

GUARDAPARQUE

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Guardaparque is a bi-weekly publication prepared and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), an organization of about 40 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 TGLedit@ptd.net.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

United States – Glacier Bay National Park Cruise Line Pleads Guilty In Death Of Whale

On Monday, January 29th, Princess Cruise Lines pled guilty in U.S. District Court in Alaska to a charge of knowingly failing to operate its vessel, the *Dawn Princess*, at a slow, safe speed while near two humpback whales in the area of Glacier Bay National Park. The body of a pregnant whale was found four days after the Princess ship sailed through the park. It had died of massive injuries to the right side of the head, including a fractured skull, eye socket and cervical vertebrae, all consistent with a vessel collision. The whale was identified from markings as “Whale #68,” which had been seen many times in the past and was known to have been in the area for at least 25 years. Under a plea agreement, Princess Cruise Lines was sentenced to pay a \$200,000 fine and to contribute \$550,000 to the National Park Foundation. The funding will support marine mammal research in the park. In this first-of-its-kind case, prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Environmental Crimes Section of the Department of Justice, along with special agents and investigators from the National Park Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, engaged in a thorough and detailed investigation, often with the assistance and cooperation of Princess. The unlawful taking (killing) of humpback whales is prohibited in the U.S. by both the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The “slow, safe speed” regulation, under which this case was charged, was put into effect in 2001 to support the “anti-taking” provisions of the two laws. Thus, a knowing failure to maintain a “slow, safe speed” when near humpback whales constitutes a violation of the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act and carries the same penalties as a taking violation. Such conduct is a federal Class A misdemeanor violation of law, punishable (for a corporation) by a fine of up to \$200,000, restitution in an amount to be determined by the court, and up to five years probation (a person who violates this law is also subject to imprisonment for up to one year). [From National Park Service “Morning Report”]

New Zealand – Mount Cook Aoraki National Park Two Climbers Die In Fall, Woman Rescued

On Wednesday, January 24th, two Japanese climbers died in a fall on Mt. Cook. Their bodies were recovered from the mountain on Thursday. The Department of Conservation says that a total of 217 people have now died on the mountain. Two days later, a rescue crew was called to assist a woman who was stuck in Ball Hutt in the lower part of the Tasman Glacier with a suspected broken ankle. The Department of Conservation says a rope was lowered to her from a helicopter. She is now in Timaru Hospital. [From Radio New Zealand]

United States – Redwood National and State Parks Mountain Lion Attacks Hiker

On the afternoon of January 24th, a mountain lion attacked one of two adults hiking in the Prairie Creek area of Redwood National and State Parks. Jim Hamm and his wife Nell were able to fend off the lion after a long struggle, during which she stabbed the lion in the eye with a pen. They then walked out to a road, where park staff discovered and assisted them. Hamm had significant wounds and survived largely because of his wife's actions. He was taken to the hospital, where he underwent reconstructive surgery and is now doing well. The area was closed to vehicles and people. California Department of Fish and Game responded and is investigating along with staff from the parks. The lion was subsequently identified and shot and killed. [From National Park Service "Morning Report"]

Canada – Yoho National Park Two Skiers Die In Snow Cave

Two backcountry skiers were found dead in the park this past week, buried in their sleep by a snow cave they had dug to stay warm. The skiers, a 27-year-old woman and 25-year-old man from Kamloops, were experienced in the outdoors and on a 30-day trip in the Wapta Icefields, according to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. "Partway on the shoulder on the plateau of Mt. Collie they made camp and dug a snow shelter," said Marc Ledwidge, a Parks Canada spokesman. "It looks like the whole snow shelter caved in and they suffocated." Ledwidge said it's believed the couple died on January 4th, but no one knew they were missing until January 14th, when they were due to return from their trip. Park wardens launched a search for the skiers at first light on January 17th after a call reporting they were overdue. Rescuers found the bodies in the snow cave near Mount Collie, close to the border between Yoho and Banff National Parks. A team flew in Thursday morning to retrieve the bodies, but poor weather may hamper attempts for several days, park officials said. Backcountry enthusiasts will sometimes construct snow caves in the winter to protect themselves against the elements. The Wapta Icefields is a popular area with several shelter huts, according to Parks Canada. [From Canadian Broadcasting Company]

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Uganda – Queen Elizabeth National Park Elephant Population Increases To 3,000

The elephant population in Queen Elizabeth National Park has hit the level of three decades ago of about 3,000. According to a census report released by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the elephant population is about 2,959, up from 2,497 in 2004. The population doubled between 2000 and 2004, when it increased from 1,100. UWA's head of research and monitoring, Aggrey Rwetsiba, attributed the growth to reduced poaching and increased migration of elephants from DR Congo. The park's management has also stepped up the protection of animals and instituted measures to fight poachers. Queen Elizabeth is a trans-boundary park, with animals moving between the reserve and the nearby Virunga National Park in the DR Congo. It is also connected to Kibale National Park and Kasyoha-Kitomi forest reserve in Uganda. "It is exciting to have the population of endangered animals like elephants increasing," Rwetsiba said. However, there was fear that the huge number could adversely affect the local population, as reports indicate that the beasts have started destroying crops in gardens bordering the park. But park authorities and conservationists are also worried about the occupation of the park by the Basongora pastoralists who returned from DR Congo last year. UWA's head, Moses Mapesa, said the pastoralists would affect animal population and distribution within the park. Wild animals suffered a population decline due to poaching caused by a breakdown of law and order in the 1970s and 80s. The elephants had gone down to just 400. [From "New Vision," Kampala, Uganda]

India – Kaziranga National Park Efforts Underway To Protect Endangered Rhinos

Two one-horned rhino calves made conservation history last Sunday when they were moved from an overcrowded sanctuary in India's northeastern state of Assam in an attempt to help the endangered beast multiply in new surroundings. A wildlife official said that the two female rhinos, each about 42 months old, were being caged and shifted in separate trucks from the internationally famed Kaziranga National Park in eastern Assam, home to the largest concentration of the one-horned rhinoceros in the world.

The two rhinos from Kaziranga would join another five year-old female at the Manas National Park in Assam by early Monday, a park warden said. The two calves were rescued in 2004 during high floods at Kaziranga and were kept at the Center for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Care within the park premises. The translocation process was being monitored by several agencies, including the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), International Fund for Animal Welfare, and the Assam government wildlife authorities. A team of doctors and experts accompanied the two rhinos in the 11-hour road journey from Kaziranga to Manas. In February last year, a 44-month old female rhino was moved from Kaziranga to Manas, 180 kilometers west of Assam's main city of Guwahati.

"The rhino is doing fine and in good health. We are keeping the animal in an enclosure measuring about a square kilometer with solar-powered fencing to keep elephants and tigers at bay from attacking the calf," Abhijit Rabha, Manas park warden, said.

The 519-square-kilometer Manas National Park, also a Project Tiger Reserve, is a World Heritage Site with just about half-a-dozen rhinos surviving at present. The three rhinos would eventually be released in the wilds of Manas. "By next year we plan to capture a male rhino from Kaziranga and shift it to Manas to help the breeding process," the WTI official said.

As per latest figures, some 1,855 of the world's estimated 2,700 such herbivorous beasts lumber around the wilds of the 430-square-kilometer Kaziranga National Park – their numbers ironically making the giant mammals a favorite target for poaching. Experts have identified five national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in Assam where they plan to shift some 30 rhinos from Kaziranga and another overcrowded sanctuary Pabitora near Guwahati. The main objectives of rhino translocation were to establish a viable breeding population in other areas and to safeguard this endangered species from natural calamities such as flood and epidemics.

There is a great amount of risk in allowing this highly endangered animal to remain concentrated in just one or two sanctuaries and hence the idea to shift some rhinos to other parks with similar environs, another forest warden said. From five rhinos a century back, the Kaziranga National Park have successfully fought back from the brink of extinction with organized poacher gangs hunting the animal for its prized horn. Gangs killed as many as 600 of the rhinos at Kaziranga between 1985 and 2000. Rhino horn is believed to have aphrodisiac qualities and is used in traditional Chinese medicine as well as in parts of South Asia to cure fever, stomach ailments and other diseases. The horn also attracts Middle East buyers who turn them into handles of ornamental daggers.

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Viet Nam – Cat Tien National park International Organizations Finance National Park

The French Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy group and the Viet Nam-Pacific Development Institute will work together on protecting and developing precious medicinal plants in Cat Tien National Park in the southern province of Dong Nai. A cooperation agreement was reached between the two parties and Cat Tien National Park at a workshop on biodiversity protection and sustainable development in Viet Nam held in Dong Nai from January 23rd to 25th. International organizations have provided millions of dollars in support to the national park for preservation work.

The French Development Agency has provided 580,000 euros in non-refundable aid for a project to protect wild cow species, while the UK-based Monkey World-Ape Rescue Centre and Taiwan's Pingtung have donated US \$500,000 for a primate rescue project at the park. The Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation project is being carried out at the park by Winrock International. In addition, scientific research projects on a number of rare animals, such as rhinos and elephants at Cat Tien National Park, are receiving assistance from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and MIKE organization [From "Viet Nam News"]

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

The most recent edition of **Cleft Stick**, the newsletter of the Game Rangers Association of Africa, contained the following article on African proverbs. They're often wonderfully insightful and are therefore being relayed to rangers everywhere as useful for interpretive and education programs of all sorts:

"Humans beings have always been storytellers: Where they have not had books, people entertained each other by recounting folktales. In addition to their entertainment value, these tales had many functions, serving as a means of spreading news from one village to the next and of communicating the customs and beliefs of the group to children. Another way of guiding people's thoughts and actions was through proverbs – short sayings that contain an element of truth and reflect the traditional values of a group. The many cultures and languages of Africa are rich in these sayings and they provide a key to understanding the African way of life, both in the past and in the present. As the Yoruba from Nigeria say, "a proverb is the horse that can carry one swiftly to the discovery of an idea." However, a proverb is never explained to the listener and if he cannot understand it, perhaps he needs to spend some time listening to the elders of his village. If he has forgotten where his village is, he should remember what the Benin, also from Nigeria, have to say: "The disobedient fowl obeys in a pot of soup." The proverbs:

- Mali – No matter how long a log stays in the water, it does not become a crocodile.
- Senegal – If a centipede loses a leg, it does not prevent it from walking.
- Guinea – A toad likes water, but not when it is boiling.
- Sierra Leone – An okra tree does not grow taller than its master.
- Liberia – Smoke does not affect honeybees alone; honey gatherers are also be affected.
- Ghana – One should never rub bottoms with a porcupine.
- Democratic Republic Of Congo – You do not teach the paths of the forest to an old gorilla.
- South Africa – When the man is away, the monkey eats up the maize and enters the hut.
- Sudan – A termite can do nothing to a stone but lick it.
- Ethiopia – The cattle is as good as the pasture in which it grazes.
- Rwanda – In a court of fowls, the cockroach never wins his case.
- Uganda – When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.
- Kenya – Those who get to the river early drink the cleanest water.
- Tanzania – A sheep cannot bleat in two places at once.
- Zimbabwe – An elephant's tusks are never too heavy for it.
- Madagascar – An eel that was not caught is as big as your thigh.

[Sources: African Proverbs, www.afriprov.org and www.lifeinafrica.com. Taken from Africa-Geographic magazine, www.africa-geographic.com]

NEWS ABOUT RANGERS

No entries this issue.

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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 TGLedit@ptd.net .

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