



The Thin Green Line

From the President

There has been some great progress recently with new Ranger associations forming and strengthening; project support from The Thin Green Line Foundation (TTGLF) for new and existing Ranger associations; the Council of Australian Rangers meeting; support given to IRF regional representatives; advancement of the IRF strategic plan; and a tremendous response to our World Ranger Day call.

However, we have had our low points and challenges too. Sadly, we've lost Wayne Lotter, our former VP and staunch ally of Rangers the world over. Tragically, Wayne was murdered in Tanzania. We have also been dealing with the loss of several more Rangers in the line of duty. And then there was the need to terminate the appointment of our South America representative. Although we have had these challenges, we must stand together and remember why the IRF exists: to support our Ranger family and to acknowledge what a critical role Rangers play in protecting this planet.

There have been eight new associations/organisations join the IRF. We welcome our new members and look forward to working closely with you all.

TTGLF has completed their 2016/2017 project call out. Grants totalling \$250,000 USD (\$325,000 AUD) were given to four IRF Regions: South America, Central America, Asia and Africa.

I proudly attended the Council of Australian Rangers Association meeting in Katherine, NT, Australia and met with all Oceania Ranger associations. Peter Cleary, the IRF Oceania Representative, and the Northern Territory Rangers Association did an excellent job of bringing together the different Ranger Associations.

I issued an official letter of support to our Venezuelan Ranger colleagues as their current circumstances are dire and they are in desperate need of support from the Ranger family and the world at large.

World Ranger Day 2017 was the biggest World Ranger Day yet. Many Ranger associations, the UN, the IUCN and countless others participated around the world. We have already started planning how to make next year's World Ranger Day even bigger to generate much needed support for Rangers around the world.

The news of a fallen colleague always creates great sadness. But the loss of IRF's former Vice President and TTGLF Director, Wayne Lotter was felt sharply by all who worked closely with him. I released an official statement and TTGLF has supported Wayne's family as part of the Fallen Rangers Fund.

Wayne would want us to mention the several other Rangers killed in this time from Mexico, Thailand, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Brazil, India, the USA and Pakistan. Sadly, in this past 12 months (July 1st to July 31st) we have lost a further 105 Rangers in the line of duty (that we know of). These tragic losses have been reflected in this year's Honour Roll. Of those killed this year:

- 42% were at the hands of poachers,
- 47% in work related accidents,
- and 11% by the very animals Rangers protect.
- We know that 45 % were within the IRF's Africa region,
- 44% in the Asian region and the remaining,
- 11% were in IRF's North America, South America, and European regions.

Together we must all work harder to get more training and equipment to Rangers on the ground, and to support the families left behind when we do lose one of our family in the line of duty.

I look forward to all the positive actions happening over the next few months and look forward to working with you all to make the IRF's vision of recognising and supporting Rangers an ever-increasing reality.

Yours in solidarity,

Sean Willmore
President
International Ranger Federation



Regional News

Africa

Chris Galliers: The recent period has been dominated by the exceptionally tragic murder of Wayne Lotter. His death has no doubt brought the reality of how dangerous the life of people fighting poachers linked to transnational wildlife syndicates can be, in Africa as well as other parts of the world. As a person who has played such a valued role in conservation and to the IRF for more than a decade (including being responsible for the 2012 World Ranger Congress in Arusha), he will be missed.

Tragically over the same period there have been a number of other Rangers who have been killed in Africa. We mourn every Ranger death as one too many. However, it does mean we need to do more to support our Rangers to give them every chance of always coming out on top.

World Ranger Day seems to be gaining greater awareness, gauging by the social media feedback, and is building support on the continent, which helps unify African countries behind the cause of Rangers.

Work is continuing around the Global Ranger Survey. Starting in Africa, with the view to be distributed worldwide. Once the data is collected, it will be invaluable. It will allow us to better understand the number of, and job titles of, Rangers and Protected Area workers, raising the profile of protected area management as a global occupation.

There has also been a move to strengthen a few budding Ranger associations, which is encouraging, we are looking forward to having them join the IRF in the near future.

At the end of July, I was fortunate enough to have participated in the Strategic Planning gathering of TTGLF board, the official charity arm of the IRF, in Melbourne, Australia which included working on the IRF Strategic Plan.

Asia

Rohit Singh: For the first time in Bhutan, World Ranger Day was celebrated as a tribute to recognise the role that Rangers play in the conservation of Bhutan's natural heritage and public service delivery. The event also celebrated the membership of its Society of Bhutanese Foresters to the Ranger Federation of Asia (RFA). His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Bhutan graced the event opening accompanied by Cabinet Ministers, heads of Ministries, representatives of development and conservation partners, international organisations and officials from the Department of Forests and Park Services.

The Nepal Ranger Association has now been formally registered, which is a great achievement, and initial discussions with Pakistan to join the RFA and IRF are looking positive.

I assisted with the support of five widows in Asia through the TTGLF Fallen Rangers Fund.

I have also been working with Ranger Campus Foundation, a new IRF Member, to support their online learning module for Rangers, testing will be done in Bhutan once it is ready. Finally, work is continuing on the Global Protected Area workers survey in Asia supported by the IRF.

Central America

Leonel Delgado: I have presence in different chat groups on WhatsApp, sharing information and providing support to colleagues from the region and the world. The group names are as follows:

- Guardaparques Latinos
- Park Ranger without Borders (Support for Venezuela)
- Park Ranger Without Borders
- II Latin American Park Ranger Congress
- World Rangers
- Observatory Deceased Park Rangers
- Paraguayan Park Rangers
- Mexican Association of Park Rangers

If any Rangers would like to be added to these groups please contact me.

A recent visit to Panama fulfilled two objectives: To affiliate the Panama Ranger Association to the IRF and to promote the II Latin American Ranger Congress which may be held in Panama in 2018.

In August, Costa Rican Ranger Day and National Parks Day were celebrated. In these celebrations, we honoured the Rangers who have died in Costa Rica and the world and we also celebrated the freedom and pardon recently given to Ranger, Mauricio Steller, by the Costa Rican Government.

As part of TTGLF's project call out, we had one successful candidate, SIWA Foundation. They were provided funding to develop their training program for Rangers of Costa Rica; 20 Park Rangers have attended the training.

World Ranger Day was celebrated and a great success in Costa Rica and Central America.

Europe

Frank Grütz: There has been a lot of work put into legalising and registering the newly formed European Ranger Federation (ERF); a meeting of the European Executive Committee was held in June 2017.

We've welcomed some new members into the IRF family, I supported the applications for IRF membership of the Association of National Parks of Albania, the Association des Gardes Nature de la Region Wallonne (AGNRW) in Belgium and Ranger Campus Foundation in the Netherlands. I've been supporting existing IRF members to improve their Ranger Associations like the AIGAP (Italian Ranger Association), the Ranger Association of Portugal (APGVN) and the Irish Ranger Association. I've also been supporting potential new members like Georgia.

I recently attended the Europarc Federation Conference in Portugal where I presented and lead a Ranger workshop. The conference had 270 participants from 36 countries, participants included representatives of the EU, managers and representatives of protected areas and nature protection NGOs, representatives of ministries for environment, representatives from nature conservation authorities, foundations and institutions.

North America

Bill Westerfield: I continue to correspond with our regional member groups encouraging them to remain active with the IRF and have been dealing with some potential new members like the British Columbia Park Rangers who are looking to set up a Ranger organisation and eventually join the IRF.

Earlier in the year I visited with a research assistant from Harper's Magazine about worldwide annual Ranger deaths. Engaging with magazines and media allows the IRF to spread the message about the critical role that Rangers play in the worldwide effort to conserve the planet's natural places and wildlife and the threats that they often face.

In October, I attended the Ranger Rendezvous 40, in Estes Park Colorado which was hosted by IRF member, the Association of National Park Rangers (US). Only three miles from Rocky Mountain National Park, the location provided spectacular scenery, abundant opportunities for outdoor exploration and lots more. It was the perfect setting for a conference about national parks and the people who protect them.

Oceania

Peter Cleary: Over 80 delegates and dignitaries attended the Council of Australian Rangers Associations (CARA) Forum this August. Hosted by the Northern Territory Ranger Association in Katherine, Northern Territory, Australia, it consisted of two days of presentations combined with a day of field trips. This allowed delegates to immerse themselves in the natural and cultural values and issues that are impacting the surrounding stone country and plains. From crocodile management due to species recovery, to the infestations of introduced gamba grass which severely compromises cultural values, the delegates were able to get a sense of park management pressures and strategies that ensure the ongoing protection of these highly valuable areas. This annual forum provides the opportunity for IRF members to come together to discuss issues relevant to their work and roles, building peer support. It also aims to support and motivate Rangers for greater conservation outcomes.

I have been involved in the IRF membership application of the Fiji Islands Ranger Association, which was successful, we welcome them to the IRF Ranger family and look forward to working closely with them. There are several Twinning opportunities between IRF Members, the South Australian Ranger Association are looking at working with contacts in Vanuatu and the Northern Territory Ranger Association are looking at assisting Rangers in Timor Leste.

South America

Marcelo Segalerba: Many South American countries including Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador and Brazil had special events for World Ranger Day. Unfortunately, August started as a bad month with news of several fallen Rangers. In Brazil, one Ranger was killed and two injured by poachers in Serra da Capivara National Park; Ranger Edilson Aparecido da Costa Silva lost his life in the line of duty, leaving behind his wife and five children. Close to South America, in Chacahua National Park, Oaxaca State, México, another young Ranger, Gabriel Ramos Olivera, was killed in the field. With those sad events, there was a show of solidarity and compassion for the families, friends and colleagues of the Rangers from the region and worldwide.

With the above tragedies, we have some positive things happening in the region too. The planning for the Latin America Ranger Congress is going well; communications via WhatsApp groups in South America are ongoing; new Ranger Associations have been created (in Brazil and Peru) and are now IRF members; a Ranger Observation Group has been created to monitor violence against Rangers in the region; another training course was successfully completed in Amapa State, Brazil (more than 500 Rangers have been trained since 2005); a twinning agreement was successfully signed between the Amapa Ranger Association (AGPA) and Brasilia Ranger Association (AGPDF); Paraguayan Rangers were trained by a team of trainers from Colorado State University and the Galapagos Rangers from Isabela Island had an event highlighting the roles of Rangers and honouring recently fallen Rangers around the world, which included a tree planting ceremony.



WAYNE LOTTER

**IRF VICE – PRESIDENT, CO-FOUNDER PAMS FOUNDATION,
TANZANIA**

- 2017

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

Wayne started his career as a Ranger in South Africa. He worked in the Kruger National Park for many years and achieved much before eventually moving to Tanzania, where, together with Krissie Clark and Ally Namangaya, they jointly established the PAMS Foundation in 2009. It was about this time that Wayne also became Vice President of the IRF. Facilitating much change in our fledgling organisation and helping to guide us into a stronger, more relevant body.

Wayne was a great guy. Many in our IRF family will remember his strange, irreverent sense of humour. People would often be thrown by his comments and with the desired outcome, Wayne would wander off chuckling to himself. At the 2012 IRF Conference in Arusha, which PAMS organised, a talent quest was held one night. Wayne was playing drums in the band when William Soko from Zambia came out on stage. William stated that he was going to sing a special song from his village. All the delegates waited in anticipation expecting a heartfelt African folk song, only for the band and Wayne to break into Celia, the Simon and Garfunkel song, which William sang with some aplomb. It brought the house down and raised a wry smile from Wayne who was in on the joke from the start.

Wayne and Krissie became the ultimate dynamic duo. They and the PAMS team became an unstoppable force for conservation in East Africa. As the poaching crisis intensified and the wild herds of elephants were decimated, Wayne, Krissie and the PAMS team worked tirelessly, and over the last five years they were responsible for the significant reduction of poaching of elephants in Tanzania.

Sadly, they were too effective. In August this year, Wayne's vehicle was stopped in Dar es Salaam and he was fatally shot in what appears to have been an assassination. Conservation has lost a true hero and we have lost one of our greatest Rangers. Wayne never hogged the limelight, choosing always to give credit to others for his amazing work, but when people like Dr. Jane Goodall come out to say he was one of her heroes, it is a testament to how significant a person he was.

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

George Malolakis was supported by TTGLF/IRF to attend the service for Wayne Lotter as our collective representative and to provide support to PAMS Co-Founder, Krissie Clark.

For the official statement visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/InternationalRangerFederation/posts/1536462029709244>

Honouring our Brave Colleagues

We honour the following Fallen Rangers who have recently died in the line of duty; we honour the sacrifice that you made to protect nature:

Mohammad Asad, Zeeshan, Alexandre Rochsinki, Sebastião Lima Ferreira Júnior, Olavo Perim Galvão, Gukiya Ngbekusa, Kitembo N'singa, Sudi Koko, Antopo Selemani, Trenton Johnson, H. Devaraj, T. Murugesan, Brent M. Witham, Pati Dhibar Charles Paluku Syaira, Jonas Paluku Malyani, Pacifique Musubao Fikirini, Souleymane Tangara, Gabriel Ramos Olivera, Edilson Aparecido da Costa Silva, Mohammad Amin Wani, Adamou Philippe, Tanasak Marod, Manzoor Ahmad, Muhammad Mushtaq Bhatti, 2 unnamed Rangers in Cambodia, Sudjit Khorthong, Ambroce Nyange and Javier Viéitez.

IRF Initiatives

World Ranger Day



For those of you that don't know, World Ranger Day both commemorates Rangers killed or injured in the line of duty and celebrates the critical work Rangers do to protect the world's natural and cultural treasures. It is observed annually on 31st of July and is celebrated by the IRF's member associations, TTGLF (the charity arm of the IRF) and by organisations, schools and individuals who support the work of Rangers in protecting wildlife and wild places worldwide.

This year was a great success with celebrations occurring in more than 40 countries around the world. Large and small celebrations occurred, from a gathering of a few Rangers, to large official events attended by hundreds of Rangers and government officials. Many people from around the world showed their solidarity by holding up the "I Stand With Rangers" sign and posting their pictures on social media.

This year's celebrations advanced the cause for Rangers worldwide. Bhutan had their first ever celebration, with the official announcement of the formation of the Society of Bhutanese Foresters. While in Zimbabwe, the World Ranger Day march spurred the government into wanting to create a Zimbabwean Ranger Association. Thank you to all who made it a great success. Next year is going to be even bigger, so watch this space.

For more information visit: <http://www.internationalrangers.org/world-ranger-day/>



Pictured here are members of the Israeli and German Ranger Association at the Holocaust site of Terezin.

The IRF Twinning Program

In May 2016, during the World Ranger Congress in Colorado, USA, a meeting of two individuals sparked a unique and highly significant partnership, Frank Grütz from Germany met Ilan Yeger from Israel. Frank then introduced Ilan to Michael and Mario from Bavaria, Germany and a friendship was formed. They kept in touch and it was at the European Ranger Congress in May this year in Litoměřice, Czech Republic, where they understood the depth of this collaboration. Both parties embraced the opportunity to visit the

Member Update

In recent months, we've welcomed eight new members to the world Ranger family:

- The Association for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Regional Conservation Area - Angostura Faical (Peru)
- Ranger Campus Foundation (Netherlands)
- The Albania National Parks Association
- The Hai Bar Israel Nature and Heritage Association (Israel Nature and Parks Authority)
- The Association des Gardes Nature de la Region Wallonne (Belgium)
- The Asociacion Nacional de Guardabosques (Panama)
- The Associação de Guardaparques de Brasília (Brazil)
- The Fiji Islands Ranger Association (FIRA)

We also have around 30 potential new members that we're working closely with, assisting them in creating new Ranger associations.

TTGLF provides a start-up grant of USD 500 to newly formed Ranger Associations to assist with the legal formation and administration costs, they have recently provided grants to two newly created Ranger Associations, namely the Associação de Guardaparques de Brasília and the Association for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Regional Conservation Area - Angostura Faical.

Holocaust site of Terezin. They remembered the difficult history of the two peoples and visiting this site only strengthened the connection between the Rangers. Mario Schmid commented, "I will never forget the deep emotional impact of this common visit, and I am really proud to be part of this collaboration with Israel."

This memorable moment paved the way to the signing of the Twinning Agreement and a strong, ongoing relationship.

The first exchange happened earlier this year, four Israeli Rangers visited the Bavarian Forest National Park in Germany. During their visit they found similarities with which they could work together and things that they could inspire each other with. The next exchange will occur later this year when some German Rangers from different protected areas will go to Israel.

Currently they're working on the following joint initiatives:

1. Data and research program for migratory birds that start in Germany and cross Israel.
2. Integration of educational program with Israeli youth.
3. Training to prevent illegal hunting and poisoning.



The IRF Twinning program is an initiative that exists for the transfer of knowledge, experience and skills between IRF Member Associations. If you're interested in getting involved, visit:

<http://www.internationalrangers.org/twinning-program/>



Pictured here is German Ranger Carsten with the Israeli flag and Israeli Ranger Ori with the German flag - a heavy flag made lighter.

IRF Funding

TTGLF also provides funding to the IRF Regional Representatives and the Executive team to ensure that they have the capacity to represent the IRF within their region and to ensure that they are supporting their members accordingly. Three regional representatives have recently been supported; namely Frank Grütz for his attendance of the EUROPARC Conference in Portugal, Leonel Delgado for his travel to Panama relating to the next Latin America Congress and Peter Cleary for his attendance of the CARA Forum in the Northern Territory.

Working Groups

Did you know that the IRF has Working Groups that support different kinds of Rangers?

The IRF has created four Working Groups to allow Rangers to share experiences and thoughts with like-minded colleagues. The four groups and links for those groups are as follows:

1. Young Rangers of the IRF
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/irfyoungrangers/>
2. Female Rangers Across the World
https://www.facebook.com/groups/867795203324474/?ref=br_rs
3. Rangers' Pride - International Ranger Federation (LGBTIQ)
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/117156015542897/>
Email: irf.rangers.pride@gmail.com
4. Indigenous/Community Ranger Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/249376878878055/>

In the News

Venezuelan Rangers Standing Strong

The last few years have been a struggle for Venezuelan Rangers. In the last 6 years, many Rangers have been forced to leave the protected areas where they work due to the serious social, economic and political problem in the country. There are now less than 1,000 Rangers to take care of 94 protected areas, covering approximately 16% of the Venezuelan territory.

A total lack of resources means that their situation is desperate, many not having any financial resources to sustain their families. If they can continue working, they need to use their own vehicles while patrolling as well as paying for their own food.

Adding to the dire situation is the fact that Rangers only have administrative or preventative authority, lacking enforcement authority. For this reason, they are not taken seriously by poachers, government authorities and society in general. When the Rangers speak out about violations to the environment, by either government or individuals, they are allegedly threatened and their job stability is at risk.

Considering the above hurdles, the Venezuelan Rangers are trying to stand strong and still try their best to complete their mission to protect these areas that they consider to be precious. The IRF stands with the Rangers and their families, to read the official Letter of Support visit this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/InternationalRangerFederation/photos/a.432886350066823.97452.432336293455162/1459279390760842/?type=3&theatre>.



The Creation of the European Ranger Federation

A new European networking organisation for Rangers was born in Litoměřice, Czech Republic, on 12th May 2017: the European Ranger Federation (ERF). The idea for this organisation started in October 2013, during a meeting between Sean Willmore (IRF President), Frank Grütz (IRF Europe Representative) and representatives of the German, Swiss and Czech Ranger Associations which took place in the Bavarian Forest National Park, Germany. During a workshop, the idea of a "vision of future, worldwide cooperation" was created. Sean was interested in advancing networking and co-operation between Ranger Associations in Europe.

In 2015, the German Ranger Association created the initial strategy for the ERF and distributed it to all the European Ranger Associations. After a meeting of 12 European Ranger Associations, the representatives signed an agreement. Thereafter the final strategy was created, the "Vision of Europe", by the Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (SCRA), the German Ranger Association and the Countryside Management Association (CMA).

The ERF will now be registered as a non-profit association in the field of nature conservation and land management. With its headquarters in Germany, its core aims include promoting the work of Rangers at a national and European level, implementing and improving communication structures between the European Ranger organisations, pan-European training opportunities, cooperating with European institutions, national governments and non-governmental organisations and institutions to promote nature conservation initiatives and disseminating the actions of the IRF at the European level.



TTGLF 2016/17 Annual Project Call Out

TTGLF has completed its annual Project Call Out and grants totalling \$250,000 USD (\$325,000 AUD) were given to four IRF Regions, namely South America, Central America, Asia and Africa. Projects supported ranged from providing Ranger uniforms to a Ranger Association in Peru, providing equipment and supplies to the Orangutan Project in Indonesia to improving Ranger accommodation in Uganda. This crucial support has an enormous effect on the lives of Rangers; it boosts Ranger morale making them more engaged along with making their extremely tough jobs a bit easier. TTGLF is



Going the Extra Mile

For World Ranger Day 2017, the Queensland Ranger Association (QRA) commemorated the occasion in many different ways. Most stopped and reflected on the hardships faced by colleagues around the world in the performance of their duties. Many posted images on social media with the "I Stand With Rangers" poster to further show solidarity and support and hosted gatherings in their local areas. This year, some took it a step further. The Central Queensland crew at Rockhampton base, led by an impassioned Bluey Harris and ably supported by Erin Witten and Aaron Russell among others, not only organised a morning tea and sausage sizzle, but they also organised a raffle and auction. They had rallied local businesses and other generous donors for prize items and threw in a trivia night for good measure. Thanks to some fantastic prizes, excellent organisation, the generosity of staff, and some spirited bidding on great items, the crew managed to raise an enormous \$2,627.80 for TTGLF. Congratulations, Rocky!

The other event contributing to our total donation amount was from the annual QRA Muster. Every year we gather as many members as will come to various locations around the state. This year, we held it at Magnetic Island, off the coast of Townsville. We had just over 100 QRA members, presenters, QPWS management and sponsors who came together for three days. As a part of this event, we included an auction one night after dinner, with the money raised going to various beneficiaries. The prizes were all donated by staff and sponsors, and the auctioneer revved up the crowd. This year we cracked a record \$5,000, of which TTGLF received an additional \$2,300 to help facilitate the great work they do.

Scott Bolden - QRA Secretary.



Pardon of Costa Rican Ranger

Mauricio Steller Fallas, a Costa Rican Ranger, was involved in an incident in August 2015 whilst out on patrol in Playa Carate. He caught an individual poaching sea turtle eggs, the poacher was hurt in the confrontation and Mauricio was sentenced to 12 years in prison for fulfilling his duty of protecting the natural resources of his country. However, on 22nd July 2017, the Vice Minister of Justice, Marco Feoli, announced the pardon of Mauricio. This sets a historical precedent and supports the fight for the establishment of legal and labour guarantees for Costa Rican Rangers. It allows the Rangers to keep their commitment to bring about legislation that provides

the only organisation worldwide that is totally dedicated to supporting Rangers.



Junior Ranger Camp

In July this year, children from nine countries (Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, England, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands) got together for the Europarc Junior Ranger Camp in the Swiss Alps. Organised by the Swiss Ranger Association and the Europarc Federation, it was a great opportunity for the kids and Rangers to exchange stories, knowledge and more from their countries as well as celebrating World Ranger Day.

The Council of Australian Ranger Associations Forum



Pictured here, the 80 delegates who attended the 2017 Council of Australian Ranger Associations Forum held in Katherine, Northern Territory, Australia, hosted by IRF Member Association, the Northern Territory Ranger Association.

Rangers the legal right to defend themselves, to get trained, to be provided the tools to do so and to have the legal support to carry out their daily activities. There are over 300 Rangers in Costa Rica that care for 1,300,000 hectares of land, and right now, there is no legislation that supports them to exercise their duties. Thanks to Leonel Delgado for liaising with the family on behalf of the IRF, and to TTGLF for providing financial support to Mauricio Steller's family during this difficult time.



Ranger Exchange - Croatia and Africa

It was at the Croatian Ranger Congress where Croatian Ranger, Vedran Badun met Sean Willmore, IRF President. He was interested in visiting Rangers in Africa to exchange skills and experiences. However, he wasn't a member of the Croatian Association of Supervisors and Guardians of Nature which is an IRF member Ranger association. Sean encouraged him to join so he could access the worldwide network of Rangers available through the IRF. Once he joined, Sean put him in touch with several key contacts in Africa, including Big Life Foundation (an associate IRF member) which supported Vedran in arranging the trip. Vedran spent three weeks in Kenya and Tanzania in several protected areas: Chyulu Hills, Tsavo, Amboseli and Kilimanjaro.

In Kenya, he spent day and night with the Maasai Warrior Rangers learning skills that he would never have learnt elsewhere. Being community Rangers, the Maasai know the lands well, they have exceptional tracking skills and know a great deal about the local flora and fauna. They are also experts on local animal behaviour, giving them an advantage when they come face to face with a wild animal on the African savannah. He also had a chance to learn about their local culture and traditions, he was welcomed by the Maasai Rangers and the local community and was even given a nickname, "Muzungu Simba" - White Lion.

In exchange for this once in a lifetime experience, Vedran organised self-defence courses where he used his advanced martial arts skills to train Big Life and Kenya Wildlife Service Rangers. The training included education about self-defence techniques, arrest and detain techniques of potential poachers, as well as military tactics, camouflage and silent communication.

Poaching in Africa has reached extreme levels with poaching groups being organised and well equipped. Vedran experienced first-hand the dangers that African Rangers face on the front line. During his stay, they arrested poachers from Somalia who were part of an organised smuggling ring.

Having a Ranger exchange like this is invaluable to both parties. It builds relationships, allows the Rangers to exchange skills and experiences and makes them aware that they are part of a larger global family of Rangers.

Maybe your exchange is the next story we can tell?

Do you have any suggestions?

Thank you to everyone who assisted with the creation of the newsletter, image credit Peter Chadwick as part of the Game Rangers Association of Africa initiative, the Ranger Legacy Project. If you have any events, stories of interest or feedback please contact the IRF Executive Officer, Louise

Reynolds via email: executiveofficer@internationalrangers.org.

If you need to contact a member of the IRF Executive team visit the website (<http://www.internationalrangers.org/contact>).