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“New Deal” for Conservation Rangers Signals a Critical Step for the Planet’s Health

On World Ranger Day, New Alliance Announces Action Plan to Develop Global Welfare Standards and Code of Conduct for Rangers



For release

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A group of international conservation organisations, including the International Ranger Federation (IRF), have formed the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) which will deliver a “new deal” for wildlife rangers including Global Welfare Standards and a Code of Conduct.

“The roles of wildlife rangers are undervalued, under-supported and underappreciated, even though rangers play a critical role in addressing the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change,” said Mike Appleton, vice chair for capacity development in the IUCN World



Commission on Protected Areas and Global Wildlife Conservation's director of protected area management. "Not only do they prevent habitat and ecosystem destruction, but they prevent zoonotic spillovers and pandemics, pollution, and the kinds of fires we are seeing burn bigger and hotter each year."

URSA is a coalition of eight international conservation groups and is the first of its kind in support of rangers. The action plan, launched today, July 31, on World Ranger Day, is a response to, and will help implement, the Chitwan Declaration, a declaration endorsed by more than 550 rangers from 70 countries at the International Ranger Federation (IRF) World Ranger Congress in 2019. The Chitwan Declaration called on NGOs and other conservation groups to act on a detailed list of needs and priorities for rangers. Much of the evidence for these needs came directly from rangers, including the more than 7,000 rangers from 28 countries who contributed to a [global survey](#).

The global community is asking rangers to protect 30 percent of the planet from poaching, habitat destruction and other threats to the ecosystems that keep the planet healthy. Rangers are currently on the frontline of the COVID-19 emergency, and are the key to safeguard the ways of life of people whose lives and cultures are inseparable from nature. They take on a myriad of roles: environmental scientist, tour guide, firefighter, law enforcement officer, political ambassador, community liaison, teacher, first aid responder, communications specialist, land manager, sociologist, historian, moderator, building manager and the list goes on.

Despite their critical profession, rangers work without adequate pay, often without suitable contracts, equipment, training or insurance. There are no standards of competence, performance and conduct for rangers, which can lead to inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, danger to the rangers themselves, and in some cases, corruption and misconduct. The Thin Green Line Foundation and the IRF this week released its annual Roll of Honour of rangers who have fallen in the line of duty, which this year totaled 137 rangers.

"Rangers work in very remote and difficult working environments, endangering their lives to protect the world's wildlife and natural resources," said Chris Galliers, president of the IRF. "We are committed to bringing about universal and lasting change for the ranger profession, to ensure rangers have the resources needed to safeguard the world's wildlife and protected areas. Local and indigenous community livelihoods and wellbeing are intrinsically linked to the health of nature, so supporting rangers in turn also helps strengthen communities."

URSA's vision is a network of well-supported, professionally competent, mandated, motivated and representative rangers working effectively as custodians of biodiversity and the life systems upon which all life depends. Through the action plan, URSA aims to enable and advocate for better training, support, safety and equality for rangers; to support their work in building trusted relationships with communities; and to generate a greater recognition of the critical value of their work.



Through its action plan, URSA aims to address these specific needs:

- **Better pay, working conditions and equipment**
Many rangers do their jobs without proper pay, contracts, equipment or insurance - often in dangerous environments.
- **Better opportunities for training and learning**
The work expected from rangers is varied and highly skilled. Yet around half feel that they are inadequately trained.
- **More trust and accountability**
Rangers need to treat people fairly and to strictly observe the law and the rights of others; they need robust guidance and leadership.
- **Fairer employment opportunities and conditions**
There are currently not nearly enough rangers to do the enormous job required of them, so creating more jobs is a priority.
- **Better representation and advocacy**
While the IRF is the global professional body for rangers, many rangers remain unrepresented. URSA will work to empower national ranger associations.

"Public servants engaged in wildlife protection help combat the trafficking in animals, which can help to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19," said Carlos R. Carrión-Crespo, sector specialist for Public Service and Utilities at the International Labour Organization. "In the ILO, we care that they have the proper tools and working conditions to carry out their work. The ILO has adopted recommendations that protect their rights to join workers' organizations and participate in collective bargaining, their civil and political rights, as well as provisions to ensure good housing conditions, welfare facilities, decent working hours, good and timely wages, and, in 2019, against violence and harassment in the workplace. When governments respect these protections, they improve wildlife services."

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Photo: SMART training of rangers at Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park on the island of Mindoro in the Philippines, 2019. (Photo by James Slade, Global Wildlife Conservation)

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Universal Ranger Support Alliance

URSA's founding members are Fauna & Flora International, Force For Nature, Global Wildlife Conservation, International Ranger Federation, Panthera, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, World Wildlife Fund, and Zoological Society of London. Together we share a vision of a healthy, thriving natural world and an understanding that this cannot be achieved without taking the necessary steps to bring about universal and lasting change for rangers; they are crucial custodians of the biodiversity and life-support systems on which we all ultimately depend. URSA has developed an action plan that can be used and adapted across the world by



all those working with rangers, to support them to do their jobs effectively and responsibly. By ensuring that the urgently needed tools, reforms and policy changes are put in place, the Alliance's purpose is to improve the well-being of rangers, the local communities with whom their work is intrinsically linked and, in turn, the planet.

About the International Ranger Federation

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) was founded on 31 July 1992 in Peak National Park in the UK. It is the global voice for rangers and actively promotes and supports the formation of Ranger Associations around the world to ensure Rangers are more adequately supported and represented.

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