



## **GUARDAPARQUE**

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**Guardaparque** is a publication prepared and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), an organization of non-governmental and governmental ranger organizations from around the world. **Guardaparque** carries reports on emergency service and law enforcement incidents, on protection of parks and the natural and cultural resources within them, on programs to educate visitors and communities on the values of parks and protected areas, and 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**

#### **New Zealand – Tongariro National Park Flash Flood Kills Six Teenagers And Teacher**

Six high school students and a teacher were killed by flash flooding in a national park in New Zealand last week. The group, from a school in Auckland, were taking part in an outdoor adventure course in the North Island's Tongariro National Park. Police said that they were swept away by rising river water after a sudden rain storm. A group of 12 people, 10 students, an instructor and a teacher, had been canyoning along an isolated gorge on Monday.

Canyoning involves a combination of hiking, swimming and climbing along a river. The students had been wearing wet suits, life jackets and helmets. Grant Davidson, chief executive of the Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre, said that a sudden rain storm caused the river level to rise fast. "The amount of water that came down the canyon is particularly unusual, I've never see it rise in that short a period of time in the 24 years I've been here," he said. Six 16-year-old students, three boys and three girls, and a male teacher were killed. Four other students and the instructor managed to escape from the water. One of the students is now being treated in a hospital.

Police said that an investigation into the accident was under way. Prime Minister Helen Clark expressed "profound sympathy and shock" over the accident, describing it as every family and school's "worst nightmare."

[Source: BBC]

#### **Australia – Nightcap National Park Missing Hiker Found After Major Search**

A major land and air search for a missing hiker in Nightcap NP in northern New South Wales came to a happy end yesterday when she was found safe and well. The 50-year-old woman was hiking with her husband and teenage daughter. They had left Mt. Nardi northwest of Byron Bay for an overnight hike in the park on Friday. After camping overnight in the park, they headed back to Mt. Nardi. While on the way, the woman got separated from her family. The woman was found by searchers on Sunday morning.

[Source: *ABC Regional Online*]

### **United States – Agate Fossil Beds and Hubbell Trading Post National Monuments Two Brothers Convicted and Sentenced For Major Thefts From Parks**

On March 31st, Maxwell Garihan and his brother Gary Garihan, were sentenced in federal court on two felony counts each of interstate transportation of stolen property and aiding and abetting. Maxwell Garihan was sentenced to six years in federal prison and three years of probation upon release and ordered to pay \$86,147.00 in restitution to a total of six victims. His brother, Gary Garihan, was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison and three years of probation and also ordered to pay \$86,147.00 in restitution to six victims.

The two men forcibly broke into Hubbell Trading Post on the evening of May 8, 2007, causing \$7,000 in property damage while in the process of stealing ten historic Navajo rugs worth \$80,000. The rugs were subsequently sold to dealers in the Denver area for a total of \$21,000. On July 9, 2007, the Garihans broke into the Agate Fossil Beds visitor center, causing \$60,000 in property damage. During the burglary, they removed some of the Cook Collection museum pieces, a loss of over \$120,000.

All of the rugs and museum items were recovered. The convictions stemmed from a major, multi-state investigation conducted by the National Park Service in coordination with a number of other federal, state and local law enforcement organizations.

[Source: National Park Service *Morning Report*]

### **Taiwan – Kenting National Park Search In Progress For Eight Missing Divers**

A full scale search for eight missing scuba divers in waters off Kenting National Park at the southernmost tip of Taiwan had not yielded any results as of last night. The eight divers, six men and two women, were reported missing while scuba diving in waters near Chihsingyen (Seven Star Rock), located some 12 nautical miles southwest of Kenting in the southernmost county of Pingtung.

They left for Chihsingyen along with four other members of a Kaohsiung diving club aboard a yacht early in the morning. The 12 began scuba diving in waters between Oluanbi and Chihsingyen at 10:30 a.m. and were supposed to return to the yacht at 11:30 a.m. However, eight of them failed to return to the yacht on schedule. The skipper of the yacht said strong winds and rapid currents in the region prevented him from finding the missing divers. He then reported the case to a coast guard squad in charge of coastal patrols in the Kenting National Park region. Coast guard teams from Pingtung and neighboring Kaohsiung County launched a major search, including sending two helicopters, as soon as they were informed of the case at around noon.

Officials at the Coast Guard Administration said five of the missing divers have earned diving licenses and are qualified as diving coaches. The strong winds and rapid currents could have taken the divers away from their set course, they said. Diving experts said the Chihsingyen region has the most beautiful undersea sceneries, including rare coral reefs as well as countless varieties of marine animals and plants. However, divers should always keep very alert on the weather conditions, including the strength of the winds and the speed of the currents, they said.

[Source: *The China Post*]

### **United States – Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Park Closes For Several Days Due To Sulphur Dioxide Emissions**

A new vent that opened up on Haleakala, a volcano within the park, produced very high sulphur dioxide levels. Because of prevailing winds, this did not at first present a problem, but a change in the wind on April 8th caused the sulphur dioxide to reach levels that the park had previously determined were of sufficient concern to cause the park to be closed. All park partners were asked to curtail operations and leave the park until further notice. This included all employees and lodging guests. Although there was no immediate threat to the safety of people in the area, all were asked to move expeditiously. The park reopened two days later when the wind again shifted, but once again had to shut down on April 23rd for the same reason. As of this writing, it is still closed.

[Source: National Park Service *Morning Report*]

## **SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

### **Philippines – Mt. Pulag National Park**

#### **Discovery Of Rare Mammal Suggests Range Of Rare Species In Mountainous Region**

A team of American and Filipino biologists recently found a rare breed of Cloud Rat at Mt. Pulag National that was first seen by a British scientist 112 years ago. Dr. Lawrence Heaney, team leader and curator and head of mammals at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, identified the mammal here on Friday as the "Dwarf Cloud Rat," a rare breed endemic to the Cordillera.

Heaney, whose team has been conducting studies on Cordillera's animal life since 2000, marvelled at the rat's rediscovery, saying "it is the animal whose existence had baffled biologists for so many years." He said the rat was dead when the team found it. Heaney's team immediately preserved the rat and prepared it for shipment to Chicago for further studies. "The Philippines may have the greatest concentration of unique biological diversity, relative to its size, of any country in the world," Heaney told reporters here on Friday. Samuel Peñafiel, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Director in the Cordillera, said the Dwarf Cloud Rat rediscovery could boost government efforts to protect the region's threatened watersheds and mossy forests. He said the findings by Heaney's team meant that there is still a wide range of rare animal life worth saving in the region's mountains and forests. Heaney said that the Cloud Rat is a "prime example of why biologists refer to the country as the 'Galapagos times ten.'" He was referring to the Galapagos archipelago, known for its vast wealth of endemic species.

The rats are known as Cloud Rats because the mossy forests where they're found are also called "cloud forests."

[Source: *Inquirer.net*]

### **United States – Alaska National Parks**

#### **Rare Musk Ox May Be Threatened By Climate Change**

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) recently launched a four year study to determine if climate change is affecting populations of Alaska's rare musk ox. Along with collaborators from the National Park Service, U. S. Geological Survey, and Alaska Fish and Game, Wildlife Conservation Society researchers have equipped 6 Musk Ox with GPS collars to better understand how climate change may affect these relics of the Pleistocene.

The research team will be assessing how Musk Ox are faring in areas along the Chukchi and northern Bering Seas, and the extent to which snow and icing events, disease, and possibly predation may be driving populations. "Musk Ox are a throwback to our Pleistocene heritage and once shared the landscape with mammoths, wild horses, and sabred cats," said the study's leader Dr. Joel Berger, a Wildlife Conservation Society scientist and professor at the University of Montana. "They may also help scientists understand how arctic species can or cannot adapt to climate change."

Once found in Europe and Northern Asia, today Musk Ox are restricted to Arctic regions in North America and Greenland although they have been introduced into Russia and northern Europe. They were reintroduced in Alaska after being wiped out in the late 19th century. Currently they found in two national parks, Alaska's Bering Land Bridge National Park and Cape Krusenstem National Monument. Next year, the team will collar an additional 30-40 more animals.

[Source: *Science Daily*]

## **PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS**

### **French Guiana – Guyana Amazonian Park**

#### **Creation Of World's Largest Rainforest Protected Area In Northern Amazon**

A French decree effectively created the world's largest rainforest protected area in the northern Amazon in February. The decree created the two million hectare Parc Amazonien de Guyane (Guyana Amazonian Park) along the southern border of French Guiana, France's "overseas department" in South America. The park boundaries were drawn in part to link with existing protected areas across the border in Brazil, creating the world's largest rainforest protected area, a

mosaic covering some 12 million hectares of tropical forest. Concerns remain, though, that without strong, coordinated enforcement follow-up among Brazil, Suriname and French Guiana, the informal gold miners (popularly known by their Brazilian nickname "garimpeiros") operating illegally in the area will so pollute the area with mercury that much of the ecological benefit in creating the protected area will be lost.

[Source: World Wildlife Federation]

### **Canada – Bowie Seamount Protected Area Underwater Mountain Becomes Protected Area**

A thriving eco-system surrounding an underwater mountain off the British Columbia coast is the latest addition to Canada's Marine Protected Areas. "Just think of it as creating a natural park, but underwater, that we want to protect for generations to come," Natural Resources Minister Gary Lunn said after the announcement on April 21st.

As seagulls soared overhead and seaplanes rumbled through the Vancouver harbor, Lunn said scientists are already looking at how to best protect the Bowie Seamount, 180 kilometres off the northwest coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands. The seamount is unique in that the summit of the underwater mountain reaches to only 24 metres below the sea. Ocean currents sweep nutrient rich water to the surface, making for easy pickings for a rich variety of marine life. Orca, Humpback and Northern Right Whales, Sea Lions, Dolphins, Sharks and at least 53 species of fish, such as Halibut and Rockfish, are also attracted to the benefits of the seamount's unique geological features. Two other seamounts, Hodgkins and Davidson, will be part of the protected area.

The waters surrounding the seamount have long been a special place for the Haida, a band of First Nations people native to the chain of islands, Lunn said. The Haida will join the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, WWF Canada and community groups in researching which commercial and recreational activities will be allowed near the seamount, he said. The Bowie Seamount joins six other Marine Protected Areas, including one in BC and five in the Atlantic Provinces.

[Source: *The Canadian Press*]

### **England – Peak District National Park Coalition Seeks To Block Quarry In National Park**

The Longstone Edge Coalition is asking the British government to provide an urgent rescue package to enable Peak District National Park to protect itself from a limestone quarrying operation. The coalition of environmental and conservation groups formed in the wake of a High Court judgment in March.

The High Court overturned the 2007 decision of a government planning inspector that the quarrying at Backdale Quarry on Longstone Edge in the park was illegal and must cease. This week the government and the Peak District National Park Authority decided to appeal against the High Court decision, a move welcomed by the coalition. Using a mineral permission granted in 1952, the landowner, Bleaklow Industries and the operator, MMC Mineral Processing, have resumed mining at Longstone. The High Court ruling overturned a public inquiry and a stop notice served by the Park Authority to prevent quarrying at Backdale on Longstone Edge. The Longstone Edge Coalition is calling for urgent revocation of the 1952 mining permission to prevent continued damage to the park.

The Peak District National Park Authority has expressed its gratitude to community and environmental groups for their continued support in its action to stop alleged harmful quarrying on Longstone Edge. The coalition includes the British Mountaineering Council, the Council for National Parks, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Friends of the Earth, Friends of the Peak District, Plantlife, the Ramblers' Association and the Save Longstone Edge Group.

[Source: *Environmental News Service*]

## NEWS ABOUT RANGERS

### **Africa – National Parks And Protected Areas Murders Of Rangers Increase In Africa**

Arrie Schreiber has passed along information summaries on ranger deaths in Africa (some previously noted) taken from an Interpol web site. Interpol is the world's largest international police organization, with 186 member countries, and has been around since 1923. The web page has a very interesting and informative section on "Environmental Crime" that includes a number of subsections, including one entitled "Wildlife News." These reports were taken from it.

The link to this site is: [www.interpol.int/Public/EnvironmentalCrime/](http://www.interpol.int/Public/EnvironmentalCrime/) .

Although from last year, these incidents reflect the very disturbing increase in violence to rangers by poachers:

#### **Bayang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary, Cameroon:**

The fourth hearing of a case of murder involving illegal hunters alleged to have shot an eco-guard to death within the Bayang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary in the South West province, opened at the Bangem High Court in May, 2007.

The wildlife criminal was arrested in February 2006. The investigation that led to his arrest was led by the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife with the technical support of the Last Great Ape Organisation (LAGA). The tribunal rendered its verdict on June 25, 2007, and the criminal was sentenced to 25 years in prison. This matter is an extreme priority in the application of Cameroon wildlife legislation and the involvement of magistrates.

This verdict will have a positive influence nationally and it will have repercussions among potential poachers and other wildlife criminals. Authorities have said they will remain vigilant and follow the evolution of this matter closely because, according to Cameroon legislation, the criminal has another 10 days to appeal.

#### **Tsavo East National Park, Kenya:**

Three Kenya Wildlife Service rangers were killed in a shootout with ivory poachers on May 19, 2007. The poachers were Somalis trying to cross the Tana River on their way to the park. Four poachers were also killed, and three (at least one wounded) were pursued as they retreated back toward Somalia. It was an intense battle, with more than 500 rounds being fired at close range (less than 20 metres).

#### **Zakouma National Park, Chad:**

Three Chadian rangers were killed by ivory poachers in a shootout in Zakouma National Park on May 16, 2007. Poachers also killed three rangers in gun-battles on January 11-12, 2007.

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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).

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