



## **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. If you have a submission for **Guardaparque**, please send it to the editor, Bill Halainen, at [Bill\\_Halainen@nps.gov](mailto:Bill_Halainen@nps.gov).

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### **EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

#### **Democratic Republic Of Congo – Virunga National Park Ranger Killed, Others Dislocated By Ongoing Fighting**

Jobogo Mirindi from the DRC has sent along this report on the terrible impacts of the ongoing war in his country on rangers and their families and the wildlife they are attempting to protect:

It is now two months since I returned from Ireland, where I attended a course in World Heritage management. I thought this was the right time to share my academic experience with my colleagues in the field – unfortunately, the park was hosting rebels instead of tourists.

Maximum efforts were made by rangers and conservation NGOs after the killing of the four gorillas in August 2007. The chief warden, Norbert Mushenzi, and other colleagues were very active but they could not resist after the deployment of rebels group commanded by Laurent Nkunda in Mikenso sector. Eight gorillas have been killed since January 2007 and the number of the rangers killed under the course of their duties keeps on increasing. Since August, the park has lost control of the gorilla sector where the militias are based. Fifty habituated gorillas are lost in the trans-boundary region between DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. They will be safe if they managed to escape in the neighbouring reserves in Rwanda or in Uganda. It is difficult to confirm whether they are safe or not. We hope the political crisis will get a solution very soon so that we can monitor the remaining population and protect them.

Rangers from Bikenge, Bukima and Jomba Patrol Posts were obliged to bring their families to the headquarters. The whole gorilla sector, including Rutshuru, Jomba and Rugari, is currently occupied by militias. This has also caused school children to move to the new villages, since there was a fear that school children will be enrolled forcefully by the rebels. The situation remains confused and some sectors are inaccessible.

On the week ending on October 27, rangers from Kabaraza attempted to conduct a patrol along Ngwenda River to monitor the hippo pool; unfortunately, they walked into an ambush and

exchanged fire with the Mai Mai rebels. The rangers ran short of ammunition. Ranger Rwiko was shot dead, while Ranger Gato was injured at the shoulder and was rescued by a Medecins Sans Frontieres team based at Kiwanja. Gato is now recovering in Rutshuru Hospital.

The crisis is now general and has affected the community's livelihood in both Masisi and Rutshuru. The price of food at the local market has increased; all farmers are now living as refugees in camps where they are being assisted by local NGOs. In Goma, the price of charcoal has increased from 5,500 Fr. (11 USD) to 11,000 Fr. (20 USD), almost doubling. This has also caused an increase in deforestation around the park.

In the central sector of the park, the Mai Mai have agreed to join the government army and are now regrouping to get ready for military training. A section of rangers was deployed last week to protect the remaining hippos after the departure of the Mai Mai rebel group. Lulimbi sector is still occupied by the Interahamwe rebel group – at Rumangabo, in the gorilla sector, ranger posts have been occupied by rebels since September and all park staff are regrouped at Rumangabo headquarters and other places in Goma until the area is safe. On the other side of Rwanda and Uganda, gorilla tourism is going on as usual. We hope there will be a solution of the crisis to allow rangers to monitor the remaining gorillas after the ceasefire.

### **United States – Crater Lake National Park Rangers Found To Have Acted Properly In Fatal Shooting**

This report on the enquiry into a violent confrontation at Crater Lake NP, handled entirely appropriately by the involved rangers, appeared in the US National Park Service *Morning Report*, a daily publication available at <http://home.nps.gov/applications/morningreport/>. This report appeared last week:

On July 27, 2005, two Crater Lake rangers responded to a domestic disturbance in Mazama Campground. During the incident, one of the rangers shot and killed the man involved in the disturbance as he charged them while brandishing a deadly weapon and threatening to kill them. The investigations into this shooting, and the board of review that was convened afterward, found that the involved rangers were acting within the scope of their duties and in full compliance with National Park Service policies. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon concluded that it was a justifiable and necessary use of deadly force to prevent death or great bodily harm.

At the time of the shooting, based on the interests and needs of the involved rangers, and in consultation with the U.S. Attorney's Office and deputy solicitor, the park chose not to release their names to the public. With the passage of two years, and in consultation with the involved rangers, comes the realisation that sharing information about shooting incidents with the law enforcement community can be an important step toward providing healing and closure. The sharing of this information, including the names of involved rangers, can also help prevent an officer from carrying the burden of a line of duty shooting alone in his or her private life. The rangers involved were seasonal ranger Pieter Sween, who was the ranger directly involved in the shooting, and supervisory ranger Peter Reinhardt, who as Sween's partner provided backup and assistance during the incident.

In recognition of their actions during the shooting, Sween and Reinhardt have been presented with exemplary act awards. Fourteen other Crater Lake employees were presented with unit citation awards for their actions in responding to and managing the incident. Rangers Sween and Reinhardt acted quickly, decisively, and appropriately to prevent death or serious injury during a rapidly evolving situation. They demonstrated superb courage, judgment and tactics in successfully resolving a violent and dynamic situation without injury to innocent persons. It's hoped that this incident serves as a reminder of the importance of appropriate training and tactics, and that the lessons learned can help the safety of other officers.

## **United States – Grand Canyon National Park Plague Determined As Probable Cause Of Biologist's Death**

This report on the death of a park employee at Grand Canyon also comes from the US National Park Service *Morning Report*:

On November 2nd, Eric York, a 37-year-old wildlife biologist at Grand Canyon National Park, was found deceased in his residence on the South Rim. Plague has been determined as the probable cause of his death, based on preliminary laboratory tests conducted by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Plague is a rare, but sometimes fatal, disease caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*. It is primarily a disease of animals, but it can be transmitted to humans through the bites of rodent fleas or by direct contact with infected animals. Though the source of his infection is not certain, York most likely became infected with plague from work-related exposures to wildlife. York had direct contact with both wild rodents and mountain lions, which put him at a higher risk for plague than other park staff and the general public.

York's symptoms were consistent with pneumonic plague, the most serious but least common form of plague. In rare cases, pneumonic plague can spread person to person through aerosolized respiratory droplets (e.g. coughing, sneezing). According to the CDC, transmission of plague from person to person has not been observed in the United States since 1924.

Since pneumonic plague was initially suspected as a possible cause of York's death, the National Park Service worked with the Grand Canyon Clinic to offer a seven-day course of prophylactic antibiotics to persons who had close contact (within six feet) with York while he was symptomatic. These people have been contacted and are in the process of receiving medication. Close contacts of York have also been informed to watch for symptoms consistent with plague and to seek medical attention as soon as possible if symptoms develop. Symptoms of pneumonic plague include fever, headache, chest pain, cough, and bloody saliva. Early treatment with antibiotics is essential to surviving plague. Plague is considered endemic in northern Arizona at elevations above 4,500 feet. While an average of one or two human cases of plague are reported each year in Arizona, there were no human cases reported from 2001 through 2006 in the state.

For additional information on plague and for tips on prevention, please visit the Center for Disease Control Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/plague/index.htm>.

## **Australia – Springbrook National Park Man's Ears Cut Off In Attack**

Media across Australia reported this bizarre incident. The summary below comes from the news service *news.com.au*:

Early last week, an oasis in the park was the scene of a gruesome attack in which a man's ears were severed. But news of the horrific incident failed to stop day trippers from pouring into Mount Cougal, a section of Springbrook National Park, to cool off in the cascading headwaters of the Currumbin Valley. Police scoured a bush track for clues to the attack on the man, which took place about 2 p.m. last Saturday. A police spokeswoman said the victim had not made an official complaint and was refusing to co-operate with investigating detectives. It is believed initial investigations have linked the violent attack to outlaw motorcycle gang members. Several detectives from Brisbane's organized crime squad were at the scene yesterday, along with forensic investigators. They cordoned off the bush track – a private road next to the national park for the search. Traces of blood were found, but it is believed the man's severed ears remain missing. The victim, 38, of Elanora on the Gold Coast, was transferred from Tweed Heads Hospital to Royal Brisbane Hospital on Saturday night where he underwent emergency surgery. He was in a stable condition yesterday. Stunned visitors found the man, covered in blood and sitting near a picnic area at the entrance to the park on Saturday. With no mobile phone coverage, he was put on the back of a utility and driven 6km to the nearest phone box where an ambulance was called.

## **SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

### **Canada – Banff National Park Grizzlies And Caribou Struggling In Park**

Canada's *CanWest News Service* posted the following report last Tuesday:

Grizzly bears and woodland caribou are struggling to survive in Canada's flagship national park. The *State of the Park Report* measures changes in Banff National Park, such as visitor experience and ecological integrity. The plight of species at risk – particularly caribou, whose numbers have dwindled to fewer than 10 in the past decade – was rated by the Parks Canada report as poor. The stability of the 60 to 80 grizzly bears in Banff and Kananaskis is of "great concern." On the other hand, the report found the numbers of ungulates, birds and amphibians range from fair to good. Conservationists criticized the report's findings.

"This is Canada's premier national park and 'fair' and 'stable' are not passing grades for ecological integrity," said Jim Pissot, executive director of Defenders of Wildlife Canada.

According to the report, the number of female grizzlies killed by humans has compromised the population's reproductive capacity. A high mortality rate, low reproductive rate, and relatively poor habitat in the mountain national parks all contribute to this grizzly population's instability, it says.

### **Sudan – Nimule National Park Wildlife Return To Park Following Two Years Of Peace**

Here's a welcome change from all the bad news about the situation of wildlife in many African national parks. The *Associated Press* reports a dramatic return of wildlife to Nimule National Park following the termination of Sudan's 22-year-long civil war. Here are excerpts from the story:

The hippos had fled to other islands in the White Nile, driven away by one of the few forces that can dislodge a large herd of these fierce beasts — an even larger herd of elephants. And there they were: some 50 elephants, massive black figures peacefully grazing on their newly reclaimed territory on the Nile island of Opekoloe. "To anyone who thought they'd disappeared forever, it's like magic," said Lt. Col. Charles Joseph, deputy warden of south Sudan's Nimule National Park near the border with Uganda, barely containing his excitement as he waded knee-deep through reed-filled water to approach the herd. Sudan's 22-year north-south civil war — Africa's longest and bloodiest conflict, killed some two million people. It also drove out large numbers of animals. Now after two years of relative peace, they're dramatically back. Wildlife Service's estimate 7,000 elephants have returned, along with some 1,500 giraffes and about 500 oryx antelopes, both thought to have left Sudan forever. Lions, leopards and a wide variety of gazelles, some of them unique to Sudan, are being spotted, too. In a February aerial survey, the U.S.-based Wildlife Conservation Society estimated herds of antelope and gazelle numbered 1.3 million. "It could well be the largest mammal migration on Earth," said Paul Elkan, the society's south Sudan country director. The reappearance of the elephants is one of the greatest symbols of southern Sudanese hopes for peace — a source of pride and national identity for the ethnic African southerners dreaming of independence from the north.

Wardens in Nimule National Park say about 350 elephants have arrived from Uganda. Earth's largest land mammals, elephants can live for decades and migrate in herds through vast territories. The (local's) pride in the majestic animals, and their fabled memory, is clear. The wardens insist that only the area's native herds have returned. They say there is no threat of violence chasing the elephants out of neighbouring Uganda or Kenya; they just want to come home. "If they're coming back, it's because they know where their homeland is," said Maj. Gen. Alfred Akwoch, the undersecretary of south Sudan's Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Conservation and Tourism. Authorities plan to reopen a dozen national parks or game reserves throughout south Sudan, a vast, subtropical region nearly the size of France whose human population of 8 million is vastly outnumbered by wild animals.

## **PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS**

### **United States – Mount Rainier NP Flood Recovery Reaches One Year Milestone**

The following report on progress in the major, year-long effort, that the staff of Mount Rainier NP is making to recover from a major flood, appeared in the U.S. National Park Service *Morning Report*:

On November 6-7, 2006, Mount Rainier National Park received 18 inches of rainfall in a 36 hour period. Flood waters devastated infrastructure throughout the park, resulting in an unprecedented six-month closure. The damage was extensive and extraordinary:

- Landslides and major washouts severed access to each major park road.
- Old growth trees were uprooted.
- Much of Sunshine Point campground washed away.
- Rivers and creeks changed channels, cutting new paths and leaving old ones dry.
- Trail damage occurred throughout the park, as raging water wiped out bridges, thousands of felled trees blocked access, and in some places trails were stripped to bedrock.

A year later, the park has made tremendous progress in the recovery process. Throughout the first half of 2007, park crews worked tirelessly to repair roads and restore all utilities in the park, and the park reopened its gates to visitors again on May 5th. Over the next 6 months, park staff continued to work diligently to restore dozens of damaged sites. The Wonderland Trail, a 93-mile trail circling the park, reopened in August and, by mid-November, the major road repair projects in the park will be complete.

Recovery efforts at Mount Rainier NP have made tremendous headway thanks in large part to the support of Congress and the help of over 1,700 volunteers, a park record. Individuals, businesses and organizations united through the Northwest Storm Recovery Coalition and the Student Conservation Association to contribute 84,000 hours of volunteer labour to the park this year at a value of nearly \$1.6 million. Much work is still to be done. Superintendent Dave Uberuaga estimates that the majority of park recovery projects will be complete within the next year. Attention is now focused on shoring up flood protection for the rainy season to protect park infrastructure and the historic assets of the park. The trails system, however, may take years to fully rehabilitate. Decisions are still on the horizon as the park is developing alternatives for how to provide public access to the Carbon River Road area and to undertake major trail rerouting projects on the Carbon River and Glacier Basin Trails. Images and details of the flood can be found at the Mount Rainier National Park website at [nps.gov/mora/parknews/november-2006-flooding](http://nps.gov/mora/parknews/november-2006-flooding).

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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](mailto:Bill_Halainen@nps.gov).