

THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION'S

### YEAR IN REVIEW























































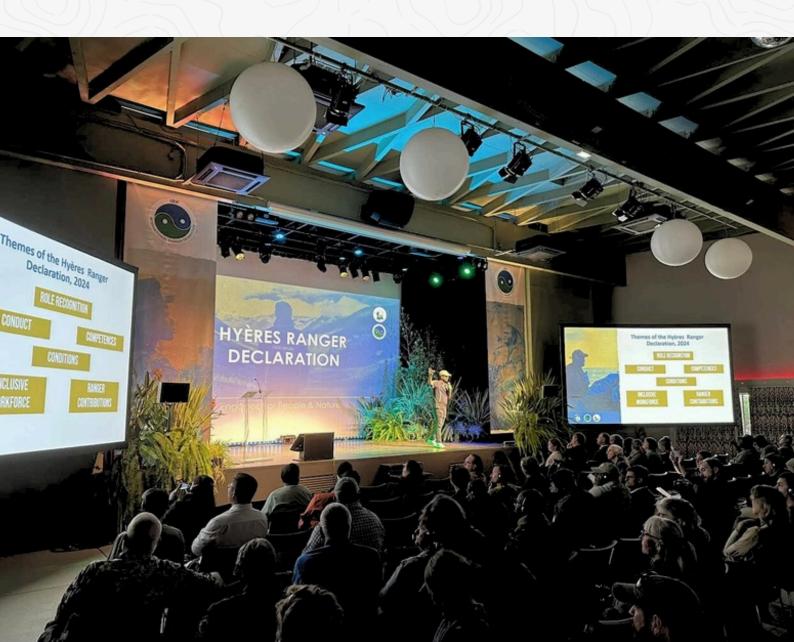






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# ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

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, community, Indigenous, or private, as essential on-the-ground planetary health professionals, that are responsible for safeguarding nature, and 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

### **MISSION**

The Federation's mission is to develop, advance and promote throughout the world community, the Ranger profession and its critical role in the conservation of natural and cultural resources.



### REMARKS FROM THE IRF PRESIDENT

2024 has been quite a year for many reasons. The world has seen great changes with over 2 billion voters going to the polls in 50 countries. It will also go down as the hottest that we have had since records began. The <u>Living Planet Index Report</u> was updated in 2024 and found that there has been a 73% average decline in wildlife populations since 1970. What this infers is that the work of rangers is not going to get easier, as many challenges are beyond our control. What we do know is that rangers are well placed to make a difference against many environmental, social and economic metrics, at a local to international level. One of the significant tools we will be using to enhance this, is the action plan that will be developed from the <u>Hyéres Ranger Declaration</u>.

If there were a global count of how often rangers were mentioned at major policy events and large influential gatherings every year, 2024 would likely rank high on the list. This year saw the 10th World Ranger Congress, which united 450 rangers and supporters from 88 countries in Hyères, France between 7-11 October, culminating in the bold Hyères Declaration. But that's not all. In 2024, ranger-specific discussions and forums were held at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP16) 2024 in Colombia, UNFCC COP 29 (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference) in Azerbaijan, UNTOC COP 12 (United Nations Transnational Organised Crime Conference) in Austria and at a consultative meeting held at the World Bank Headquarters in Washington D.C, and so many more global contexts.

For the IRF, 2024 was one of growth and expansion. We welcomed 30 new members and the formalisation of a new regional body (the Latin American Ranger Federation). We also increased IRF's capacity by having Jon Churcher fill the new General Manager position. With a bold Strategic Plan outlining our vision through to 2030, the IRF stands poised to continue expanding our mission to develop, advance and promote the ranger profession throughout the global community, as well as its critical role in the conservation of natural and cultural resources.



### **2024 AT A GLANCE**



140

rangers died during service between June 2023 to May 2024 across 37 countries.



AROUND

rangers and supporters from 80 countries united for the 10th World Ranger Congress in Hyeres, France



IRF has

208

members across

regions



30

new member organisations were added to the IRF in 2024



400

Indigenous Rangers from desert regions unite for the Indigenous Desert Alliance



**80+** 

participants gather for 30x30-focused Ranger Roundtable Session



3+

major policy events, including COP16, COP26, and COP12, featured IRF participation



Ranger excellence recgonized through the IRF Awards — including the first-ever Gordon Miller Lifetime Achievement Award



7+

policy documents, briefs and research papers produced and shared



states across Australia light up monuments in green for World Ranger Day 2024.



1000+

rangers participate in the Wildlife Ranger Challenge 2024



10,000

rangers provided with essential insurance, training and leadership development through the launch fo the Ranger Welfare and Standards Initiative (RWSI).



2030

IRF strategy launched, outlining the organization's mission and vision in the lead up to 2030.



46

rangers across 10 Latin American countries gather for the Second Meeting of the Latin American Ranger Federation (FLG)



20+

women rangers gather in Lahore, Pakistan, for a key discussion to highlight their contributions to conservation.

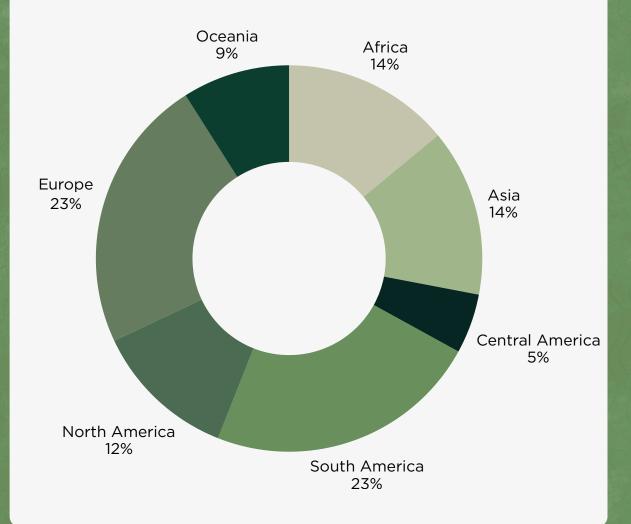


& so much more!

### **MEMBERSHIP**

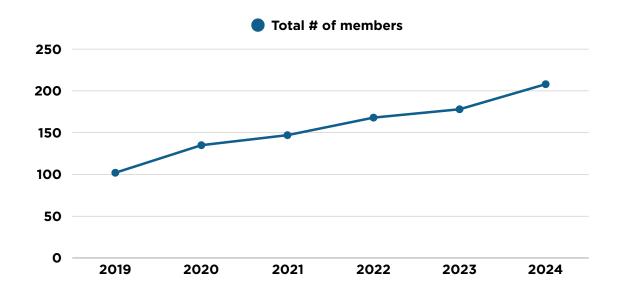
IRF has over 208 member organisations across 7 regions.

#### **MEMBERS PER REGION**



In 2024, the IRF welcomed 17 new members and supported the formalisation of a new regional body (the Latin American Ranger Federation). The IRF Membership has more than doubled (102 members) from the 9th IRF WRC in Nepal (2019) to the 10th IRF World Ranger Congress (208 Members) in France (2024) Membership fees are a major support to the running of the IRF, however only 24% of our current active full and associate members paid their annual membership dues.





#### MAP OF RANGER ASSOCIATIONS





### GLOBAL SPOTLIGHTS OF 2024

# HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIVE MEETING HELD IN WASHINGTON D.C.

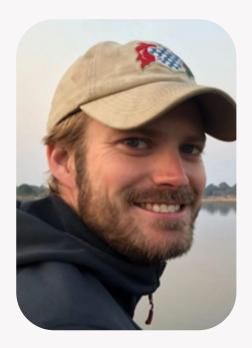
In early March 2024, the IRF, the <u>Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA)</u> and the <u>Global Environmental Facility</u> coordinated a consultative meeting on the role of the ranger workforce in enhancing the implementation of <u>Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)</u> on the 5th of March at the <u>World Bank</u> in DC.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and agree a path forward to strengthen, support and enable a professional, accountable and equitable ranger workforce to help achieve the goals and targets of the GBF.

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### WELCOMING IRF'S NEW GENERAL MANAGER

In July 2024, IRF expanded our capacity by welcoming Jonathan Churcher to fulfill the newly created IRF General Manager position. Jon has spent the last four years working in Zambia supporting rangers and communities living and working in and around some of the most important protected areas in Africa. Whilst in Zambia, Jon worked to ensure rangers were represented at the highest level of government, ensuring all the rangers under his care had access to proper training, equipment and life insurance.



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#### PRESENTING THE IRF STRATEGIC PLAN 2030

The IRF Board presented our <u>2030 Strategic</u> <u>Plan</u> in early 2024. This document is the high-level guiding framework that will help the IRF focus all its actions, decisions and allocation of human and financial resources. This supports our long-term vision and mission, helping to improve efficiency and increase our impact. A series of open consultations on the plan was also held amongst the ranger community.

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### IRF OPENS A NEW BANK ACCOUNT

In 2024, IRF moved its bank account to BMO Banks in the United States of America (US), in line with the formal registration of the IRF as a tax-paying organization in the US.





# UNITING FOR THE 10TH WORLD RANGER CONGRESS

The 10th IRF World Ranger Congress took place in Hyères, France from October 7-11, 2024. Hosted by Gardes Nature de France and the IRF, the event brought together more than 450 rangers and supporters from over 80 countries, with women making up 49% of attendees and 15% representing Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

The Congress focused on the evolution of the ranger profession and its role in achieving Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Rangers shared knowledge, built partnerships, and discussed strategies to protect 30% of land and oceans by 2030.

This gathering was a rare opportunity for rangers—many of whom work in remote and isolated areas—to connect, exchange experiences, and strengthen global conservation efforts. It marked the first global assembly of rangers since the COVID-19 pandemic.

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READ FULL REPORT >

SPEAKER'S PRESENTATIONS >

#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 10TH WORLD RANGER CONGRESS



#### **CONGRESS OVERVIEW**

Featured over 20 workshops and plenary lectures, providing valuable insights from global conservation leaders. The final declaration by IRF and GNF were presented at COP16 in Colombia to amplify rangers' voices and influence biodiversity policies. It also shaped discussions at COP12 in Vienna.

PRESS KIT

OPENING VIDEO



#### **HYÈRES RANGER DECLARATION**

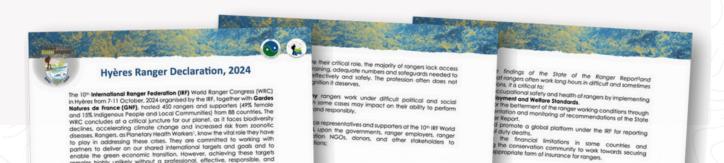
The declaration outlines rangers' key demands, including greater recognition, increased resources, improved working conditions, and professional training. Rangers also advocated for a more inclusive workforce, with greater representation of women and indigenous peoples. Ultimately, they seek a rightful place in implementing global agreements, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

**LEARN MORE** 



#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Day 2 at the Congress featured IRF's Annual General Meeting, where representatives from Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, South America, and North America shared updates and insights on advancing ranger initiatives worldwide. Their discussions reinforced the collective dedication to conservation and the essential role rangers play in protecting our planet.





#### **IRF PRESIDENT'S AWARD 2024**

Bunty Tao, Indigenous Ranger from India and President of the Ranger Federation of Asia was honored with the IRF President's Award 2024—an incredible recognition of his leadership and dedication to conservation. Bunty has been a state indigenous Ranger for over 30 years, in the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, India. He belongs to the Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh in the Eastern Himalayan Mountain ranges, bordering Tibet to the north, Myanmar to the east and Bhutan to the west.

**LEARN MORE** 



### IRF GORDON MILLER LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2024

The IRF Gordon Miller Lifetime Achievement Award was presented for the first time at the Congress, in honor of the late co-founder of the IRF, Gordon Miller, who passed in 2023. The award recognized Roger Cole and Richard (Rick) Smith for their decades of dedication to conservation and the ranger profession. Their work has strengthened conservation efforts and left a lasting impact on rangers worldwide.

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#### **IRF YOUNG RANGER AWARD 2024**

Margaret Lynatte Darawanda, an <u>Akashinga</u> Ranger from Zimbabwe was awarded with the IRF Young Ranger Award 2024. This honor recognizes the remarkable contributions of young rangers to the conservation of protected and conserved areas. It honors their passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to safeguarding our natural world.

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#### **IRF BOARD ANNOUNCEMENT 2024-2027**

Ahead of the 10th World Ranger Congress, electronic voting was initiated for the first time to elect the next IRF Board. The results were unveiled at the Congress. Representing rangers globally is a monumental task, but this dedicated team is committed to achieving the Hyères Declaration goals by 2027.

#### LEARN MORE >

Congratulations to the new IRF Board 2024-2027!



President
Chris Galliers



Vice President Rohit Singh



Treasurer MIchael "Mike" Lynch



Secretary Andrew "Andy" Davies



Asia Representative Hamera Aisha



Africa Representative Mohammed Dikko Bala



Central America Representative Christian Robles Puchi



Europe Representative Lars Scharfe



North America Representative Mark Caughlan



Oceania Representative Amanda Dudgeon



South America Representative Werhner Atoche Montoya



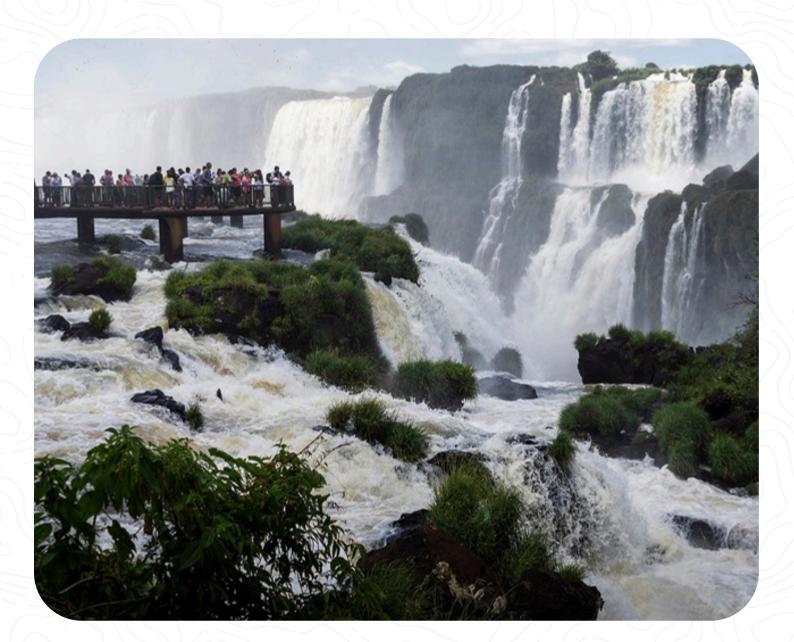
# ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE IRF WORLD RANGER CONGRESS 2027

At the recent World Ranger Congress, a landmark announcement was made—the 11th World Ranger Congress is heading to South America!

In 2027, Iguazú National Park, Argentina, will host this global gathering, set against the backdrop of towering waterfalls and extraordinary biodiversity. This iconic location will bring rangers together to share knowledge, strengthen networks, and champion conservation efforts worldwide.

A huge thank you to Sindicato de Guardaparques Nacionales de la República Argentina (SIGUNARA) for hosting the next Congress. We look forward to celebrating rangers and their vital work in one of the world's most breathtaking natural wonders!

LEARN MORE >

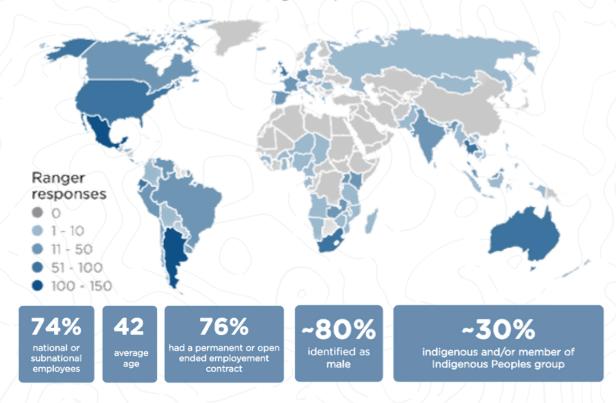


# LAUNCH OF LANDMARK STATE OF THE RANGER REPORT

2024 saw the culmination of three years of work led by Mónica Álvarez Malvido, IRF Federation Development Officer, with the release of the world's first State of the Ranger Report. The report, the first ever report on the global state of the ranger profession, was published at the 10th IRF World Ranger Congress. It is revealing for the sector and acts as a baseline for the next iteration (planned for 2027), where we aim to see measurable improvements from our efforts.

<u>LEARN MORE ></u>

#### 81 countries, 1286 survey responses



This report establishes a global baseline understanding of the current status of the ranger profession; including recognition, conditions, competencies, inclusivity in the workforce, conduct, and ranger associations. This is the first publication (2024) of a long-term global study to track changes in the ranger profession.

**ACCESS THE REPORT** 

#### **POSITIONING RANGERS AT THE 2024**

# UNITED NATIONS BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE (COP16)

Between 21 October - 1 Nov, IRF, alongside partners, organized a series of events hosted at the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), also known as the 2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference.

#### Press conference highlighting the Ranger Call to Cali

The IRF, supported by the Universal Ranger Support Alliance, hosted a press conference featuring high-level representatives from France, the European Commission, IUCN-WCPA, and Colombia's Vice Minister. They delivered the powerful 'Call to Cali' from the 10th World Ranger Congress with a resounding message: Rangers need more support to carry out their vital duties.



#### WATCH RECORDING

#### CALL TO CALI

#### Rangers at the heart of the 30x30 target

Through a dynamic panel discussion, this event underscored rangers' vital role in global conservation, highlighting the Hyères Declaration, the State of the Ranger Report, and the 30x30 target—all reinforcing the urgent need for greater investment, recognition, and support.



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### President of Colombian Ranger Association participates in high-level round table

Juan Sanchez, president of the Colombian Ranger Association, participated in a panel entitled "The recognition of traditional territories and respect of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. In the session, Juan highlighted how working with Indigenous Peoples helps to strengthen protected areas through co-management.



#### **ADVOCATING FOR RANGERS AT THE 2024**

# UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP29)

IRF also took part in the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), which took place from November 11-24, 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan. As the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), it brought together nearly 200 countries to negotiate global climate policies.



Panel: Guardians of the forest — women and Indigenous Peoples at the forefront of forest conservation

Jon Churcher, IRF's General Manager, was featured at a panel held at COP29's Forest Pavillion which focused on the role of women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in forest conservation. Jon highlighted the vital role of rangers as planetary healthworkers, the role of women and Indigenous Peoples in meeting global targets, as well as the need for further support to create more professionalized and inclusive ranger workforces worldwide.

**WATCH RECORDING** 





# IRF MARKS FIRST ATTENDANCE AT COP12 IN VIENNA



Following the successful 10th IRF World Ranger Congress, IRF President Chris Galliers and <u>Gardes Nature de France</u> President Carole D'Antuoni attended <u>UNTOC COP 12</u> — the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime Conference — in Vienna on October 14, 2024.

The <u>Hyères Declaration</u>, formulated during the Congress, was presented as a call to action, emphasizing the importance of supporting rangers in their crucial role in conservation. Their expertise and commitment are vital in addressing environmental challenges and meeting global commitments.

# IRF-SUPPORTED STUDY CALLS FOR URGENT RANGER REFORM

A December 2024 study, supported by the IRF, revealed the critical role rangers play as emergency first responders, particularly as climate-related disasters intensify. Findings showed that nearly 60% of rangers have taken on expanded duties, from evacuations to supply deliveries, yet over 60% lack formal training in disaster response. The research underscored the urgent need for policy reforms to professionalize the ranger workforce, strengthen training, improve resource access, and establish support systems to ensure they are equipped to handle escalating environmental crises.



**READ HERE** 

#### THE UNIVERSAL RANGER SUPPORT ALLIANCE HOLDS IN-PERSON STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

URSA is a coalition of conservation organizations supporting and promoting IRF to build a network of well-supported, professional, and capable rangers, who can act effectively as custodians of the natural world. We help them advocate for the creation of inclusive and effective teams at the forefront of protecting nature, people, and the planet. Our time-bound support prioritizes recognition, resources and representation for rangers around the world.

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The IRF had a very constructive two-day steering committee meeting with the <u>Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA)</u> in Hyères after the 10th World Ranger Congress. The meeting set out to see how URSA could support the IRF to develop and implement the <u>Hyères Ranger Declaration</u> action plan and also address a number of other key points that resulted from the Congress.



### RANGER ROUNDTABLE: RANGERS FOR 30X30

Ahead of World Ranger Day 2024, the IRF hosted a Roundtable discussion, "Rangers for 30 by 30," bringing together rangers from diverse regions. Panelists shared their firsthand experiences, opportunities, and challenges in implementing Target 3 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (30x30 Target).

The discussion delved into critical issues, including working conditions, ranger competencies, codes of conduct, and inclusivity. A subsequent Q&A session allowed participants to engage with the panelists and explore these topics further.









#### RANGER ROUNDTABLE PARTNERS









### EQUITY, EQUALITY AND RIGHTS PRINCIPLES IN THE RANGER WORKFORCE

This year, we made significant progress in developing the <u>Equity</u>, <u>Equality</u> and <u>Rights Principles in</u> the <u>Ranger Workforce</u>. The groundwork has been laid, with a comprehensive draft based on extensive research on equity, equality, and rights within ranger and similar frontline professions.

- An Advisory Group comprising representatives from the ranger workforce, subject matter experts from <u>URSA</u> member organisations, and academics reviewed and refined the draft. We also solicited input from regional ranger associations to ensure the principles were relevant and effective.
- Under the guidance of the IRF Board, we finalized the <u>Equity, Equality and Rights Principles in</u>
   <u>the Ranger Workforce</u>, marking a major milestone in our efforts to promote equity, equality,
   and rights within the ranger profession.



#### WORLD RANGER DAY 2024: SPOTLIGHTING RANGERS' ROLE IN 30x30

July 31 is World Ranger Day and honors the dedication, and crucial work rangers do every day around the globe. The day offers an opportunity to show support to rangers for the services they provide. It was initiated in 2007 by the IRF and the Thin Green Line Foundation to mark the 15th anniversary of IRF's founding.

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#### At a glance

In 2024, the IRF and the global ranger community commemorated 140 fellow rangers who lost their lives in the past year. 53% of these rangers were in Asia, and 30% were in Africa. Their unwavering commitment to protecting our natural and cultural treasures will never be forgotten.

#### **Theme**

The theme "Rangers - The Natural Solution to Achieving the 30x30 Biodiversity Targets" highlighted their essential role in conserving 30% of the planet's land and waters by 2030. The IRF and ranger communities around the world leveraged this theme to spotlight ranger capacity, training, and recognition, emphasizing that achieving the 30x30 goal requires a well-supported, adequately resourced ranger workforce.

#### Social media kit

The IRF developed <u>a social media toolkit</u> to assist ranger associations to promote World Ranger Day, as well as promote rangers across the world and spotlight this year's theme.



### WORLD RANGER DAY 2024

#### **ROLL OF HONOUR**







The 140 rangers from 37 countries named on this 2024 Roll of Honour are only those who have been reported to and verified by the IRF.

This is not the global picture of Line-of-Duty ranger deaths as there are many countries where it is difficult to access reliable information.

In acknowledging these 140 names, we also recognise those unknown rangers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice defending the worlds' protected areas.

To report Ranger deaths please email: executiveofficer@internationalrangers.org | The International Ranger Federation www.internationalrangers.org

Support the families of rangers who have died in the line of duty www.thingreenline.org.au/donate | info@thingreenline.org.au

#### **WORLD FEMALE RANGER WEEK**

From June 23-30, the global ranger community came together for World Female Ranger Week, celebrating the women protecting our planet's most vulnerable ecosystems. These women face daily risks, yet their contributions often go unrecognized. Supporting female rangers isn't just about equity—it's about strengthening conservation through diverse perspectives and expertise.

Currently, only 3-11% of the world's 286,000 terrestrial rangers are women, and with over 1.5 million additional rangers needed to meet global conservation goals, their inclusion is more critical than ever.

Despite progress, significant barriers remain—deep-rooted gender biases, inadequate facilities and working conditions, direct discrimination, and gender-based violence continue to limit opportunities for women in the field. Addressing these challenges is key to building a stronger, more inclusive ranger workforce and securing the future of global biodiversity.

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# THE FOREST AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE (FCI) ISSUES BOLD CALL TO ACTION ON WORLD FOREST DAY 2024

Launched in May 2022, the <u>Forest and Communities Initiative (FCI)</u> brings together The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law, the IRF, Global Forest Coalition and the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity in support of vital planetary guardians: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. The FCI aims to support the conservation of forest ecosystems through the action of Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and the development of a supportive network of actors providing a range of multidisciplinary expertise.

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This year, on <u>International Day of Forests</u>, the <u>Forests and Communities Initiative (FCI)</u>, in partnership with the IRF, issued a call to action for forest protection and Indigenous rights!

Following the FCI's inaugural conference in Monaco last November, the <u>call to action</u> emphasized the need for:

- Strengthening protections and promoting the involvement of local communities in forest conservation
- Investing in conservation initiatives led by Indigenous Peoples, including rangers
- Implementing a regulated and safe environment for environmental advocates, including rangers, and ensuring access to justice
- Strengthening support and resources for rangers worldwide to conduct their work safely and professionally

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#### CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS LAUNCHED

The Forests & Communities Initiative (FCI) launched its 2024 Call for Expression of Interest, inviting Indigenous- and community-led organizations to manage regional conservation projects. Selected partners will oversee funding distribution, project selection, and long-term ecosystem protection efforts across sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. This initiative strengthens local leadership in forest conservation while fostering sustainable environmental stewardship

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### REGIONAL SNAPSHOTS

# REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS UNITE AT THE 10TH WORLD RANGER CONGRESS

The 10th World Ranger Congress served as a vital platform for regional ranger associations to connect in person, fostering dialogue on shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

#### Some highlights included:

- During the Annual General Meeting on the second day, regional representatives
  delivered focused presentations, detailing progress on regional goals, key
  achievements, and areas for future cooperation. These discussions reinforced the
  collective vision of strengthening ranger networks and advancing global
  conservation efforts.
- The Ranger Federation of Asia proudly hosted the Asia Region Meeting on Day 1, with a fantastic turnout of rangers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, South Korea, and beyond.
- Urs Reif, European Representative of the IRF, guided Congress attendees through the European Ranger Federation's ongoing commitment to supporting rangers and driving global conservation goals during a keynote address on the second day.











# LANDMARK REPORT HIGHLIGHTS RANGER CONTRIBUTIONS IN PAKISTAN

The launch of the Decent Work in Nature-based Solutions 2024 report at #UNCCDCOP16 in Riyadh marked an important milestone for rangers. Published by the ILO, IUCN, and UNEP, the report highlights how Nature-based Solutions (NbS) not only combat land degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss but also create sustainable livelihoods. A key case study underscores rangers' essential role in safeguarding these solutions, and Haseena Anbarin, a ranger from Pakistan, shared firsthand experiences at the event, emphasizing the need for stronger support, investment, and policy frameworks to secure ranger employment in NbS.

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# TAKING THE RANGER VOICE TO EARTH IN FOCUS - SINGAPORE

Rohit Singh, the Vice President of the IRF, was a speaker at the Earth in Focus Singapore Nature Film Festival that highlighted the Illegal Wildlife Trade challenges on the ground in Asia and the role that rangers play in addressing those challenges.

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# WOMEN RANGERS GATHER IN LAHORE TO STRENGTHEN CONSERVATION EFFORTS

In November 2024, women rangers gathered in Lahore, Pakistan, joined by the IRF and the Ranger Federation of Asia, to highlight their contributions to conservation. Despite their small numbers and limited recognition, these women serve as wildlife protectors, educators, first responders, and community mobilizers, playing a key role in achieving global biodiversity targets. The discussion reinforced the urgent need for greater support, enabling policies, and improved working conditions to ensure they thrive.

#### **LEARN MORE**









### **AFRICA**

# PRINCE WILLIAM CHAMPIONS RANGER WELFARE ACROSS AFRICA

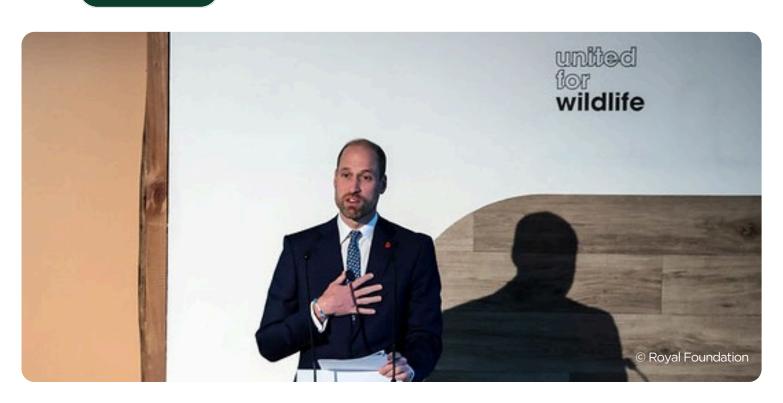
Prince William has pledged to improve support for wildlife protectors, starting with a five-year initiative to enhance ranger welfare across Africa. In collaboration with the IRF and its Africa regional body, the Game Rangers Association of Africa, the program will provide 10,000 rangers with insurance, training, and leadership development. By strengthening ranger welfare, this initiative ensures those on the frontlines have the resources needed to safeguard species and habitats effectively

**READ MORE** 

# LAUNCH OF THE RANGER WELFARE STANDARDS INITIATIVE

The launch of the Ranger Welfare and Standards Initiative (RWSI) marks a major step forward in protecting Africa's wildlife guardians. Spearheaded by Prince William and backed by Tusk, the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA), and the IRF, the initiative provides 10,000 rangers with essential insurance, training, and leadership development.

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# 1,000 RANGERS, 1,500 SUPPORTERS, ONE MISSION: THE WILDLIFE RANGER CHALLENGE RETURNS FOR 21 KM VIRTUAL RACE

The Wildlife Ranger Challenge is the world's largest celebration of solidarity, support and fundraising for the ranger profession, launched in 2020 in response to the global pandemic. More than a 100 teams of rangers spanning the African continent compete every year in a series of challenges through June-September, culminating in a 21km race across their respective protected areas. It is coordinated by Tusk and the Game Rangers Association of Africa.

On Saturday 21st September, the 2024 Wildlife Ranger Challenge brought together more than a thousand rangers from across 18 countries in Africa. They ran in a coordinated 21km race from their respective protected areas. Almost 1,500 public supporters from around the globe joined them in solidarity – running, or walking, wherever they were in the world, to show they are #ForWildlifeRangers

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#### **AFRICAN CONSERVATION AWARDS 2024**

The African Conservation Awards are hosted annually by the Game Rangers' Association of Africa (GRAA) and are endorsed by the Republic of South Africa's Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment. His Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco, who is committed to the protection of endangered species through the support of his Foundation, is the Patron of the African Conservation Awards.

The 2024 African Conservation Awards, hosted by the Game Rangers' Association of Africa, recognized the contributions of conservationists across the continent. This year, the awards expanded to formally include Marine Rangers, acknowledging their role in safeguarding biodiversity.

Beyond celebration, the event highlighted the challenges rangers face, from resource shortages to demanding better working conditions. Every nominee demonstrated resilience and dedication, reinforcing the need for ongoing support and investment in Africa's conservation workforce.

This year's winners include:

- Best Field Ranger: Modiki Claver, Ranger Team Leader, Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas, Central African Republic (CAR)
- Best Marine Ranger: Chanel Hauvette, Senior Marine Field Ranger, Robberg Nature Reserve and Marine Protected Area and Keurbooms River Nature Reserve, South Africa
- **Best Ranger Team:** South Luangwa Rapid Response Unit for Human-Wildlife Conflict, South Luangwa National Park, Zambia
- Best Ranger Supporter: Munene Kamundi, Strong Ranger Initiative, Kenya



### THE AFRICAN CONSERVATION AWARDS 2024 ARE IN ASSOCIATION WITH







# LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

# LATIN AMERICA RANGER FEDERATION MEETING CUSCO, PERU

The Second Meeting of the Latin American Ranger Federation (FLG) wrapped up on May 12th, marking a week of dynamic collaboration and shared learning. With support from the IRF, the event gathered 46 rangers from 10 Latin American countries at CONAFOVICER's facilities in Cusco, Peru, fostering crucial discussions on strengthening conservation efforts across the region.

During the meeting, participating ranger associations and unions shared their achievements, challenges, and experiences, facilitating a valuable exchange of lessons learned.

#### Key outcomes included:

- Progress toward formalizing the FLG as a Regional Federation
- Elections for the new FLG board
- Development of a 5-year roadmap
- Creation of the <u>Cusco Declaration</u>, which amplifies the voice of rangers in the Latin American region

The in-person meeting provided a unique opportunity for rangers to share best practices, strengthen their professional identity, and solidify regional associations. A robust, supported, and resourced ranger workforce is crucial for achieving ambitious global conservation goals, such as the <u>30x30 target of the Convention on Biological Diversity</u>.

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### **NORTH AMERICA**

# IRF AND US FOREST SERVICE COLLABORATION

The IRF and the <u>USDA Forest Service</u> recently signed a 5 year collaboration agreement in which IRF and the agency's wilderness program's field-based representative teams, the <u>Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group (WAG)</u> and the Wilderness Information Management Steering Team (WIMST), will join efforts in activities aligned with the IRF Strategy 2030.

This year, these two groups supported the World Ranger Congress development and are looking to integrate and organize their work around the IRF Rangers for 30 by 30 Framework. IRF attended the Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group Annual Meeting from November 19-21 on the Gila National Forest based out of Silver City, New Mexico. This was an opportunity to better understand each other's organizational needs and to start drafting a work plan for concrete actions for 2025.

During the meeting, the IRF and the Chief's WAG were able to meet with local rangers and visit the Gila Wilderness. 100 years ago, on June 3, 1924, 30,538 hectares were set aside by the Forest Service as the Gila Wilderness--the first designated wilderness in the world! It was Aldo Leopold, a Forest Supervisor in New Mexico, who brought a greater understanding of our relationship with the natural world at a time when the technological advances of the 20th century increasingly shut people off from their surroundings.



### **EUROPE**

#### STRENGTHENING RANGER SOLIDARITY THROUGH CROSS-BORDER FAMILY CONNECTIONS

In a heartwarming initiative, Spanish children of fallen rangers, Carmen and Rosario, spent a summer holiday with UK ranger families, marking the first exchange program of its kind. Spearheaded by the Spanish ranger aid organization AMINTA and supported by the UK's Countryside Management Organisation (CMA), the program provided these children with a meaningful cultural experience while strengthening international ranger solidarity. Hosted by Devon County Council ranger Mark Baker and Blackwater Valley ranger Raf Wane, the visit fostered connections that transcend borders, reinforcing the ranger community's commitment to supporting families of fallen colleagues.

#### **LEARN MORE >**





# PROTECTING NATURE'S PROTECTORS: RANGERS AND MENTAL HEALTH

The Thin Green Line Foundation UK (TGLF UK), in collaboration with the National Trust UK and the European Ranger Federation held a participatory webinar to mark World Mental Health Day 2024. Rangers explored the psychological toll of conservation work, from isolation to emotional strain. Facilitated by Megan McCubbin, the discussion highlighted barriers to support and the need for crisis training, ensuring rangers can care for themselves and the public they encounter in nature.

### **AUSTRALIA & OCEANIA**

#### FOUR STATES LIT GREEN FOR #WRD2024

On July 31st, 2024, World Ranger Day, iconic monuments across four Australian states lit up in green, honoring Rangers worldwide. Inspired by the Tasmanian Ranger Association's 2023 initiative to illuminate the Tasman Bridge in Hobart, this nationwide tribute was coordinated by multiple Australian Ranger Associations. Rangers across Australia, Oceania, and the world are connected through the IRF, whose networks have helped spread this fantastic idea across the nation. By lighting up landmarks, the initiative has raised much-needed awareness of World Ranger Day and the vital work of Rangers in protecting species and habitats globally.

LEARN MORE >

#### UNITING INDIGENOUS DESERT RANGERS

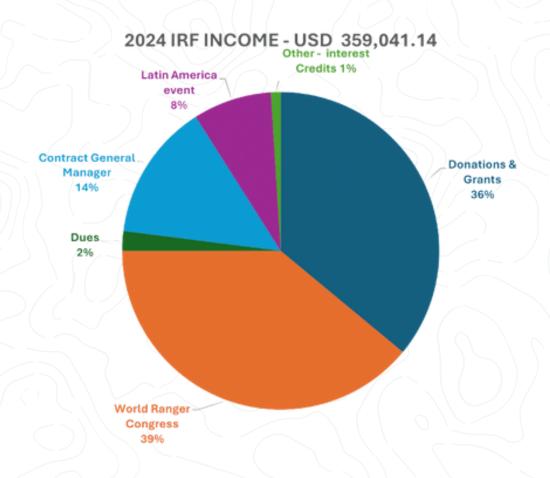
The Indigenous Desert Alliance Conference 2024 successfully brought together over 400 Indigenous Rangers from desert regions, fostering connection, knowledge-sharing, and collective problem-solving. The event strengthened networks and highlighted the vital work of Indigenous Rangers in caring for country. Congratulations to the Indigenous Desert Alliance team for delivering another impactful gathering.

LEARN MORE >

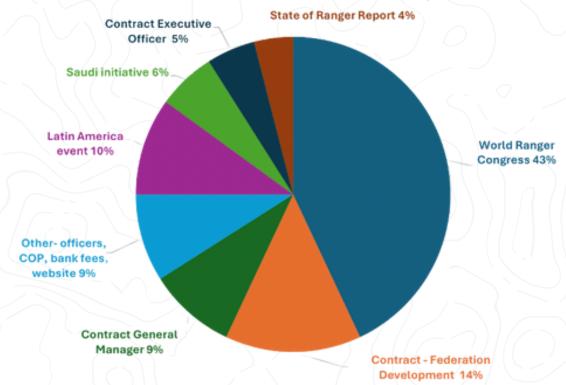




### **IRF FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FOR 2024**



#### 2024 IRF EXPENDITURES - USD 276,041.14



Reserve to 2025 - USD178,109.50

Detailed Financial Reports at: www.internationalrangers.org/irf-governance/



# NEWSLETTERS IN 2024

**Happy New Year 2024** 

10th WRC Expression of Interest for Speakers

10th WRC Call for Sponsorship

<u> Annual Membership Fees 2024</u>

10<sup>th</sup> WRC Updates

**Equity, Equality and Rights Principles Draft** 

10<sup>th</sup> WRC Additional Information

**2027 WRC Expression of Interest** 

WRC (Oceania Notice)

**World Ranger Day 2024 Social Media Kit** 

**IRF Electronic Elections 2024** 

**IRF's 2024 Highlights** 

This 'Year in Review' report only scratches the surface on IRF and the global ranger community's annual spotlights. It is intended to capture only a select number of updates from throughout the year and does not intend to serve as an 'all encompassing' document of all our activities.

If you have any questions, please email: executiveofficer@internationalrangers.org



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