



GUARDAPARQUE

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Guardaparque is a bi-weekly publication prepared and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), an organisation of more than 50 non-governmental and governmental ranger organizations from around the world. **Guardaparque** carries reports on emergency service and law enforcement incidents, reports on protection of parks and the natural and cultural resources within them, reports on programs to educate visitors and communities on the values of parks and protected areas, and reports on the people who are responsible for all these activities. **Guardaparque** contains information from rangers in the field on operations conducted in the field. From time to time, it also reports on political issues affecting those operations. It is supplemented by a quarterly newsletter, **The Thin Green Line**, which focuses on IRF activities. If you have a submission for **Guardaparque**, please send it to the editor, Bill Halainen, at TGLedit@ptd.net.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Zimbabwe – Hwange National Park British Tourists Trampled To Death In Safari Stampede

A mother and her daughter were killed when an elephant trampled them during a safari in a game reserve in western Zimbabwe in late March. The woman's husband was injured in the accident which occurred after the group of holidaymakers had left their vehicles to look closer at a male bull elephant while on a two-night visit to Hwange National Park. Managers at the safari camp where the family were staying said that the elephant had been in musth (a period when bull elephants have high testosterone levels and are very aggressive) and armed guides had not had time to fire directly at the charging animal. The injured man was released after hospital treatment.

Gavin Rennie, of the Hide Camp in the heart of Hwange, which is renowned for its diversity of big game, said: "It happened extremely quickly. They were with an experienced, professional guide who fired a warning shot, but there was no time to fire a second as the elephant charged. The two who died were trampled under the animal as the rest of the group tried to get away". Police said they were investigating if there had been any negligence on the part of the guides during the incident. This tragedy happened while the Britons were on a safari drive in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. After spotting a lone elephant, they left the vehicle to reach close quarters on foot. Mr Rennie said: "It is standard procedure that when there is a fully-qualified guide, our guests can get out of the vehicle and walk towards the animal of interest. The group got closer and it was then that it was noticed the elephant was in musth. The guide signalled for everyone to return to the vehicle and that movement caused the elephant to charge. A warning shot was let off but there was no second shot and the guide was knocked over by the elephant as it hit the two people. It is a dreadful tragedy."

[Source: *The Independent*, England, submitted by Roger Cole, Countryside Management Association]

Australia – Hattah-Kulkyne National Park Police End Marijuana Growing Operation In Park

A major drug growing operation has been discovered inside a national park in Victoria's northwest. Police say a complex piping system that stretched for several kilometres was used to grow marijuana crops inside the Hattah-Kulkyne National Park between Ouyen and Mildura.

The pipes were traced back to a nearby property, where police say large quantities of processed cannabis and cash were found buried. A man is being interviewed about the find but no charges have been laid. Sergeant Mark Edwards said, "We executed a search warrant on the property and uncovered a number of containers that were been buried in the ground containing large amounts of processed cannabis of a high quality, quantities of cash and a number of firearms."

[Source: *ABC Online*, Australia]

United States – Badlands NP Ranger Assaulted During Arrest

While on patrol on April 17th, Ranger Vincent Littlewhiteman came upon a car parked in front of a gate. Because the car was blocking the gate and because it was in an area with a history of fossil poaching activities, Littlewhiteman approached the car to contact the driver, a Christopher Thrall, 24, of Lead, South Dakota.

The driver's side window was down and Littlewhiteman smelled a strong odour of marijuana coming from the car. He had Thrall step out of the vehicle and asked him if he had any weapons or narcotics. Thrall answered no to the former but offered no answer to the latter. Thrall told Littlewhiteman that he was only a park ranger and that he had no authority; he then lunged at Littlewhiteman, grabbing his shirt pocket in an attempt to retrieve his driver's license inside. Littlewhiteman told him he was under arrest and a struggle ensued. When the ranger drew his taser, Thrall told him to go ahead and use it because he'd been tasered before and that it didn't work on him. When Thrall made a move toward his car in what appeared to be an effort to obtain a weapon, Littlewhiteman discharged the taser. Thrall reached around and pulled the taser's barbs from his back, then stumbled and fell to the ground. Littlewhiteman attempted to arrest him, but Thrall resumed fighting. Littlewhiteman then drew out his baton and snapped it open, at which point Thrall submitted to being handcuffed and arrested. During the subsequent search, Littlewhiteman recovered about 22 grams of suspected marijuana.

Thrall was taken to the county jail. Neither man was injured in the confrontation. Thrall remains in federal custody and felony assault charges are being brought against him by the U.S. Attorney's Office. Thrall is a multi-state offender and has a history of drug arrests.

[Source: *National Park Service Morning Report*, United States]

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

United States – Wind Cave National Park Black-Footed Ferrets Being Reintroduced Into Park

Black-footed ferrets, which are among the rarest animals in North America, will be returning to Wind Cave National Park. "This summer marks the thirtieth anniversary of the last sighting of a black-footed ferret in Wind Cave National Park," said acting superintendent Tom Farrell. "This reintroduction effort will not only restore a missing species to our mixed-grass prairie, but the ferrets will also help in the management of our prairie dog population."

The park is planning to reintroduce approximately 20 to 25 black-footed ferrets annually for the next three to five years under a scientific experimental/recovery permit issued under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. This permit allows experimental reintroductions to occur within park boundaries and provides mechanisms to ensure that private property interests outside the park are not impacted.

Management actions used to reintroduce ferrets and manage the prairie dog population will be consistent with the park's recently completed prairie dog management plan that limits prairie dogs to a range of 1,000 to 3,000 acres within the park.

[Source: *InsideNPS*, United States]

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Australia – Wollemi National Park New Rock Art Found In Blue Mountains

Experts have discovered what they say is some of southeast Australia's most culturally significant indigenous rock art in a remote area of the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. Located in the Wollemi National Park, the rock art sites include white hand stencils and charcoal drawings of human figures and animals. They also feature representations of Eagle Hawk, who Aboriginal people believe created part of southeast Australia's landscape, and ancestral beings Baiame and Daramulan.

The sites were first discovered late last year by a team of archaeologists, indigenous people and bushwalkers led by Griffith University professor Paul Tacon. But Professor Tacon said the significance of the sites had only been realised after further study. "No other rock art site in southeast Australia depicts all the key ancestral beings in the one place," he said. "The site contains more than any other in the country. Due to the area's remoteness and rugged terrain, people in ancient times could not live there for long periods of time, suggesting they would make pilgrimages to the area because of its spiritual importance." The sites had also been identified as a teaching area, with evidence males and females of all ages visited there.

Professor Tacon said rock art was most commonly found in northern Australia and the discovery in the Blue Mountains confirmed southeast Australia still had strong links to Aboriginal culture and art practice. "With all the change that has occurred in the greater Sydney region, it has been felt by some people that Aboriginal culture has been lost," he said. "But this find ... strengthens links to this ancient civilisation. We believe this is just the beginning of what is out there and are excited about the future possibilities of what our work could uncover."

[Source: *The Australian*, Australia]

India – Dachigam National Park Mysterious Fires Put Out, Endangered Species Protected

Firefighters have put out a number of mysterious fires that burned for three days inside Jammu and Kashmir's Dachigam National Park earlier this week. The fires threatened some of the parks rarest plants and animal species. The fires had broken out at six places in the higher reaches of the park. "Officials of the Wildlife Protection Department assisted by fire and emergency services have finally succeeded in extinguishing the fires," said Basharat Ahmad Dhar, Kashmir divisional commissioner.

Dachigam is home to the highly endangered Kashmir red deer, known as Hangul. This subspecies of the red deer, native to northern India, is not found anywhere else in the world. The Hangul is at the top of the endangered list of the Wild Wide Fund for Nature. Besides the Hangul, there are black bears, snow leopards, jackals, foxes, partridges, pheasants and wild fowls inside the park.

Betula trees, the bark of which was used for writing before the discovery of paper, also grow on the higher reaches of this park. Mountain streams that run through the park carry the introduced brown trout. The local fisheries department also has a big hatchery inside Dachigam where they grow rainbow trout. These highly priced table delicacies are sold to locals and tourists alike.

[Source: *Indo-Asian News Service*, India]

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

No entries.

NEWS ABOUT RANGERS

Democratic Republic of Congo – Kahuzi-Biega National Park DRC Park Ranger Escapes Rebel Abduction

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a park ranger is home safe after escaping from a rebel group that held him captive for two years. The ranger, Jean-Marie Cizungu Kazingufu, was kidnapped in 2005 from his post at the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in eastern DRC. Last week he emerged from the forest, battered and exhausted after an eight-day escape on foot.

Samantha Newport works with WildlifeDirect, an organization that helps rangers in the DRC. She said Kazingufu made a break for freedom when he became convinced he would be killed.

"Just recently, last week, he managed to make his daring escape following a brutally beaten when he believed he was going to be killed," she said. "He made a desperate run for it. After eight days of roaming the forest he came across a roadblock where he was able to negotiate his freedom."

Newport says while in captivity Kazingufu was forced to work as a secretary for a rebel group because he speaks both French and Swahili. She says the rebels abused and tortured him.

"He is now back at home with his wife, but he is going to be going back to work," she added. "He is very keen to be going back to his work." However, she added the recovery from his injuries would be slow.

Newport said there has been a history of rebel attacks on rangers in the park, which is in the Kivu Region of the DRC, near Lake Kivu and the Rwandan border.

"They are very much targeted by rebel groups operating in the area, because they are seen as an obstacle to what rebel groups want to achieve," she explained. "So they [the rangers] are really incredibly brave and incredibly dedicated."

Another ranger was injured in a shooting earlier this week by unidentified armed men in the forest.

Newport says rebel groups target forest rangers because of their anti-poaching operations. The Kahuzi-Biega National Park is home to much wildlife, including elephants, rhinos, and the rare mountain gorilla.

Though Kazingufu identified his attackers as Mai Mai rebels, DRC analyst Mbwebwe Kapamba says it is difficult to say who is responsible for the attacks on rangers. He says Mai Mai are a diverse group who were active during the DRC's civil war, and some remain active today. "Some of them are siding with the government, the power in Kinshasa, some of them are against. It is difficult to say that it is a homogeneous group," he noted. Kampamba says there is little government control in the area and bandits claim to be part of larger rebel movements.

In the past decade more than 100 rangers have been killed in the DRC. Poachers in the area have recently started using automatic weapons to hunt legally protected animals for their meat, tusks and teeth.

[Source: *Voice of America*, United States]

Prepared and published by the International Ranger Federation as a service to rangers around the world. Submissions should be sent to Bill Halainen at TGLedit@ptd.net or Bill_Halainen@nps.gov.