



GUARDAPARQUE

June 15, 2007

Volume 1

Number 11

Guardaparque is a bi-weekly publication prepared and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), an organisation of about 60 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 Bill_Halainen@nps.gov.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Chad – Zakouma National Park Video Shows Rangers Fighting To Protect Elephants

The National Geographic Magazine web site has a nine-minute-long video on the efforts that rangers in Chad are making to stop elephant poaching. It's called "Ivory Wars: Last Stand In Zakouma." Go to the web site below and then click on the video:

http://www7.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0703/sights_n_sounds/index.html

Here's a description from the web site: "Zakouma National Park in south-eastern Chad is home to one of the world's largest remaining concentrations of elephants. Despite a tumultuous history of slavery, colonialism, and civil war, conservationists have managed to create a wildlife refuge here. Zakouma's armed guards have ensured sanctuary for the hundreds of species that reside within the nearly 1,200 square mile park (3,100 square kilometres). Often at great personal risk, the guards fight a dangerous war against poachers who hunt the animals for their value on the black market or as cultural talismans. As the annual rains arrive to replenish the desert landscape, some 3,500 elephants search for better forage outside the park's perimeter, where poachers await them."

[Source: *National Geographic Magazine*, United States]

Australia - Murramarang National Park Kangaroos Mutilated And Killed In Park

Police have been called in to investigate the killing of three kangaroos, beaten to death and mutilated in a National Park on the New South Wales South Coast. The three animals were found dead on Sunday within 100 metres of each other near the boat ramp at South Durras in the Murramarang National Park north of Batemans Bay. One kangaroo was decapitated, one had been beaten to death and one had its eyes gouged out and was left with a joey still alive in its pouch.

Police and the National Parks and Wildlife Service are appealing for the community's help in tracking down the culprits. The kangaroos at the popular tourist spot had lost their fear of humans, which made them vulnerable to attacks.

"I have never come across anything as bad as this in my many years with the NPWS," said an agency director. "The staff and I are completely disgusted by what has occurred. The fact that it has happened in a National Park, land set aside specifically to act as a haven for native animals, is beyond comprehension."

The five-month-old joey, which weighs 900 grams, is now struggling for survival. People caught harming protected fauna face a jail sentence of up to six months and can be fined as much as \$11,000.

[Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, Australia]

United States – Grand Teton National Park Grizzly Attacks And Injures Visitor

Dennis Vandebos, a 54-year-old resident of Lander, Wyoming, was injured by a grizzly bear around 6 a.m. on Wednesday, June 13th, while walking on the Wagon Road just below the corrals at Jackson Lake Lodge. Vandebos surprised grizzly bear #399 and her three cubs, who were feeding on a freshly-killed elk carcass.

The attack likely resulted from a defensive response by the bear, while protecting its food source. At this time, no adverse action will be taken against the bear involved in this incident.

Vandebos took an early morning walk at approximately 5:30 a.m. and was returning to his room at the lodge when the incident occurred. He reported watching an elk off to his right, then noticing the bear and her cubs approaching to his left, within ten feet of him. Vandebos yelled, but one of the bears continued toward him; he yelled again, then jumped off the trail and laid on his stomach in a submissive posture. At this point, the bear inflicted puncture wounds and lacerations to Vandebos before it was frightened off by the shouting of a Lodge company wrangler who was nearby at the time. The wrangler administered emergency medical assistance to Vandebos until park rangers arrived on the scene. A park ambulance then transported Vandebos to St. John's Medical Center in Jackson for treatment of his injuries.

Park officials have posted closures for the Wagon Road and trails in the Willow Flats area below Jackson Lake Lodge. Signs state that the area is closed due to bears frequenting the vicinity. The Wagon Road and trail closures will likely be in effect until the end of June, during the remainder of the elk calving season.

Sow grizzly #399 and her three yearling cubs have been utilizing habitat in and around the Willow Flats area since emerging from hibernation this spring. This bear family has frequently been visible along park roadsides between Colter Bay and the Oxbow Bend turnout of the Snake River, one mile east of Jackson Lake Junction. These are not the only bears in the area; several other bears – black and grizzly – are also utilizing habitat in this location.

This is the first bear incident involving injuries in Grand Teton National Park this year. The last time a grizzly injured a person in the park was in October of 2001 when a hunter from Minnesota surprised a bear on Schoolhouse Hill north of Moran Junction. That same year, a local resident was injured by a grizzly bear in March while backcountry skiing in the Upper Berry Creek area of the park. A previous grizzly-related injury in Grand Teton happened in August of 1994, when a jogger from Utah was attacked on the Emma Matilda Lake Trail.

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

Democratic Republic of Congo – Virunga National Park Endangered Mountain Gorilla Mother Shot Dead

On Saturday, June 9th, a two-month-old mountain gorilla was found clutching its dead mother, which had been shot in the back of the head by armed attackers in the southern sector of Virunga National Park. Rangers who came across the horrific scene were able to rescue baby Ndakazi and take it to Goma, where the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project (MGVP) is now caring for it. Gapira Wa Mutazimiza, the deputy head warden for the area, has announced that the mother's body would later be buried. The female gorilla, revealed to be Rubiga, and her infant were members of the 32-strong Kabirizi family, the largest habituated group of mountain gorillas living in Virunga National Park. The Gorilla Organization, which supports community-based conservation around the park, recently celebrated the birth of baby Ndakazi, who was named in honour of the chief monitoring ranger, who died earlier this year.

Greg Cummings, director of the Gorilla Organization said, "We are devastated that this park and these endangered gorillas are yet again victims. With so few mountain gorillas left in the wild, an attack of this kind can have a very grave impact on the long-term survival prospects of the species". Gorilla infants are dependent on their mother's breast milk for the first three years of their lives and do not thrive in captivity. While baby Ndakazi is reported to be taking baby formula milk, it remains in critical condition following its ordeal.

This is the third attack to shock the Virunga National Park since the beginning of the year. In January, the remains of two silverback gorillas were found in a pit latrine, having been slaughtered and eaten by rebel soldiers based in the area, and just three weeks ago rebel troops attacked ranger patrol posts in the northern sector of the park, leaving two people dead and three people injured. Following the attack the troops threatened to harm the gorillas if any retaliation was made against them. More than 100 rangers have been killed in the line of duty during a decade of civil wars and humanitarian crises in DRC.

[Source: The Gorilla Organization, U.K., sent along by Wayne Lotter, GRAA]

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Russia – Zov Tigra National Park Russia Establishes Park For Tigers

Russia has established a national park to protect Siberian tigers. The Zov Tigra National Park – the name of which translates from Russian to mean "Roar of the Tiger" – is the first protected area of its kind in Russia's Far East, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said.

The 200,000-acre park will protect the big cat's habitat while simultaneously allowing for nature tourism, according to the WWF. The group estimates there are about 500 Siberian tigers left in the wild.

It is "enormously important for the survival of the world's largest cat," Darron Collins, managing director of WWF's Amur-Heilong Program in the United States, said in a news release.

The group said it had been pushing for a decade for the park's creation, and "had to demonstrate an economically viable future for protecting a pretty big chunk of land," Collins said.

For Zov Tigra, "that future has got to include sustainable, ecologically based tourism," he said.

The Russian Far East, near the country's eastern coast and the Chinese border, has several strictly protected areas where no human activity is allowed and several wildlife management areas that permit natural resource extraction, WWF said.

The organization called for more protected areas in the region for Siberian tigers, which are threatened by poaching for their bones and skin for use in Chinese medicine.

[Source: *The Associated Press*, United States]

India – Gujarat Rangers Use Animal Ring Tones To Lure Leopards

Rangers in western India are using mobile phone ring tones of cows mooing, goats bleating and cockerels crowing in order to attract leopards that have wandered into villages. Leopards, wandering into villages in search of food, are attacking people. A senior forest official in the state of Gujarat said rangers use the sounds of animals played through speakers set behind a cage to lure the leopards into captivity. Five leopards have been captured for re-release since the method was adopted a month ago.

[Source: *Reuters Ahmedabad*, sent along by Gordon Miller]

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

United States – North Cascades National Park Global Warming Clouds National Parks

Global warming is altering the identity of national parks in the West, especially the Pacific Northwest, where the iconic string of glacier-capped mountains inexorably shrinks from the horizon, park officials warn. The melting ice caps in Washington state, home to more glaciers than anywhere else in the lower 48, are providing one of the most visual accountings of global warming outside Alaska and the Arctic region, enhanced by federal officials' digital archiving last year of photos of park glaciers taken 50 years ago.

The changes over the decades are threatening the aesthetics and ecosystems of parks such as North Cascades, imperilling the country's natural heritage, park officials and conservationists said. Glacier National Park in Montana has lost 124 of its 150 glaciers in the last 150 years and is projected to have none left by about 2030, according to park officials.

"It's awful. We've got to change our ways," said Steve Shuster, 55, an architectural designer from Seattle and a regular North Cascades visitor.

Another passer-by enjoying the 360-degree panorama of white-capped summits, Sherry Cline, 75, agreed. "If they're all bare peaks up there, what's it going to be?" said the retired high school biology teacher from Lynden, Wash.

President Bush, criticized by some as dragging his feet on climate change, last month proposed an international gathering to address carbon emissions. At the same time, the Interior Department announced a new climate change task force to look at national parks and other agencies. Conservationist groups have long warned that many parks are facing damage from greenhouse gases. As last week's G-8 summit put Earth's rising temperature on an international stage, park enthusiasts and their supporters said they were heartened to see the Bush administration say it was taking the issue seriously.

"They're finally starting to get it," said Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.), who attended a recent gathering of the state's three national park superintendents and others at Seattle's Mountaineers club, where discussion focused on repairing parks after last fall's flooding.

Not everyone agrees that mankind's emissions are causing warming. Some scientists in Washington and elsewhere contend that natural cooling and heating cycles are at work.

In North Cascades and Mt. Rainier National Parks, both in Washington state, six glaciers under study have shrunk by 45 percent in the past 100 years, a park geologist said. The 312 glaciers in North Cascades park, spanning 42 square miles, account for a quarter of all glaciers in the lower 48 states, park officials said. The Natural Resources Defense Council, a conservation group, has identified 12 national parks in the West, including North Cascades and Mt. Rainier, as most at risk from climate change, and seven face loss of snowfields and glaciers.

"Olympic, Mt. Rainier, North Cascades and Glacier [National Parks] -- you can look at a large geographic region using the parks as the sampling points of the impacts of global climate change," said North Cascades Supt. Chip Jenkins.

Emerging from the icy losses has been pristine land not seen or touched by humans for centuries, as well as new lakes, park officials said. Still, the big thaw is troublesome because the runoff may cause powerful, destructive flooding and could deprive high-altitude animals and organisms of cool water in the summer, park officials said.

No one is saying Washington's vistas of glaciers, including the magnificent Mt. Rainier on Seattle's skyline, will vanish soon, not even in 100 years. But the issue remains a cause of concern and controversy.

Don Easterbrook, professor emeritus of geology at Western Washington University, who has studied climate change for 40 years, agrees that glaciers are shrinking but says there's a good chance it's a result of solar changes, not carbon emissions. Easterbrook also noted that the trend analysis of the past 100 years begins with a cool period in which glaciers would naturally be advancing and ends with a relatively warm 30-year period in which glaciers inevitably would shrink. "In a nutshell, what it looks like is there's a strong possibility that what we're seeing is climate change due to solar output," Easterbrook said.

Meanwhile, Philip Mote with the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington said a study of 11 states west of the Rockies shows that snow pack has shrunk by 10 - 15% from the 1950s to 2000. Scientists at the University of California, San Diego, found earlier springtime snow melts and lower summer river flows in the same 11 states from 1948 to 2002.

The snow pack melt became controversial when Washington state's associate climatologist, Mark Albright, disputed Mote's findings and referred to them as "the myth of the vanishing snow pack caused by global warming" in the Portland Oregonian in February. Albright was stripped of his state title, an unpaid post, and remains a research meteorologist at the University of Washington, said Mote, who also is state climatologist and was Albright's boss.

The slow disappearance of glaciers and snow pack would fundamentally alter the attraction of such parks as North Cascades, where "with little effort, you feel like you're the only person for hundreds of miles," said ranger Charles Beall.

For the past 25 years, geologist Jon Riedel, 48, has been studying glaciers, which he considers "dramatic indicators" of climate change. A native of Marshfield, Wisconsin, he became fascinated with how ancient glaciers altered the Wisconsin landscape and then landed his dream job in this national park where he could actually encounter them. "I don't have to imagine," he said. The thaw holds serious economic implications for the Northwest, Riedel added.

Natural melting typically yields 250 billion gallons of fresh water every year; for comparison purposes, the Chicago area draws 767 billion gallons a year from Lake Michigan; which feeds the Skagit and Columbia Rivers and in turn helps produce the state's renowned cheap electricity. The waters also aid recovery efforts for endangered fish and provide irrigation for winter wheat fields and fruit orchards.

Glacier loss eventually would mean smaller waterways, Riedel said. "The landscapes will remain after the glaciers are gone, but it's not the same, is it?" he said.

[Source: *The Chicago Tribune*, United States]

Russian Federation - Kamchatka – Kronotsky National Reserve World-Renowned Geysers Lost In Mudslide

The Valley of the Geysers in the Kronotsky National Reserve in Kamchatka is famous for its 90 or so geysers and numerous colourful thermal pools, but it suffered a calamitous event recently when most of it was destroyed as a massive landslide carried millions of cubic metres of mud and stones over the top of the geysers.

A mound covered by snow collapsed 'within seconds,' causing a huge landslide that engulfed two thirds of the valley, park ranger Valery Tyspkov told Russian TV. He added that torrent destroyed most of the geysers as it came to a halt close to the valley's hotel.

Laura Williams, director of the Kamchatka office of WWF said the mudslide erased the pearl of Kamchatka, part of a World Heritage site of Geyser Valley. Ironically the resulting thermal lake could become a new attraction for Russians. Williams said the losses were a tragedy for mankind, as we have lost one of the great natural wonders of the world, but added a philosophical note when she said "but for nature, this is only a blip in the planets evolution."

[Source: *The Guardian*, England, sent along by Gordon Miller]

NEWS ABOUT RANGERS

Uganda – Queen Elizabeth National Park Rangers Arrested Following Eviction Of Herdsmen

Police in Kasese have arrested 12 rangers of the Uganda Wildlife Authority for violently evicting Basongora herdsmen from Queen Elizabeth National Park. They will be charged with attempted murder. Ten people were injured in the eviction operation. The rangers, who were acting on directives from the Minister of State for Tourism, used live ammunition to drive the pastoralists out.

"They started shooting at people and destroying their houses and their property. That was high-handedness," said Kasese Regional Police Commander Martin Abilu. "There were many rangers involved in the incident, but we focused on those who did the actual shooting." He said he had also summoned the officer who led the operation and accused him of having lost control of the operation.

Abilu said it was unfair to push out the Basongora before finding them a permanent settlement. He noted that President Museveni last year appointed an inter-ministerial team, chaired by agriculture minister Hillary Onok to come up with a solution.

Two of the injured were yesterday still admitted at a clinic in Kasese town. Keziya Kato, 44, had sustained a deep cut on the head while Christopher Happy, 26, was shot in the right foot and the upper arm.

But the Uganda Wildlife Authority denied its officers injured anybody. The chief warden of the park, Tom Okello, said his operatives' shot in the air to disperse a mob of Basongora, armed with clubs, stones and other weapons, which had overwhelmed the 10 park rangers.

The Basongora entered the park in March 2006 with some 10,000 head of cattle after they were chased out of Virunga National Park by the Congolese authorities. The herdsmen were allowed to stay in a corner of the park as a temporary measure. However, they penetrated deeper into the park, while others from as far as Nakasero and Luweero joined them. UWA estimates the number of cows presently in the park at up to 30,000.

The police also arrested three suspected poachers, who were armed with AK 47 rifles, and are hunting for three others.

The UWA director of operations, Sam Mwandha, said the arrest of the rangers was an attempt to intimidate them.

[Source: *The Sunday Vision*, Uganda]

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