formal mechanism in place for communities to provide feedback on ranger activities?

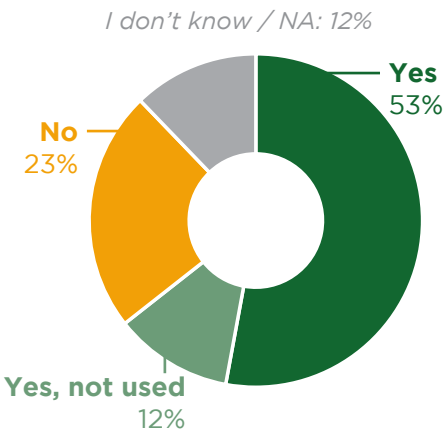


“The local communities are our allies, and we work closely with them.”
- Ranger, Ecuador

A note on community-ranger relations

Prior research shows the importance of developing strong community-ranger relations, especially in areas with Indigenous Peoples. Community interaction varies significantly, and can range from providing information about local fauna and flora to arresting trespassers or illegal hunters. *Life on the Frontline* found that over 80% of participants believed part of their success was dependent on communities providing information.

Employers:
Is there is formal mechanism(s) in place for communities to provide feedback on ranger activities?



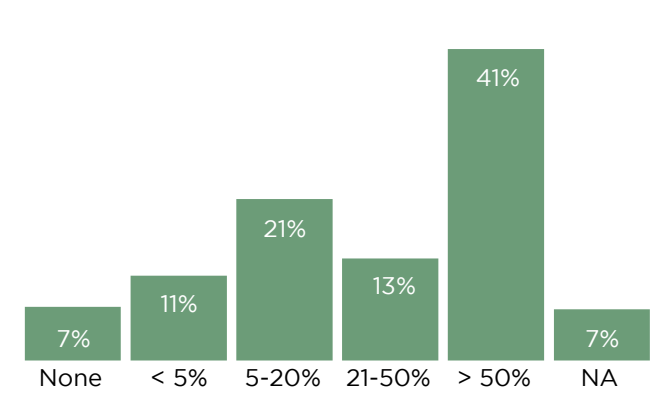
With more than 90% of rangers saying they engage with communities at least some of the time, community interaction is a central part of a ranger’s profession. Rangers were also asked about whether they received basic training or an overview of the needs, lifestyle, priorities, or culture of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. It is important to note, however, that only 3.5% of respondents stated they did not interact with communities as part of their job.



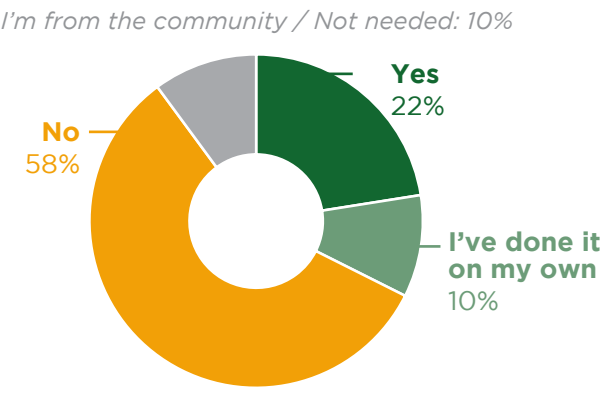
“We did not come to this world; we came from it. We have the knowledge on how to live on these landscapes. We don’t see country and nature as the other. That is a shared value we have. See us for what we are, see our relationship with country and do it in a respectful way.”
- Indigenous Ranger, Australia

Most rangers (58%) reported they do not receive any training/overview, suggesting a potential area that requires attention. Interestingly, when asked what percentage of rangers working in their local area(s) are Indigenous or community rangers, 41% of employers stated over half. This suggests that while organizations may be hiring more Indigenous or community rangers, their attention to formally training rangers to better understand Indigenous Peoples and local communities may be limited.

Rangers:
What percentage of rangers working in your local area(s) are Indigenous Peoples and/or from local communities?



Rangers:
Have you received basic training or an overview on the needs, lifestyle, priorities, or culture of Indigenous Peoples and local communities?

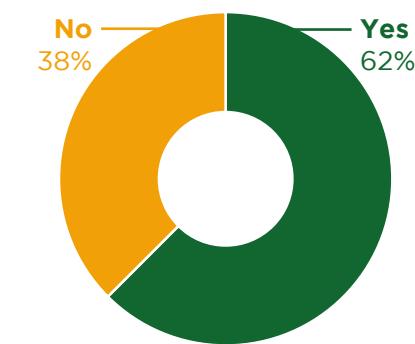


Ranger Associations

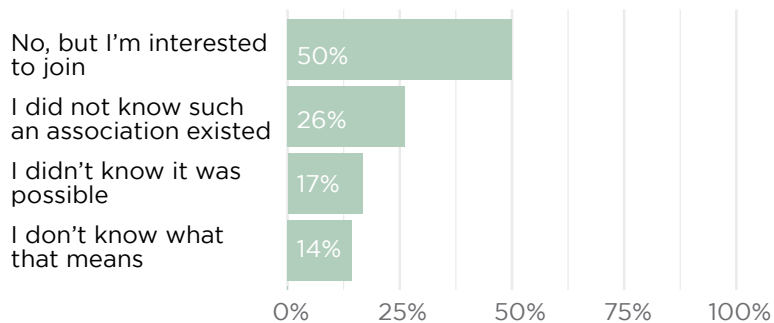
The role of ranger associations has received increasing attention. Both rangers and employers were asked about membership, as well as the potential benefits of joining an association. Over 60% of rangers responded that they are members of an international, regional or national association.

The reported rationale for joining an association varied, but the most selected reasons were wanting to be a part of a community of rangers (43%), interacting and engaging with other rangers (41%), because associations promote an appreciation for conservation (35%), and wanting to attend events (e.g., conferences, annual meetings) (31%). When asked what benefits they receive, the most selected reasons were being a part of a community of rangers (40%), interacting and engaging with other rangers (35%), attending events (e.g., conferences, annual meetings) (24%), and a greater appreciation for conservation (25%). These findings are encouraging as it appears that rangers are receiving what they expect to receive when they join an association.

Rangers:
Are you a member of a ranger association (international, regional or national)?

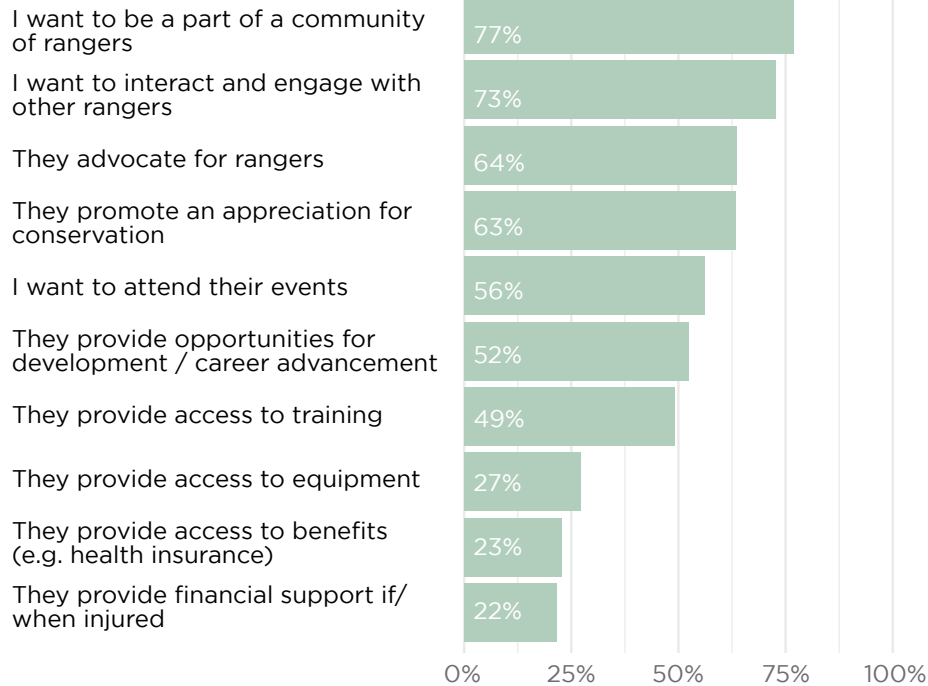


Rangers:
Why haven't you joined an association?
for 'No' responses



'I have not received any benefits' and 'other': <1%

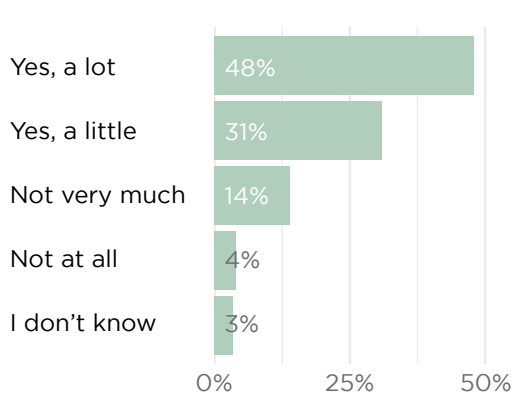
Rangers:
Why did you join a ranger association?
for 'Yes' responses



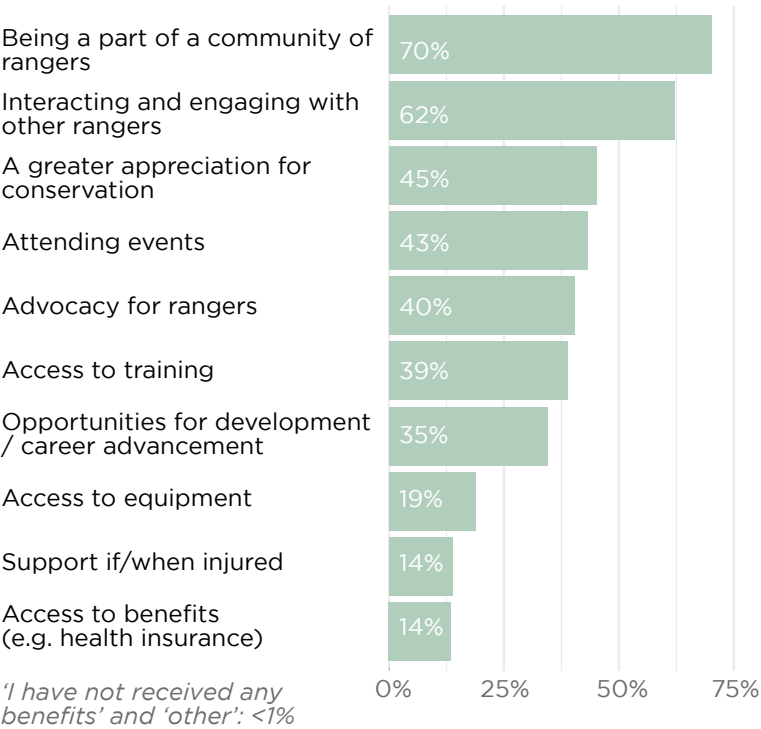
“I recognized the profession could get lonely. I thought it was important to create a community”
- Anonymous Ranger

When asked whether they feel their ranger association positively impacts their profession, an overwhelming majority of rangers believe their association has a positive impact. Interestingly, for rangers that are not members of an association, half of the respondents are interested in joining one. About a quarter said they did not know that such associations exist and another 17% did not know it was possible for them to join one.

Rangers:
Do you feel your ranger association has positively impacted your profession?



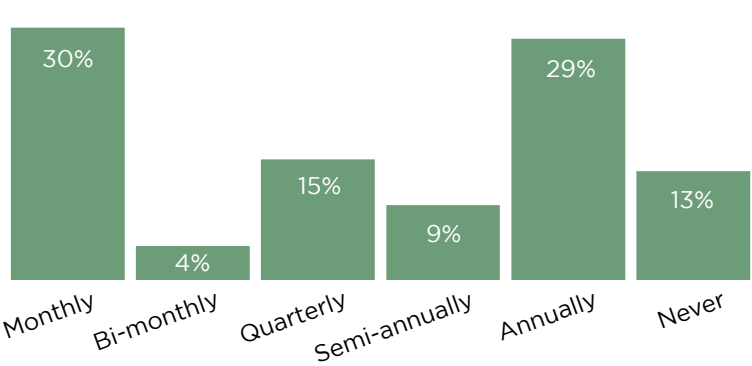
Rangers:
What benefits have you received as a member of a ranger association?



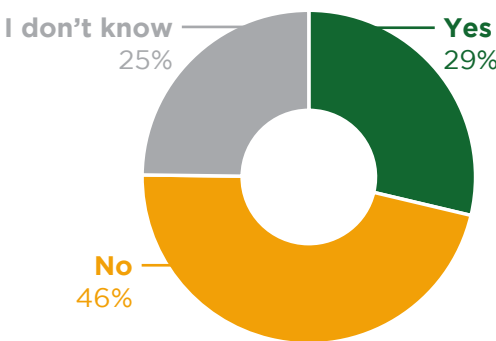
Over
60%
of rangers are part of an association

Employers were also asked about ranger associations. Those that have a national ranger association were further asked how often the association communicates with their organization. About 30% of employers stated that monthly and annual communication occurs. For those that do not have a national ranger association, employers were asked whether rangers participate in a regional or global association, like IRF. Just under 30% of employers reported they believe rangers are involved in a regional or global association.

Employers:
How often does the national ranger association communicate with your organization?



Employers:
Do rangers participate in regional or global associations (e.g. IRF)?



“We are feeling the climate change in our protected areas and everywhere, the frequency and severity of natural disasters. We all have stories we can share on how climate change has affected our lives, and this has a snowball effect and social issues and funding that come with these challenges. The intensity and frequency are the big issues. Mental health issues that come with that too. Rangers are burned out. We do not have enough as it is, we need more.”

- Ranger, Australia



Recommendations

We call on all stakeholders to take action to professionalize, recognize and resource the ranger workforce, and support rangers to perform their critical role and fulfill increasing global expectations.

Governments and Policymakers:

- Recognize rangers as essential planetary health workers and their crucial role in the achievement of global commitments on biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, prevention of zoonotic diseases and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Promote recognition of the ranger profession by the International Labour Organization.
- Enable the conditions and provide opportunities for rangers to become involved in shared governance in the decision-making of area-based conservation.
- Allocate resources to increase the number of rangers in an inclusive manner, recognizing the role of Indigenous and community rangers, promoting gender balance, and acknowledging the diversity of skills needed to deliver better results on the ground.
- Support protected area agencies and organizations who employ or work with rangers to professionalize their workforce, making them more inclusive, accountable and appropriately trained.

Employers:

- Ensure adequate and regular training to help rangers carry out their responsibilities and include periodical performance evaluations and feedback mechanisms.
- Ensure rangers have appropriate safeguards and policies to deliver their responsibilities.
- Empower, motivate, and enable rangers to maintain a balance between work and home life through provision of fair working conditions, including adequate leave,

reduced physical and mental stress, and hiring of adequate numbers of rangers.

- Review and then improve ranger training curricula, with attention to safety and first response training, law enforcement standards, social safeguards, use of equipment, and accountability frameworks. Comprehensive training programs are needed on community relations, observance of rights and communication skills.
- Resource and invest in rangers. Review ranger remuneration and career advancement policies to ensure they are rewarded and remain highly motivated.
- Guarantee access to necessities, including adequate resources, equipment and technology. Ensure access to basic services that can improve health and safety.
- Improve the availability and quality of emergency medical care and reduce response time in delivering qualified medical attention to injured rangers in the field. Provide insurance coverage for serious injury or death to all rangers.
- Use and adapt the available [IRF and URSA resources](#), guidelines and standards to improve welfare and capacity of rangers.
- Collaborate with ranger associations and organizations for improvements on the workforce and better conservation results.

Rangers:

- Establish functional ranger associations and/or strengthen existing ranger associations and organizations to create avenues for a united voice for rangers, connect the global ranger community for knowledge sharing and promoting good practice, and provide effective communication and advisory channels to advocate for policy amendments.

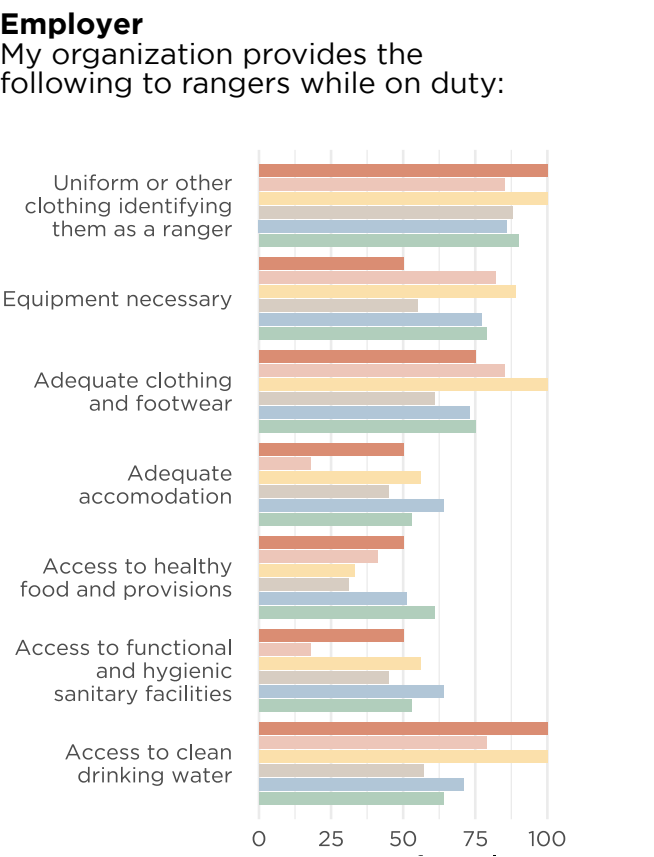
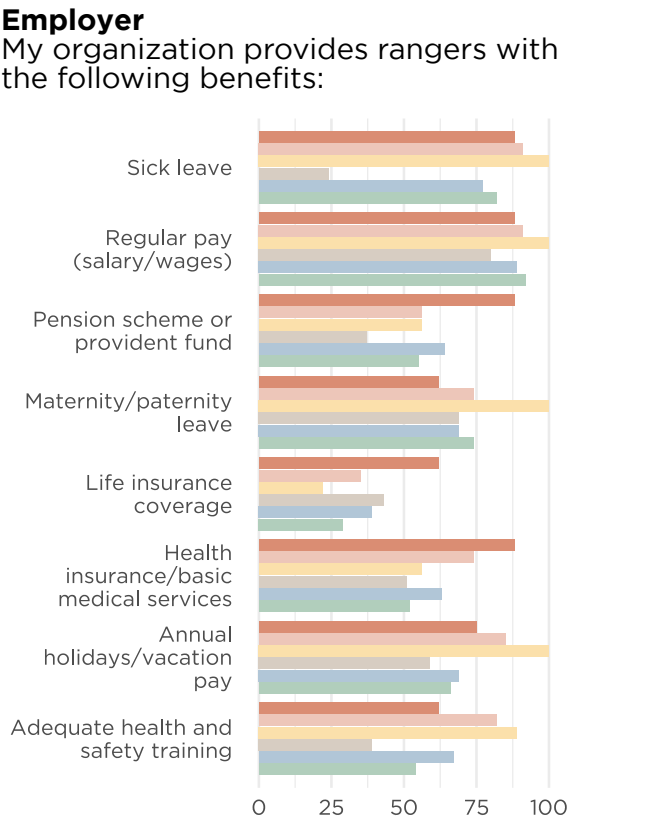
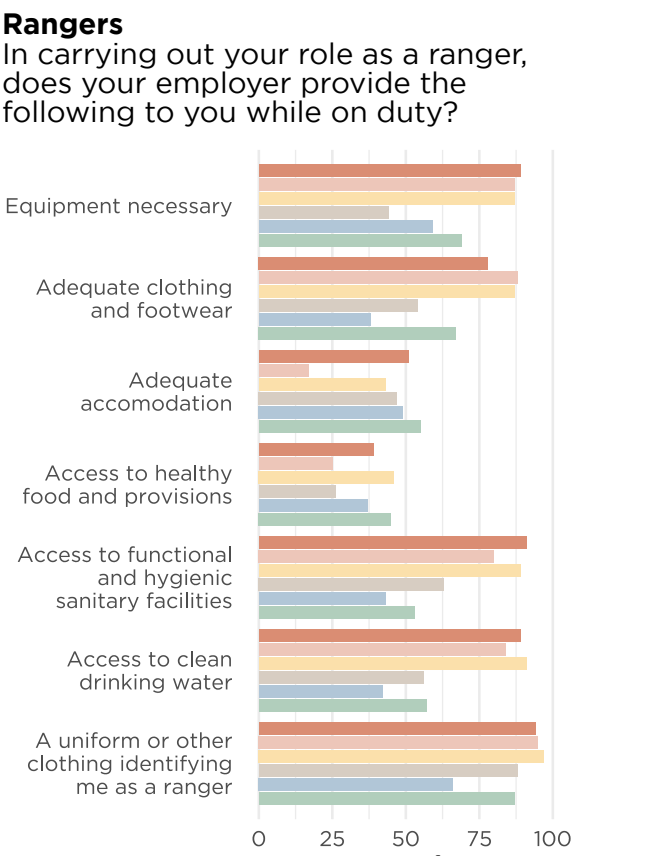
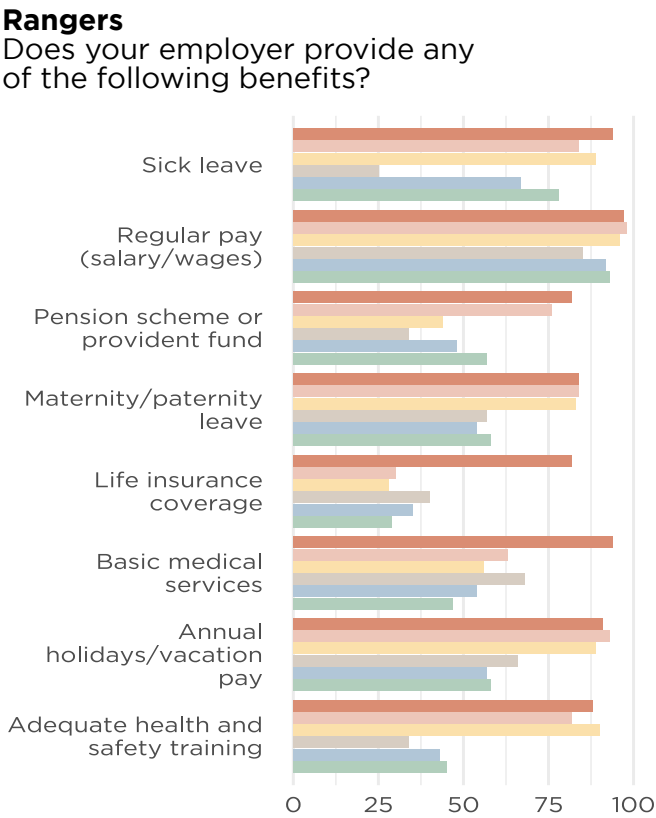
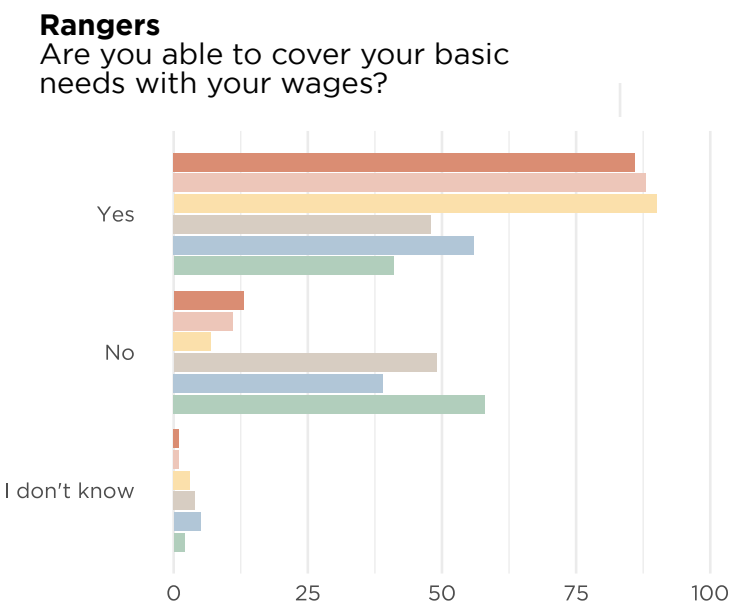
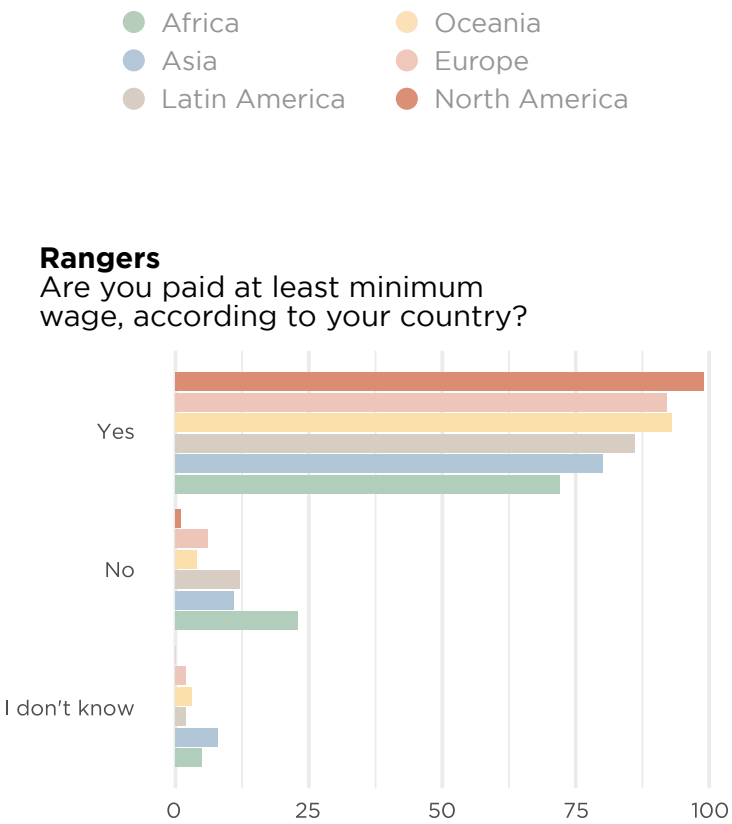
Annex: Regional Breakdown

CONDITIONS

Disaggregating the data by region shows some variation as to whether rangers were paid at least minimum wage, according to their country, with rangers from North America (99%), Oceania (93%), and Europe (92%) with the highest percentages for “Yes”. Africa had the lowest percentage at 72%. Regional variation was also displayed over whether wages were sufficient to cover rangers’ basic needs, with more than 85% in Europe, North America, and Oceania saying they were, while less than 60% agreed in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Examining the reported benefits by region displayed both consistency and variation. For example, in all regions a high percentage reported receiving regular pay (all at or above 85%, with Europe the highest at 98% and Latin America the lowest with 85%). Considerable regional differences, however, were identified for adequate health and safety training, with Europe, North America, and Oceania at 80% and above, whereas Africa, Asia, and Latin America were all below 50%. Such consistency and variation were also displayed in the employer survey.

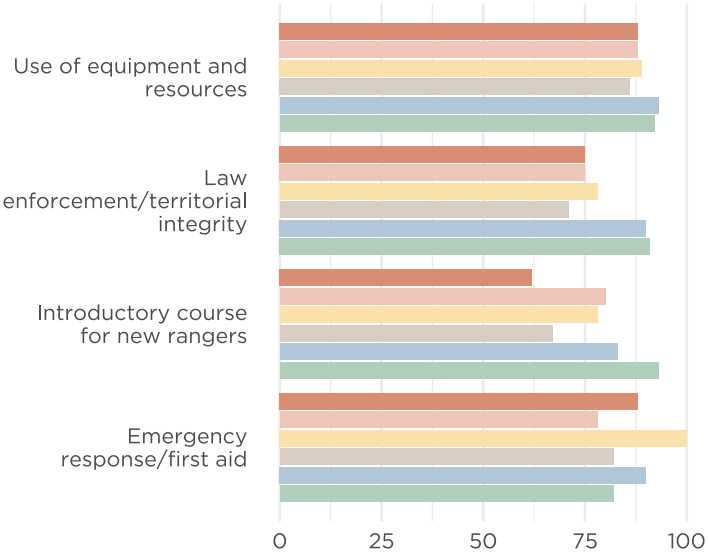
Similar stability and disparity were identified when examining provisions provided while on duty with most regions receiving a uniform or other identifying clothing (Oceania being the highest with 97% and Asia the lowest with 66%). Regional differences were noticeable for receiving adequate clothing and footwear, equipment necessary to perform duties, access to functional and hygienic sanitary facilities, and access to clean drinking water in both the ranger and employer survey.



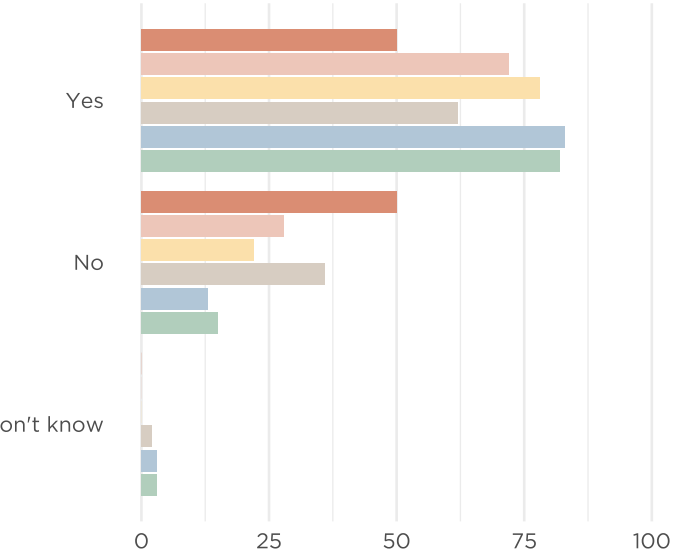
COMPETENCIES

While there was some regional variation related to the type of field training employers provided, in general, most regions were similar in the training opportunities afforded to rangers. More than 80% of ranger employers in Africa and Asia reported having done an assessment of training needs, compared to 50% in North America. The highest proportion of rangers saying they had completed a performance evaluation was in North America at 75%, with Europe the lowest at 45%. When asked whether they felt adequately trained to perform their day-to-day activities, all regions largely agreed, with the lowest being Asia at 73% and Oceania the highest at 92%.

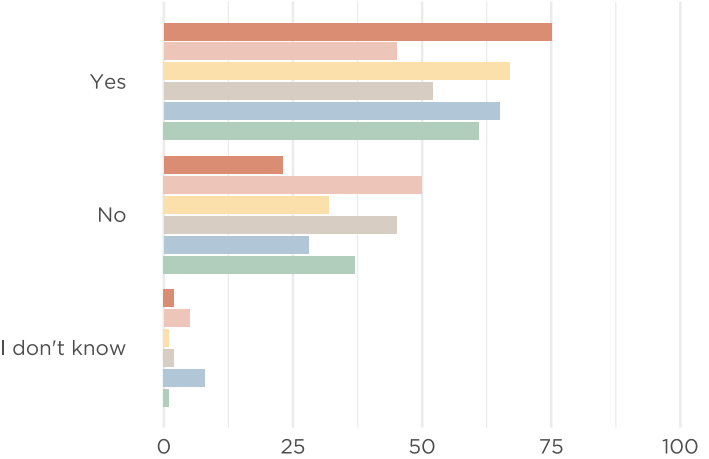
Employers:
What kind of field training have you provided to the rangers in your area(s), at least once?



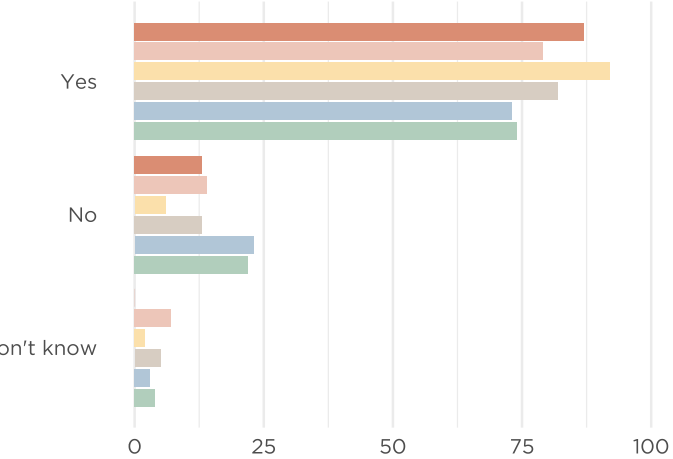
Employers:
Have you done an assessment to identify training needs for rangers?



Rangers:
Have you ever done a performance evaluation?



Rangers:
Do you feel you are adequately trained to perform your day-to-day activities?



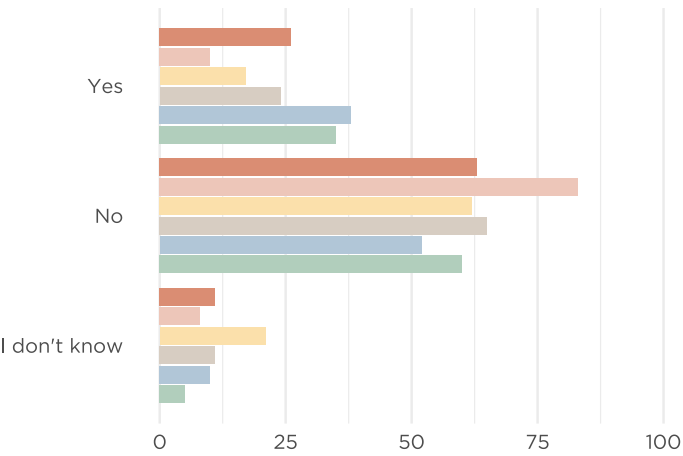
CONDUCT

Regionally, Africa and Asia held the highest percentage reporting the adoption and implementation of a code of conduct, either their own version or IRF's Code of Conduct.

INCLUSIVITY

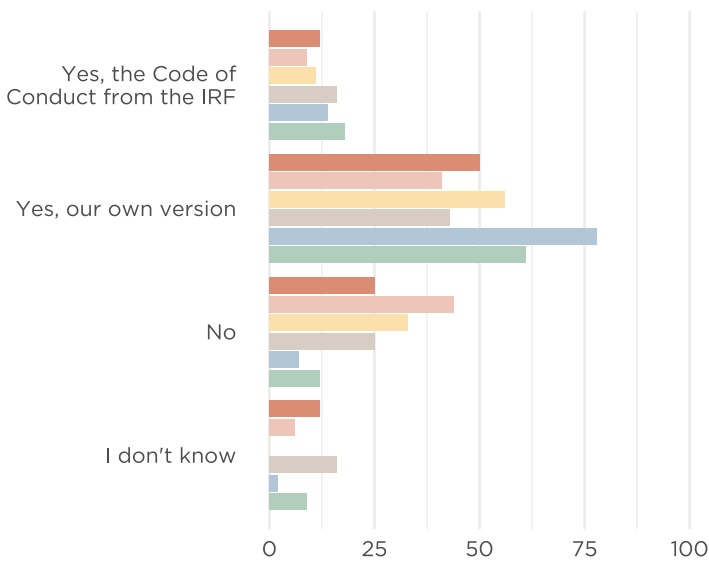
There were some regional differences on gender issues. Over 30% of female respondents from Africa and Asia believed they had been unfairly excluded from performing certain roles based on their gender, compared to 10% in Europe and 17% in Oceania. However, only 63% of female rangers in Europe and 68% in Africa believed they were paid the same as their male colleagues, compared to over 80% in Asia and North America.

Rangers:
Are you unfairly excluded from roles based on gender?

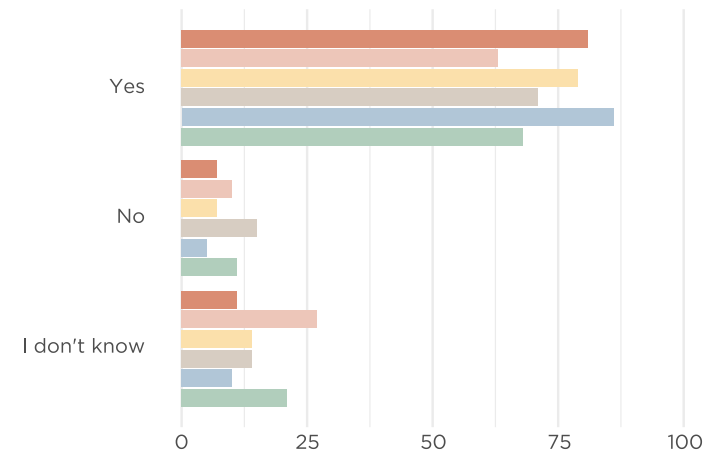


- Africa
- Asia
- Latin America
- Oceania
- Europe
- North America

Employers:
Has the organization adopted and implemented (or is in process of doing so) a code of conduct for rangers?



Rangers:
Are you paid the same wages as your male counterparts?



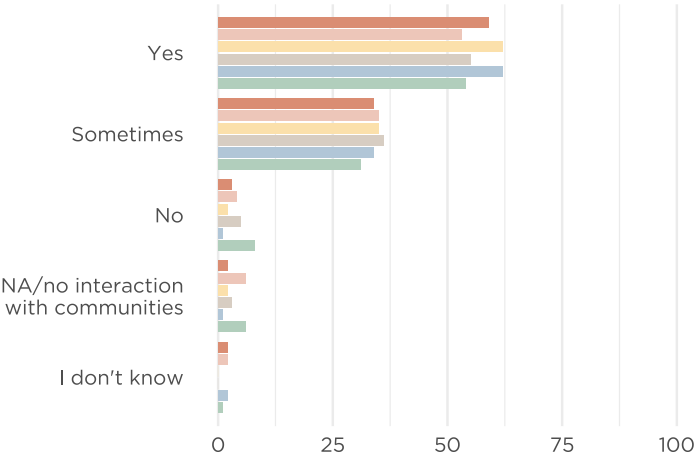
“The term ranger is not limited to certain groups, it is very inclusive for people around the globe who are committed to conservation and protecting nature. Within the ranger workforce there are people from different societies, backgrounds and tribes. We need to include the beliefs and cultures and people, they are a key stakeholder in conservation.”

- Ranger, India

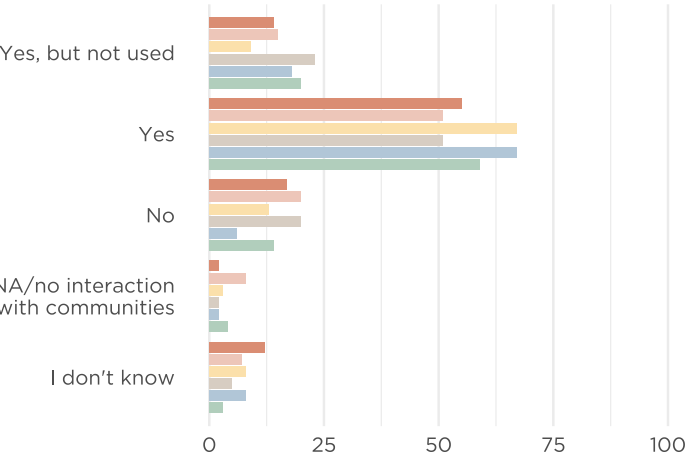
INCLUSIVITY

There appeared to be regional similarities when it came to reciprocal communication/opportunity to interact with surrounding communities, as well as the existence of a formal mechanism to facilitate community-ranger interactions.

Rangers:
Do you feel you have reciprocal communication or opportunity to interact / engage with surrounding communities?



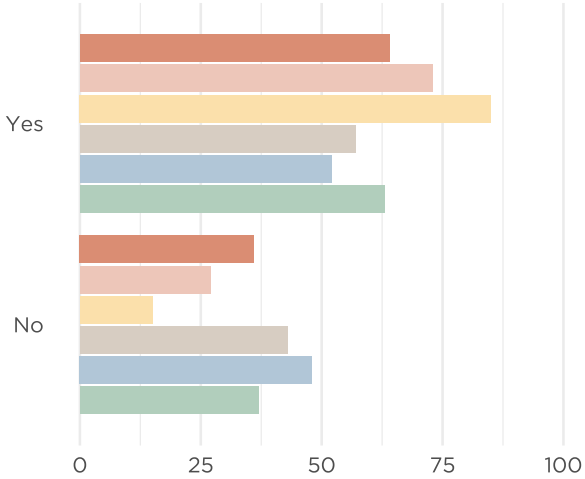
Rangers:
Are you aware of a formal mechanism in place to facilitate interaction with surrounding communities?



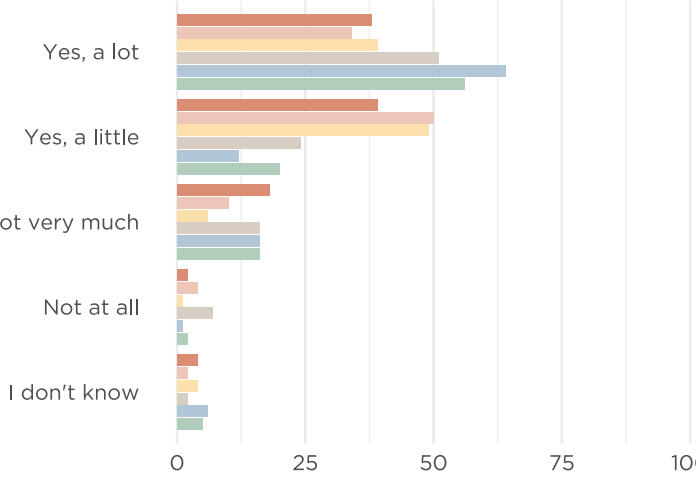
RANGER ASSOCIATIONS

Regional differences appeared for ranger association membership with Asia being the lowest at 52% and Oceania the highest at 85%. On whether their association had positively impacted their profession, there were regional differences between the sentiments of “Yes, a lot” and “Yes, a little.”

Rangers:
Are you a member of a ranger association (international, regional or national)?



Rangers:
Do you feel your ranger association has positively impacted your profession?



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Ranger Federation of Asia (RFA)
European Ranger Federation (ERF)
Council of Oceania Ranger Associations (CORA)

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