



GUARDAPARQUE

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

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

United States – Everglades National Park Manatee Protection Boating Operation Conducted

Park rangers, in cooperation with the United States Coast Guard, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, recently ran a third special operation to enforce manatee speed zones in the Gulf Coast District (Florida manatees – *Trichechus manatus atirostris* – are an endangered species in the U.S.) Rangers and officers worked in Chokoloskee Bay, issuing 24 speed zone citations along with numerous safety and resource violations over a two-day period. The operation coincided with a large “catch and keep” fishing tournament that takes place every year at the end of the spring snook season. Rangers spoke at the captain's meeting prior to the tournament; as a result, no violations were issued to any of the participants over the weekend. Chokoloskee Bay is considered an area of inadequate protection for manatees and is undergoing an interagency review to improve the protection for this endangered species. Enforcement is therefore increasing, as are outreach and education efforts by rangers. The result has been improved compliance with speed limits in these zones. More special operations are planned for the future.

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

Israel – Qumran National Park Four Visitors Die In Flash Flood Despite Ranger Warning

A park ranger described to police how he had told a group of hikers to leave a streambed shortly before a flash flood killed four of them. Ismail Abu Mahmoud said he saw the group enter the site at Qumran at about 9 a.m., not long before a storm began. According to police sources, he told investigators that as soon as the rain began, he warned the group to turn back due to the risk of flash floods. Some members of the group left the area, while the remainder stayed, he said.

Police are gathering statements from the rest of the hikers and their three guides to determine whether criminal behavior was involved. Sources in the Judea and Samaria Police District said they wanted to give the survivors time to recover and to attend the funerals of their friends. Officers yesterday said that criminal charges were unlikely against the hikers, "there doesn't appear to be much we can do to them," one officer said, "They entered the creek bed in an organized manner, before the storm began, and you can't really say they were disobedient. In any event it's not clear that any crime can be attached to them, and it's doubtful that prosecution is appropriate." The police called on the Israel Defense Forces and the Israel Nature and Parks Protection Authority to formulate a policy on blocking hikers from accessing flood areas.

[Source: *Ha'aretz*, Israel]

United States – Yosemite National Park Fatal Fall From Half Dome

At 3 p.m. on Thursday, April 19th, Yosemite dispatch received a cell phone report from witnesses who reported that about two hours earlier a solo hiker had slipped off the Half Dome cables and slid out of sight. The cables are laid down on the rock this time of year and the stanchions that hold the cables up are removed to prevent damage by avalanches. Rescue personnel began hiking the nine miles toward Half Dome because weather made flying impossible. The team was turned around above the shoulder of the dome several hours later by heavy snow, wind, and icy conditions that made travel on the exposed ridge too dangerous even before they reached the bottom of the cables. The bad weather continued throughout the following day and the dome was never out of the clouds. The weather broke the following morning and a spotter posted across Tenaya Canyon from Half Dome picked out what he believed was a body in the gully to the north of and below the cables. The location of the body, about 1,000 feet below the base of the cables, was confirmed from a helicopter. A recovery team was flown to the shoulder of Half Dome and was able to descend to the victim utilizing crampons, ice axes and roped climbing. The body was flown out by long line under a helicopter. She was eventually identified as Jennie Bettles, a 43-years old marketing executive and marathon runner from Oakland, California.

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

United States – Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park Rescue Of Seriously Injured Climber

Climbing ranger Brent Mims received a report of an accident on a climbing route graded at 5.10 (very difficult) in SOB Gully around 9 p.m. on the evening of April 19th. A 21-year-old man from Colorado Springs was climbing with three other people when he fell about 30 feet below his belay, taking a total fall of 50 feet. He was unresponsive for about two minutes and had an obvious deformity to his right hand. The nearly eight-hour-long rescue involved a 150-foot technical climb to reach the summit of a detached pillar, then the 400-foot lowering of a rescuer to the injured climber's position. A separate haul system was constructed to traverse the rescuer and injured man along the top of the pillar to a point where they could be lowered into the gully. They were then hauled 600 feet to the canyon rim. This rescue was the first of the year utilizing a team of dedicated volunteer climbers who are familiar with the Black Canyon and train with the staff. This complex rescue, led by Mims, would have undoubtedly been exceedingly difficult without the support of these volunteers.

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

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Republic of Korea – Jirisan National Park Asiatic Black Bear Restoration Project

It has been reported that 13 Asiatic black bears have awakened from their hibernation in Jirisan National Park, according to the Species Restoration Center, Korea National Park Service. These bears went to winter sleep in December 2006. The Species Restoration Center found that many of these young bears (two to three years old) started their activities five to twelve days earlier than in 2005 and 2006 due to the warm spring weather, which is above the average temperature. The Species Restoration Center, plans to conduct daily monitoring of the activities of bears and remove every dangerous factor found, like poison and snares, within the home range of the bears. Since it is expected that bears actively search for food after hibernation, the Species Restoration Center also works to minimize the damage to local people's bee farming. It plans to increase the number of electric fences around commercial hives from 49 to 100 this year.

The following is a brief history of the Asiatic black bear restoration project in South Korea:

- Four bears were experimentally released into Jirisan National Park in September 2001
- An MOU was signed between the Republic of Korea and Russia on black bear protection in September 2003 (Russian Asiatic black bears have the same origins as Korean black bears)
- Seven bears from Ussurisk Nature Reserve in Russia were introduced in 5.2ha soft reintroduction enclosures inside Jirisan National Park in October 2004
- Bears were from North Korea in 2005
- The second release of bears from Russia took place in 2005

Twenty Asiatic black bears have been released since 2001. Of these, seven bears died or were removed, snares killed three, three were collected due to the failure of natural adaptation, and one is missing. Currently, 13 bears successfully survived in Jirisan National Park. The Korea National Park Service started its Asiatic black bear restoration project in 2001 at Jirisan National Park.

[Source: Gyu Sung Lee, Dadohaehaesang National Park, Korea National Park Service]

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Slovak Republic – Tatras National Park Nature Reserves Within Park Opened To Logging

The State Forest Administration began harvesting wood in Ticha and Koprova National Nature Reserves in Slovakia's Tatras National Park in April. The World Wildlife Federation (WWF) has strongly criticized the move as clearly contravening both national and EU nature conservation legislation. Both Ticha and Koprova Nature Reserves are among the list of sites proposed by the Slovak government for inclusion in the EU's 'Natura 2000' network of specially protected sites. The forest administration and the Ministry of Environment have justified the harvesting on the basis of a study undertaken by the Slovak State Nature Conservation Agency and the National Forestry Centre, which maintains that EU conservation legislation requires active harvesting of trees felled by a 2004 windstorm. A WWF-commissioned evaluation has strongly criticized the government-financed study for not meeting requirements for assessments as laid out in Article 6.3 and 6.4 of the EU's Habitats Directive. The evaluation found the study to be one-sided, ignoring generally recognized facts regarding ecology and the dynamics of ecosystems, and methodologically flawed. "From the perspective of nature conservation, there is not a single reason for harvesting wood toppled by the wind storm in the Ticha and Koprova Nature Reserves," said Dr Zdenka Krenova of Sumava National Park in the Czech Republic and a co-author of the evaluation. WWF has called on the Slovak State Forestry Administration to stop harvesting in the two valleys immediately, and on the relevant authorities to undertake a proper assessment of the planned harvesting according to Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive.

[Source: World Wildlife Federation, courtesy Vaughn Baker, U.S. Association of National Park Rangers]

Grenada – National Park System Grenada’s “Crown Jewels” Are Up For Sale

The Grenadian government has passed an amendment to the Grenada National Parks and Protected Areas Act, giving the Governor General the right to sell national parks land (and other protected areas) to private developers. The amendment to the National Parks Act allows the sale of the Mount Hartman National Park – the last stronghold of the critically endangered Grenada Dove *Leptotila wellsi* – for a massive hotel and villa complex.

Half the global population of Grenada Dove – less than 120 individual birds – are found within the Mount Hartman Estate, with the majority currently finding safe haven inside the Mount Hartman National Park. "By paving the way for the sale of the Mount Hartman National Park, the Grenada government seems to have gone back on its word that the park would remain intact," said David Wege, BirdLife's Caribbean program manager. As recently as the end of February, the Hon. Ann David-Antoine, Minister of Health, Social Security and the Environment stated in a letter that "the Government has not abolished the sanctuary [Mount Hartman National Park] nor will it do so."

Said Wege: "With foreign investors and developers apparently driving the development process in Grenada, the loosening of the National Parks Act is potentially devastating for the protection of Grenada's rich natural heritage." Conservationists have also expressed concern over recent claims from the Grenadian government that the developer responsible for the proposed Four Seasons development has been given time to undertake a full environmental impact assessment and that "no final decision on the development has yet been made" on the hotel development. Photographic evidence suggests otherwise. Approximately half of Hog Island – a critical part of the Four Seasons project – has been cleared, ready for building work to commence.

Since news of the potential sale of the park was announced, a number of ornithologists, conservation organizations and high-profile supporters have lent their voice to the campaign to ensure the Grenada Dove is adequately protected. Noted author Graeme Gibson, who alongside Margaret Atwood is a co-patron of BirdLife's Rare Bird Club, has created a website offering advice and information to those who are interested in supporting the campaign and lobbying both Grenada and Four Seasons. The website can be found at: www.grenadadovecampaign.com.

[Source: *Bird Life International*, courtesy of Jeff Ohlfs, U.S. Association of National Park Rangers]

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

No entries.

NEWS ABOUT RANGERS

Guatemala – Tikal National Park Two Rangers Shot And Killed

Past president Rick Smith has sent along the following information, noting that he has tried several times to get more information on these murders but has had no success at all. Here's what we know: "On the 4th of August of last year, two resource guards (the Guatemalan term used for park rangers) were gunned down by unknown assailants while on duty in Tikal National Park in Guatemala during a robbery at the park entrance station. The names of the rangers were Manuel de Jesus Diaz Corado and Hugo Nathanael Lopez Barrera. The IRF extends its sympathy to the families and co-workers of these fallen colleagues."

[Source: Rick Smith, IRF]

Canada – National Parks Park Wardens Stripped Of Weapons And Equipment

Canada's park wardens were stripped of all law enforcement duties and equipment on May 10th, the day after a federal ruling called for them to be issued handguns. Parks Canada has taken away enforcement tools such as batons, handcuffs, body armour and pepper spray from wardens. They

have also been asked to turn in badges that identify them as peace officers. And if they encounter anything criminal on the job – from wildlife poachers to noisy campers – they are now under orders to call the RCMP and stay back until police arrive. "It's a big invitation to criminals to come out to our national parks just before the long weekend," said Patty Ducharme, national executive vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the union representing the wardens, "It's ludicrous."

Parks Canada was ordered to either arm wardens and give them weapons training or remove their law enforcement role in a 200-page decision issued by appeals officer Douglas Malanka. In order to ensure wardens are "protected from danger" while Parks Canada pores over the report, all the trappings and responsibilities of law enforcement have been taken away from the officers. "We've directed our 42 national parks to have wardens stand down from active law enforcement," said parks director general Doug Stewart. "We don't want any confusion in the public about what their role is right now. We don't want people to make any mistakes." Stewart said that wardens would be allowed to continue carrying bear spray when doing conservation work.

The decision to turn law enforcement duties over to the RCMP is an interim one while Parks Canada decides whether to arm its wardens, permanently remove the law enforcement role or appeal the ruling. The seven-year battle for wardens to carry side arms has involved several court challenges and at times has divided wardens, not all of who are in favour of carrying guns. But the Banff National Park warden who first launched the challenge is ecstatic over the ruling and is urging Parks Canada to get on with the process of arming its 400 wardens currently on duty in the National Parks. "I hope they understand finally what Mr. Malanka has told them," said Doug Martin. "That for our safety we need to be armed."

[Source: *Calgary Herald*, Canada, courtesy of Augusto Atturo, Italian Ranger Association – for more information, go to the National Park Warden Association home page at www.parkwardens.ca]

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.