



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

Nepal – Royal Chitwan National Park Man Found Guilty Of Killing Nine Rhinos

Former airline pilot Ramesh Chandra Pokharel has confessed that he shot dead nine rhinos in Chitwan National Park (CNP) and surrounding forests. Pokharel, 76, from Dilli Bazar Kathmandu revealed that he regularly got bullets for his rifle from a man who worked at the military academy of the Nepali Army. He disclosed this at a press meeting held at Kasara office of the CNP, which sent eight accused, including Pokharel, to Bharatpur prison. Goods confiscated from them were displayed at the meeting. A team led by Ana Nath Baral, assistant protection officer of the CNP, arrested Pokharel on February 17th at his home in Kathmandu. The team also confiscated a rhino horn from his car and a caliber 30.06 automatic rifle during the arrest. Pokharel confessed that he used different persons to kill rhinos. Pokharel's recently renewed license mentions that he owns four automatic weapons. [Source: *Kantipur Online*, India]

United States – Everglades National Park Rangers Enforce Boat Speed Laws To Protect Endangered Manatees

Rangers, working with officers from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, recently ran two special operations to enforce manatee speed zones in the Gulf Coast District of Everglades National Park. Officers working in Chokoloskee Bay issued 25 speed citations and numerous safety and resource violation notices over a two-day period. 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 accordingly increasing in an effort to educate boaters and improve compliance with these speed zones. Statewide, at least 86 manatees were killed by powerboats in 2006. More special operations are planned for the future. [Source: National Park Service *Morning Report*, United States]

Taiwan – Yushan National Park Nine Police Officers Penalized For Poaching

Nine police officers in central Nantou County involved in a wildlife poaching case received different degrees of penalties last Tuesday, with one of them given two major demerits and expelled from the police force. The incident occurred on March 12th when three officers from a police station in Hsinyi township violated the Wildlife Conservation Act by killing Formosan barking deer and flying squirrels with firearms in the Yushan National Park. A college professor who was in the park saw three dead Formosan barking deer and three dead white-faced flying squirrels, along with three hunting rifles, in the trunk of a police patrol car. He reported the poaching to park police, who investigated and found that the poachers were police officers from Nantou County. Nantou County Police Bureau chief Lin Yi-min has apologized to the nation for the incident. According to Lin, officer Chuan Chung-ming was given two major demerits and expelled permanently from the police force. Officer Wu Wen-cheng was given two demerits and transferred to a non-executive post, while Hsinyi office chief Chen Chien-min was given one demerit. The case will also be referred to the Nantou Public Prosecutor's Office, Lin said. Six other officers at the Hsinyi office also received reprimands and Lin asked his superiors at the National Police Agency to determine his share of responsibility for the case. [Source: *China Post*, Taiwan]

United States – Yellowstone National Park Rangers Arrest Record Number Of People In 2006

Most people come to Yellowstone National Park to glimpse a geyser, hike a trail or look at wildlife. But for those who came to make trouble in 2006, odds were better that they got caught. Rangers arrested a record number of people last year and a record number appeared to face charges at the tiny federal courthouse at Mammoth Hot Springs, the park's headquarters. Of the 3.8 million people who came to Yellowstone either for business or pleasure, 260 were arrested, according to an annual report on law enforcement statistics in Yellowstone. People were arrested for reasons including drunk driving, possession of drugs, assault and poaching wildlife. Rangers made fewer drug arrests than in 2005, when a record 207 people were busted during a year-long emphasis on drug activity. Rick Obernesser, Yellowstone's chief ranger, said it's likely, but impossible to prove, that the effort in 2005 had a chilling effect on those who wanted to bring drugs into Yellowstone last year. It's also possible that the 2005 effort is partly responsible for the dramatic drop in recent years of vehicles that are broken into, said NPS special agent Brian Smith. Last year, eight cars were broken into in Yellowstone. In 2005, it was five and in 2004, two. On average, 51 car break-ins were reported every year during the 1990s, including 99 in 1991. While most of the law enforcement activity is during the busy summer season, some of the most significant changes have come during the winter. A requirement that all snowmobilers be with a commercial guide has cut deeply into the number of tickets handed out during the winter. In 2003, there were 206 violations. In 2004, with the new rules in place, there were 51. In 2006, it dropped to 22 – the lowest in 25 years. With fewer problems on the roads during the winter, rangers were freed up to patrol along the park's western boundary, where snowmobilers have been caught illegally entering the park from Forest Service land or private land. Most of the 22 violations in 2006 were from illegal boundary crossings. Despite the numbers, most ranger contacts with the public is with law-abiding people who are in Yellowstone simply to enjoy themselves. "It's a very satisfying, rewarding and well-respected job," Smith said. "And it doesn't get any better than working in Yellowstone." [Source: *The Billings Gazette*, United States]

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Kazakhstan – Altyn Emel National Park Conservationists Reintroduce Deer To Former Habitat

In Kazakhstan, a small group of Bukhara deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*) has been relocated to a former habitat in the Altyn Emel National Park. The species is endemic to Central Asia, and previous reintroductions and other conservation efforts in the region have proven successful, paving the way for this latest move. But environmentalists are still warning that the Bukhara deer's habitat -- which includes Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan -- needs better protection. Conservationists from the WWF and the Altyn Emel National Park in southeastern Kazakhstan spent two years preparing for the transfer. Finally, two bucks and seven does were reintroduced this winter. Vyacheslav Khudiakov, who heads the wild-animals department of Almaty's regional forestry and hunting office, says the animals came from the nearby Qarachingyl game reserve. "Nine deer were brought from [Qarachingyl] to Altyn Emel National Park, located on the right bank of the Ili River," Khudiakov says. "There is a special [national] program on the protection of disappearing species running from 2005 to 2007. Within the framework of this program, we are going to bring this species along the Ili River." The nine animals will be kept in a holding pen for at least a year to allow them to adapt to their new environment and reproduce. Then some animals will be set free. Pereladova says she is optimistic about the development of the Bukhara deer population in the 500,000-square-kilometer park. She says it offers good protection from poachers and logging activities. [Source: *Radio Free Europe*]

Uganda – Bwindi National Park More Gorillas Brought To Park

Bwindi National Park is to get two more mountain gorilla family groups as tourism in the east African nation continues to grow as a fast pace. The Uganda Wildlife Authority has announced the plans, but tourists will not see the new groups for some time. "With the number of foreign tourists steadily increasing, the present demand is greater than supply," said authority spokeswoman Lillian Nsubuga. "The habituation process will be organized and conducted by our staff at UWA, and will take between one and two years." Nsubuga went on to say that mountain animals are naturally afraid of humans, which is why the habituation process takes so long. Bwindi National Park is already home to a number of gorilla family groups and the animals are a big attraction for visitors. The park is also known as the "Impenetrable Forest" and attracts thousands of visitors every year. [Source: *Opodo News*, UK]

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Korea – Mt. Chiri, Hallyo, Wolchul, Kaya, Tokyu and Naejang National Parks National Parks Could Be Opened For Development

A bill that would allow seven national parks to be developed without concern for the environment is under consideration in the National Assembly, triggering a dispute among government offices, civic groups and lawmakers. According to the Ministry of Environment, the Assembly's Construction and Transportation Committee is likely to endorse the bill, which applies mainly to the development of the south and east coast. The bill would make studies on the environmental effects of construction in these areas non-binding. The seven areas to be affected are Mt. Chiri, Hallyo, Wolchul, Kaya, Tokyu and Naejang national parks. Kim Seok-joon, a lawmaker in the committee evaluating the bill, said the measure is essential to develop the eastern and southern part of the country. He said that the government was only concentrating on the west coast, but the bill would also bring attention to other parts of the country. The National Park Service opposes the proposed change, saying it would cause major damage to the environment, especially since 57 percent of Korea's endangered species live in national parks. "Seventy percent of wildlife lives in the national parks, which account for 6.6 percent of the nation's territory. It is an international trend to preserve the environment rather than develop it, and the bill will surely destroy that," said Yoon Guk-gu, the National Park Service public relations director.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Finance and Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry also oppose the bill. More than 151 civic groups in South Kyongsang Province gathered Friday to declare that the bill would bring a development craze to rural areas, which would not benefit local residents. It is not a step toward sustainable development, they said. The National Park Conservation Network said that if the bill passes, it will publicize the names of lawmakers who proposed the bill or voted for it. If the bill passes the committee, it will be put to a vote in the full Assembly no later than March 22nd. [Source: *The Korea Times*]

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Malaysia – Sarawak

Park Guides Must Now Have Licenses To Provide Guiding Services

Park guides in Sarawak must have a license to provide guiding service to visitors in national parks and nature reserve effectively from April 1st. The Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) will implement a park guide training and licensing system to cater for the need. Sarawak Forestry Chief Park Warden, Wilfred Landong, said the Controller of National Park and Nature Reserves had approved the implementation of such scheme. “SFC is the first to implement the licensing system in the country,” he said. “Under the licensing system, two categories of park guide license will be issued, namely the Provisional Park Guide License and the Park Guide License.” He said all park guides must have licenses issued by the Controller of National Parks and Nature Reserves to operate. Landong said the Provisional License, valid for only one year, enabled them to guide in any national park or nature reserve. He said to obtain the full park Guide License, which is valid for three years, a guide must attend and pass a Certificate in Park Guiding Course or pass the general examinations or assessment organized by SFC. The training program under the certificate course is aimed at enhancing the professionalism of the guides to the deliver their services to the visitors. This will also enable the guides to understand conservation so that they can motivate tourists to appreciate the environmental. Landong said the implementation of guide training would inculcate best practice standards among park guides in relation to safety, interpretation, customer service, product promotion and the guide’s own leadership and presentation. He said about 300,000 visitors visited the 18 national parks and five nature reserves in the state last year. [Source: *The Malaysia Star*]

NEWS ABOUT RANGERS

Sri Lanka – Wilpattu National Park

Four Wildlife Officers And Four Soldiers Shot And Killed

Four soldiers and four wildlife officials have been shot dead in a suspected Tamil Tiger ambush in Sri Lanka's Wilpattu National Park, which is famed for its idyllic surroundings and leopard sightings, a military spokesman has reported. Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe said the bodies of four soldiers, including a colonel and a major, the chief park warden and three other officials had been recovered. This followed an intensive search mounted after the group, riding in a single vehicle, had gone on a security assessment mission with a view to establishing a permanent military presence in the park following reports of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) activity there. Wilpattu lies along Sri Lanka's northwestern coast, straddling northwestern and north central provinces. The LTTE has made no claims about the park killings but said in its TamilNet website it had handed the bodies of four police commandos killed in fighting in the Eastern Batticaloa district to the Red Cross. The LTTE said six Special Task Force commandos have been killed in the fighting, but two decomposed bodies were buried in the battlefield. TamilNet said a woman LTTE cadre had been killed in the fighting. The government continues a major offensive in the east in an effort to clear the province of Tigers now holed up in jungle terrain at Thoppigala in the Batticaloa district. The LTTE said that some 100,000 people have been displaced in the district as a result of the fighting. The government admits that a large number of refugees are being cared for in temporary camps but disputes the LTTE figures. **NOTE: IRF President David Zeller has sent a letter of condolence to the family and colleagues of the deceased.** [Source: News accounts]

**South Africa – Kruger National Park
Game Ranger Seriously Injured By Elephants**

A game ranger was seriously injured last week when his vehicle was attacked by a herd of elephants in Kruger National Park. Park spokesperson Raymond Travers said Thomas Mathosi was returning from a staff function in the far northern part of the park with a group of colleagues last Tuesday morning. The group happened upon a breeding herd of elephants. As they watched the herd, a smaller group of elephants stormed them from behind, overturning their vehicle. "We cannot say why they attacked... Bulls feel protective over their calves... That could have been a factor," said Travers. A section ranger, Sandra Basson, and her driver, Mathosi, were pinned underneath the vehicle while the rest of the rangers were thrown out of it. The rangers fired three warning shots to disperse the elephants and then freed the two trapped under the vehicle and rushed them to hospital. Mathosi sustained a serious injury to his thigh. His condition has stabilised, said Travers. He is currently at the Polokwane Private Hospital. The rest of the rangers were treated for minor injuries and discharged. [Source: *Independent Online*, South Africa]

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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 or Bill_Halainen@nps.gov .

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