



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.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Taiwan – Kenting National Park Eight Missing Divers Found

Eight Taiwanese scuba divers were rescued on April 28th, nearly 48 hours after going missing off the island's south end. In a remarkable feat of endurance, one of the divers managed to swim ashore and told rescuers where they could find the others. A helicopter plucked them from the sea. All were exhausted and hospitalised.

The six men and two women, all experienced divers, went diving on the morning of Saturday, April 26th, near Chihsingyen (Seven Star Rock) off Kenting National Park, but failed to return to their boat an hour later as scheduled. After a lengthy wait for rescuers, the group's coach, Ding Bo-ling, set off on a more than 10 hour swim for shore, finally reaching land before midnight Sunday at Taimali, 76 kilometres (47 miles) further north. The remaining divers saved energy by floating on their backs and held hands to avoid being separated. Five helicopters and nine patrol boats had been dispatched for the round-the-clock rescue operations, while the divers' relatives also hired fishing boats to join the search.

In a similar accident in the area nine years ago, six divers were washed away by strong ocean currents, and four of them were rescued after 30 hours.

[Source: *Agence France-Presse*, April 28, 2008]

Australia – Barrington Tops National Park Body Of Missing Crown Prosecutor Found In Park

The body of Crown Prosecutor Alex Clout, 55, who disappeared in the bush in late April, was found at month's end on the banks of the Gloucester River in Barrington Tops National Park. Police then found Clout's Toyota 4WD in the Gloucester River, about three kilometres from where his body was discovered. The car was believed to have been swept off a causeway. Clout was travelling alone in the 400 square kilometre national park on April 24th when he disappeared. A post mortem examination will be carried out to establish the cause of his death.

Barrington Tops National Park is a heritage-listed area and a popular four-wheel driving destination, but is known to be treacherous in wet weather.

[Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 29, 2008]

India – Orang & Kaziranga National Parks Poachers Kill Four Rhinos In National Parks

During the last week of April, poachers killed two rhinos; including a calf, in Kaziranga National Park, just as the forest department was gearing up to send 25 armed guards to Orang National Park, where two rhinos were killed the week before. The carcasses of the two rhinos at Kaziranga were found on the Agaratoli range of the national park. The horn was missing and tigers had feasted on more than half of the carcass of the calf.

An official said the adult rhino's nails and part of the tail were also missing along with the horn. He said this corroborated for the first time confessions by a poacher that they have been asked by buyers to bring along these body parts of the animal as proof that the horn was genuine. The carcasses were recovered from inside the woods near the Turtoni anti-poaching camp. There was a bullet mark on the head of the female rhino, but it wasn't clear whether the calf had been killed by poachers or tigers. These latest killings bring the total number of rhinos killed by poachers this year to six.

The incident in Kaziranga comes at a time when the Assam forest department has rushed 25 armed guards to Orang National Park, which has now become a soft target for poachers. Three rhinos have been killed this year in Orang alone. Last year, three rhinos were killed. Only three persons on an average are guarding an anti-poaching camp in Orang, whereas a minimum of 12 people were required to man it in three shifts a day. The park, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, covers an area of 79 square kilometres. The Darrang district authorities, where the park is located, will introduce a boat camp to check poaching.

[Source: *Calcutta Telegraph*, April 29, 2008]

United States – Sequoia & Kings Canyon NPs Major Marijuana Plantation Destroyed

On April 22nd, National Park Service rangers, aided by NPS special investigators, agents from the Office of Homeland Security, Tulare County Sheriff's Office deputies and California Highway Patrol officers, located and removed a new marijuana grow site in Sequoia National Park. Rangers seized 7,922 plants, many not yet in the ground, and destroyed the infrastructure and camping area to keep the growers from coming back to the area. Although they hoped to capture growers tending the site, the two people encountered fled and eluded capture by running down a steep embankment. Rangers tracked and pursued them while Tulare deputies conducted road surveillance and officers from the California Highway Patrol searched from an airplane. Efforts to find the pair proved fruitless.

Investigators worked with the U.S. Attorney's Office to obtain a search warrant for the tent found on site. Evidence collected has been submitted to the Drug Enforcement Agency lab in San Francisco to be analyzed and may lead to future arrests. The growing of illegal marijuana on public lands is a major threat to national treasures like Sequoia National Park. Since 2000, more than 157,000 plants have been removed from the park by protection rangers.

Over the past three-and-one-half years, rangers and natural resource staff have also found and removed 18,465 pounds of garbage and hazardous waste, including 445 small propane canisters, empty and partially empty packaging from 9.5 gallons of liquid insecticides, 12,900 pounds of fertilizer, and 22.7 miles of irrigation hose. All of this was collected from more than 105 grow sites and camps illegally cut into the wilderness of Sequoia National Park. The long-term damage that this illegal activity has done to once pristine wilderness is not easy to evaluate, but it is evident in the alterations to the land and the volume of poisons and fertilizers that have been used by the growers in connection with these activities. A more extensive cleanup of this most recent site is planned for later this year. The investigation continues.

[Source: National Park Service *Morning Report*, April 30, 2008]

Italy – Gran Paradiso National Park Five French Mountaineers Die In Avalanche

On Thursday, April 30, rescuers found the bodies of five French mountaineers who had been missing since they were swept away by an avalanche during an excursion in Italy's north-western Alps. A single survivor was in critical condition in a hospital.

The bodies of four men and a woman were spotted by a helicopter shortly after dawn following a suspension of the search overnight because of darkness and bad weather, said officials in the cities of Aosta and Turin. The group was overrun by the avalanche Wednesday afternoon at an altitude of about 8,000 feet while travelling through Gran Paradiso National Park, an Alpine area north of Turin and near the French border. The group's guide, also a French citizen, was pulled from the snow Wednesday evening after being spotted by a helicopter, said Claudio Rosset, an Alpine rescue official in Aosta. The 45-year-old guide was in critical but stable condition in the intensive care unit of Aosta's hospital after suffering abdominal and chest trauma.

The five victims were found at the bottom of a gorge and had been dragged down some 500 feet by the avalanche. Rescuers used the helicopter to retrieve the bodies. The members of the group were all French and between the ages 38 and 60. The mass of snow descended on the group from Punta Basei, a 10,000 foot peak. Fresh snow had recently fallen on the mountain and the unstable mass is believed to have caused the avalanche.

[Source: *The Associated Press*, May 1, 2008]

Democratic Republic of Congo – Virunga National Park Fourteen Elephants Poached In Park

Fourteen rare elephants in Virunga National Park have been killed since mid April, a conservation group said. A 2006 survey showed there were only 350 elephants in the war-ravaged park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. "We've been taken by surprise by the intensity of the killings," Emmanuel de Merode of WildlifeDirect told the BBC. He said that he feared it may be linked to South Africa's decision to lift a 13 year moratorium on elephant culling. "All 14 were killed by automatic rifle; they were cut up for their meat and with the exception of the final one, their ivory was taken away," Mr Merode told the BBC's Network Africa program.

Four poachers were caught after the last incident by a joint patrol of Congolese military and park rangers, he said. "We believe it may be linked to factors outside Congo that relate to the reopening of the ivory trade." South Africa's government halted the killing of elephants in 1995 but since then numbers have more than doubled and it now needs to control the numbers. But Mr Merode said that South Africa could now also trade its ivory. "Unfortunately this has huge impact on rest of Africa, with the reopening of a legal ivory trade, illegal ivory can very easily be sold on the market." A 5 year conflict in DR Congo officially ended in 2003, but several militia groups still operate in the park, which stretches 8,000 square kilometres along DR Congo's border with Rwanda and Uganda.

Since 1996, 120 rangers have been killed trying to protect the park's wildlife. Last year, rebels killed five rare mountain gorillas in the park. Congolese conservationists estimate there was population of 70,000 elephants before the war.

[Source: *BBC News*, May 2, 2008]

India – Corbett National Park Tigers Saved Through Prompt Enforcement Action

Several tigers in Corbett National Park were recently saved through the prompt and coordinated efforts of India's Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. Upon receiving information about dubious movements of a person from the Bavariya Tribe from park authorities, WCCB took action.

One person has been detained and is in custody. He entered Corbett National Park disguised as a beggar in order to survey the area for tigers. Authorities found that the man had in his possession tools for trapping, nets, a large quantity of dry provisions, medicine, nine mobile phone numbers and several local contacts, indicating that he was a professional poacher. The two men with him escaped. The investigation continues.

WCCB has been working with park authorities to step up park security and protection.

[Source: WCCB press release, May 2, 2008]

Ecuador – Yasuni National Park Spearing And Beheadings Reported In Park

An illegal logger has been speared to death by Amazon natives in Ecuador's Yasuni National Park. The killing, which occurred on March 4th, reflects mounting tensions between natives and illegal loggers working in one of South America's most prized parks. It also follows allegations made in February that as many as 15 Amazonian tribal members were beheaded by timber poachers in the region. The death of the logger was confirmed by a spokesperson at the Orellana provincial police headquarters in Coca, Ecuador. The Ecuadorian newspaper *El Comercio* published a photograph of the scene, showing the body of the logger, Luis Mariano Castellano Espinosa, riddled with wooden spears protruding from his chest and legs. The killing appeared to be the work of members of the Taromenane tribe, judging from the type of spear used, police captain Edwin Ruiz told the newspaper.

The attack took place in the rainforest of 1.9 million acre (758,000 hectare) Yasuni Park, which has been designated as a biosphere reserve by the United Nations. Yasuni is rich in marketable trees such as cedar and contains a quarter of Ecuador's untapped oil reserves. The park is also home to Amazon natives such as the Taromenane and Tagaeri, two tribes living in voluntary isolation within the park's "untouchable zone," where logging and oil exploration are prohibited. But loggers operate with impunity in parts of the park due to lack of enforcement, critics have charged, and violent clashes have resulted.

The murder is the most recent confrontation in Yasuni, where the government has now established a permanent military presence to stop illegal logging, a move that natives and rights groups had long demanded. "There are powerful economic interests" involved in the park's future, said Diego Falconi, a top advisor to the Ecuadorian police. "But the government is committed to resolve it."

[Source: *National Geographic News*, May 5, 2008]

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Kenya – Maasai Mara Game Reserve Conservationists Call For Pesticide Ban After Hippos Die

Kenyan conservationists on Monday 27 April pressed for a ban on a deadly pesticide blamed for a spate of hippopotamus deaths at the famed Maasai Mara Game Reserve. Carbofuran is already illegal in Europe and in the process of being banned in the US, and was discovered in the post-mortems of five hippos found dead in the safari park. Four lions that ate part of one of the hippos were also paralyzed. "The results showed that the stomach contents of the hippo and lion tested positive for Carbofuran," said Brian Heath, the head of Mara Reserve in a statement.

Concern in Kenya was first raised in the 1990s when the chemical, used on crops such as potatoes, corn, rice, grapes and soybeans, was believed to have killed a large number of ducks and waterfowl in western and central regions. WildlifeDirect chairman Richard Leakey urged Kenya to ban the chemical which has been outlawed in Europe and deemed harmful in the United States and on the process of being proscribed. "We believe that there are significant human health concerns and environmental risks associated with using this chemical which is widely abused because it is easily available over the counter from any agrovet," Leakey said the statement. The poison affects not just large predators such as lions, but also scavengers birds such as vultures and other birds of prey, the statement said. "If the current level of usage continues, it is possible that two different species of vultures in Kenya could go extinct within the next ten years," said conservationist Simon Thomsett.

The insecticide, manufactured locally by AgroEvo East Africa Limited, is sprayed directly onto soil and plants. It is traded locally under the name Furadan. Exposure to the chemical stimulates the nervous system causing headaches, nausea, dizziness, blurred vision, confusion and general muscular weakness and at very high exposures, it results to cardio-respiratory paralysis and death.

[Source: *Agence France-Presse*, April 27, 2008, courtesy of Roger Cole]

Brazil – Serra Geral do Tocantins Ecological Station Fourteen New Species Discovered

An expedition of scientists in Brazil has uncovered 14 possible new species of animals, including a legless lizard and a dwarf woodpecker in this country's fast disappearing Cerrado grasslands, an environmental group reported in late April. According to Conservation International, the new species found in an area adjacent to farming and housing developments also included two other reptiles, eight fish, an amphibian, and a mammal.

The new species were uncovered during a 29 day expedition to the Serra Geral do Tocantins Ecological Station, a protected area of mixed woodland and savannah in central Brazil. The Cerrado grasslands once covered an area half the size of Europe, though they are now being converted to croplands and ranchlands.

Luis Fabio Silveira, a zoologist at the University of Sao Paulo told *Live Science Journal* that "the geographic distribution of some of the species registered is restricted to the area of the ecological station. Thus their survival depends on the good management of the protected area and its immediate surroundings." Scientists say the results will be used to support the development of a management plan for the protected area.

[Source: *AHN Media*, April 30, 2008]

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Iceland – Vatnajökull National Park Iceland Forms Europe's Largest National Park

On June 8th, an area encompassing 13 per cent of Iceland's landmass with unparalleled geographical diversity, will become the largest protected wilderness in Europe. Volcanoes, lava flows, vast glaciers, waterfalls, canyons and calderas, sand flats, rivers, lakes and lush vegetation are just some of the natural wonders contained within Vatnajökull National Park's 13,000 square kilometres.

The park's boundaries will incorporate previously unprotected land as well the existing Skaftafell and Jökulsárgljúfur National Parks, the most powerful waterfall in Europe, Dettifoss and the entire Vatnajökull glacier (Europe's largest). The Icelandic government is initially investing around £8 million in a network of visitor centres and park rangers' work stations, due to be completed in 2012.

An existing visitor centre at Skaftafell will be joined by five new facilities, including one currently under construction at Ásbyrgi. Ranger stations will also increase from four to 11. It is estimated that the new park could increase visitors to Iceland by between five and seven per cent over and above levels already projected by 2012.

[Source: *Easier.com*, April 28, 2008]

Afghanistan – Band-e-Amir National Park Amid War, Afghanistan Builds Its First National Park

In Afghanistan, Americans are working with the government in Kabul to create something that's never existed before in this war ravaged country, a national park. It takes several hours by four-wheel drive vehicle to get to the 220 square mile site, riding on rocky roads that wind through mountains and across streams. But the drive is easy compared to the obstacles planners face to make this park in central Bamyan province a reality.

Between mountains in the Hindu Kush range lie six, sky blue lakes. They are the lifeline of 15 villages where people live pretty much as they have for centuries. The lake region and its many streams, called Band-e-Amir, boasts some of the most beautiful landscape in Afghanistan, including crystal clear waterfalls, cascading over naturally formed dams that keep the lakes in place. Such natural wonders make Band-e-Amir the perfect place to create Afghanistan's first national park, says Bamyan Governor Habiba Surabi.

"This is one of our desires, one of our wish that we at least will have something for the tourism attraction, the tourism destination here in Bamyan," he says. Surabi and other Afghan officials have joined forces with the Wildlife Conservation Society, the U.S. Agency for International

Development and other foreign donors to make the park a reality. Not just as a tourist haven, but as a place where the country's fledgling conservation laws can take root. A planned, paved road will make Band-e-Amir more accessible, although it could take years to build.

"There was just kind of sense with the donor community as well as the government that this particular natural resource was something that was so attractive, desirable and generally worth of protection that it needed to be sort of made an example of," says Loren Stoddard, USAID's director of alternative development and agriculture office in Afghanistan.

But, there are problems in the effort to create a national park. There are animal droppings everywhere. Plastic bags that are discarded flutter about in the wind. There are also empty bottles that are littering the area. Sayed Hussein runs a flour mill built three generations ago next to some of the waterfalls at one of the lakes. The 60 year old is one of many villagers who are nervous about the proposed park. To him and many others across Afghanistan, conserving natural resources is a foreign concept. Natural resources are what they depend on to survive. Trees are cut down for firewood. Landscapes are turned into farmland and pastures to grow food and raise livestock. Trash is hauled to the edges of one's neighbourhood to be dumped or burned. Water is harnessed for consumption and power. So to Hussein, the waterfalls next to his mill aren't something beautiful to be gawked at, they are a way to power the heavy stone wheels that grind wheat into flour. He is reluctant to consider how he might change his life to make the park work. But villagers do get a say in what happens here. Decisions about the proposed park and its rules are in the hands of a committee that includes not only the government in Kabul and its Western advisors, but Band-e-Amir elders and other village representatives.

Peter Smallwood, who is country director of the Wildlife Conservation Society, says the aim is for the park to be a home-grown one. It would be a national landmark that benefits residents and tourists. "I don't think that our job here is to recreate an American park, and in fact, other than gentle nudges, I don't really want to be saying 'here is the vision.' I want the vision to be grown from theirs," Smallwood says. So the park will likely have some features one doesn't usually see in the West like a Shiite Muslim shrine on one lakefront that will remain open.

American proponents of the park say those decisions must come from the Afghans themselves. Smallwood, of the Wildlife Conservation Society, admits its slow going. Like getting the Afghan government to establish a general set of rules for protected areas. That's the last hurdle before the park officially opens. With the ongoing war against the Taliban elsewhere in the country, he and others say it's hard to get the government to focus on protecting the environment. Band-e-Amir Park Ranger Sayed Zaher says he and the other three rangers assigned here have not been paid in four months since the government took charge of them from the Wildlife Conservation Society. But he adds that he believes in what he's been hired to do. And that he's having some success in getting fellow Band-e-Amir residents to cooperate with conservation measures

[Source: National Public Radio, USA, May 5, 2008]

British Virgin Islands – Sandy Cay Nature Preserve Islands To Get New National Park

The government of the British Virgin Islands will soon add another island to its national park system when the executors of the estate of the late Laurance S. Rockefeller officially donate Sandy Cay to the government and people of the territory. Sandy Cay will be preserved as a combination botanic garden, nature preserve, and low key recreational area under the management of the National Parks Trust.

For almost four decades, Rockefeller personally owned and managed Sandy Cay, which is a 14 acre undeveloped island located between Tortola and Jost Van Dyke. Among other things, he made a lasting contribution to placing the British Virgin Islands on the road to economic prosperity when, in 1964, he completed construction of the territory's first major five-star hotel on Virgin Gorda, the Little Dix Bay Hotel. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the territory, Rockefeller was granted "belonger" status by the government in September 2003.

[Source: *Caribbean News Net*, April 30, 2008]

NEWS ABOUT RANGERS

United States – Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Two Rangers Assaulted At Campground

A man has been charged in federal court with two counts of resisting and two counts of assault after he attacked two rangers on Saturday, May 3rd, at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's Dunewood Campground in Beverly Shores. Charged was Joshua Don Young, 27.

Two rangers, Anthony Papesh and Jennifer Jackson, were dispatched to the Dunewood Campground in response to a complaint of unregistered guests at three camp sites. They were unable to find those guests, but in passing one site they saw a beer can on a picnic table. Papesh and Jackson stopped and made contact with Young, who admitted knowing that the campground was closed to alcohol. Young advised the ranger that that can was the only alcohol at the site, but while he went to empty the can another person at the site, at the rangers' request, opened a cooler to reveal a six pack of beer. At this point Young became "agitated" and told the rangers that he would neither empty the can nor leave the campground. Young then approached Papesh and tossed in his face the contents of a dustpan containing cold campfire ashes. Jackson immediately took out her baton and struck Young once on the left calf, but Young grabbed it and struck Jackson on the left side of her skull, lacerating her scalp. Young then struck Papesh on the top of his head, also lacerating his scalp. Jackson, whom the blow to the skull had left briefly "dazed," tried spraying Young in the face with pepper spray but it had "no visible effect," so she removed her sidearm and ordered Young and everyone at the site to lie on the ground. Young instead grabbed a two year old boy who was at the site and used the child as "a shield," then walked away from the camp site in the direction of a restroom. Papesh and Jackson followed Young at a safe distance and were joined by officers from the Beverly Shores Police Department, the Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Natural Resources, and the Porter County Sheriff's Police, who together were able to take Young to the ground, cuff his hands, and place him in custody. Jackson received four staples to her scalp and Papesh seven when they were subsequently treated at St. Anthony Memorial Health Center in Michigan City.

[Source: *Chesterton Tribune*, May 6, 2008]

Canada – Parks Canada National Park Wardens To Get Sidearms In 2009

Parks Canada will begin equipping national park wardens with side arms by March 2009, the federal government says. Environment Minister John Baird announced on May 9th that Ottawa is authorizing the government agency to create up to 100 armed enforcement officer positions.

"Parks Canada's enforcement officers have the important responsibility of protecting visitors and staff in Canada's national parks, and they require the right tools to do the job safely," said Baird in a statement. Until early last year, park wardens had law enforcement duties, such as dealing with unruly campers and protecting the park's natural resources. But in May 2007, an Occupational Health and Safety report said that to continue to deal with such issues in the parks, officers would need firearms. Following the report, wardens were relieved of law enforcement duties.

According to the Environment Ministry's statement, Parks Canada enforcement officers will be responsible for enforcing the federal conservation laws that apply to national parks and marine conservation areas, but police will still take care of Criminal Code violations. There are 42 national parks in Canada and Parks Canada employs about 425 park wardens. The program will be funded from the \$12.2 million set aside in the federal budget for park law enforcement over the next two years, with \$2.7 million for each following year.

[Source: Canadian Broadcasting Company, May 10, 2008]

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.
