



GUARDAPARQUE

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Law Enforcement And Emergency Services

Ghana – Bia National Park

Violent Confrontation Occurs Between Park Officers And Local Residents

Summary/Resumen: Park officers and local residents have had a confrontation in which at least one person was shot and much damage was done. The fight was over access to the park./Oficiales del parque y algunos residentes locales tuvieron un enfrentamiento durante el cual una persona fue disparada y se ocurrió mucha destrucción. La confrontación fue sobre el acceso al parque.

A violent clash between residents of Atwoafua in Ghana's Western Region and officials from the Wildlife Division in the Bia National Park has resulted in one person sustaining gunshot wounds in the left leg. A military re-enforcement from Sefwi-Wiawso has been deployed in the park to maintain law and order. The confrontation arose as a result of a misunderstanding between the residents of the town and the wildlife officials over the refusal of the officials to allow the residents to enter the reserve. Houses and tractors were destroyed in the process. The bone of contention is that Bia National Park is a reserve set aside for the conservation of wild animals. It also serves as a tourist site for the nation. Officials of the Wildlife Division in the area were alleged to have been subjected to severe brutality by the youth of the town.

The reserve is currently being guarded by security personnel while the men in Atwoafua have fled from the town to seek refuge, leaving women and children behind. The injured game keeper is currently receiving medical attention at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. At the time of filing this story, no arrests had been made.

Source: Ghana Broadcasting Corporation web page

Republic of South Africa – Kruger National Park
Two Alleged Rhino Poachers Sentenced To Ten Years In Jail

Summary/Resumen: Two accused poachers have been sentenced to ten years in jail for possession of illegal guns in the park. They still face poaching charges. Thirteen rhinos have been killed in the park this year./Dos cazadores furtivos fueron sancionados con 10 años de encarcelamiento por haber poseído armas en el parque. Todavía estarán sujetos a acción judicial por la caza ilegal. 13 rinocerontes han sido matados en el parque durante este año.

Two men accused of poaching rhinoceros have been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for possession of illegal weapons, SA National Parks reported this week. The court has yet to rule on the charges of poaching against Joao Mdlovu and Berlito Mdlovu, who were arrested in January. Mdlovu is also standing trial in the same court on separate charges of poaching with Phaniel Mnisi.

SANParks spokeswoman Zakiya Fareed said the court found the Mdlovus guilty on Tuesday of possession of an automatic firearm and a hunting rifle believed to have been used in the poaching of rhino at the Kruger National Park. She said 13 rhino had been killed at the park this year and 11 people arrested on poaching charges. There had been 46 rhino killed throughout the country so far this year.

Source: Independent Online

United States – Grand Teton National Park
Backcountry Skier Dies In Avalanche On South Teton

Summary/Resumen: Three skiers were on a mountain in the park when one triggered an avalanche that swept him 2,000 feet down the mountain to his death. The recovery of his body was difficult due to avalanche danger./ Tres esquiadores estuvieron en una de las montañas en el parque cuando uno de ellos causó una avalancha que lo llevó 600 metros por abajo a su muerte. La recuperación de su cuerpo fue muy difícil debido a al peligro de más avalanchas.

A backcountry skier triggered an avalanche on the South Teton that swept him to his death on the morning of Sunday, February 21st. Wray Landon, 30, of Driggs, Idaho, skied with two companions to the summit of the South Teton via Garnet Canyon and the Northwest Couloir early Sunday morning. They were descending the southeast face of the peak when Landon set off a two-foot crown avalanche approximately 300 feet below the 12,514-foot summit. The avalanche carried Landon over 2,000 vertical feet of slope and cliff bands before he came to a rest about a thousand feet above Lake Taminah in upper Avalanche Canyon.

Landon and his companions were experienced with backcountry travel in the Teton Range and prepared with the appropriate equipment for a mountain excursion. Landon's ski companions called an emergency number and reported the accident. Rangers flew to the site and spotted his body. In order to reach the body, which was in an exposed avalanche-prone area, four rangers were flown via helicopter to a nearby landing zone near Snowdrift Lake. Three Teton County Search and Rescue personnel were flown into the location, and they conducted aerial avalanche control using explosives to stabilize slopes above the route rangers intended to ski in order to reach the body. After the avalanche control work was completed, four rangers traversed a steep slope below an area of cliff bands and couloirs. While two rangers acted as safety spotters, watching for additional avalanche activity, the other two rangers prepared the body for aerial evacuation.

Source: U.S. National Park Service

Species Management

Democratic Republic of the Congo – Virunga National Park Mountain Gorilla Population Increases Despite War

Summary/Resumen: A recent census of mountain gorillas has shown that their population has increased from 72 to 81 animals despite the dangers they face due to ongoing guerilla warfare and poaching in the park./Un censo reciente de la gorila de la montaña muestra que la población de la especie ha incrementado de 72 a 81 a pesar del peligro de la caza furtiva y la guerra en el parque.

In September 2007, forces loyal to the ex-rebel leader Laurent Nkunda threw park rangers out of the Mikeno sector of Virunga National Park, where six groups of habituated mountain gorillas live. Fifteen months passed without any rangers being able to monitor the mountain gorillas, but in December 2008 Virunga National Park director, Emmanuel de Merode, successfully negotiated with the CNDP rebel group to allow park rangers access the Mikeno sector and resume monitoring of the area.

The Institut Congolaise de Conservation du Nature (ICCN), the government institution in charge of protected areas management in Virunga National Park, has since been fully operational and ICCN rangers have just completed a census of the habituated mountain gorillas – those considered most at risk from the conflict. The count showed that the number of gorillas in these groups had increased to 81, compared to a count of 72 in 2007.

“Habituated mountain gorillas aren’t afraid of humans, which makes them particularly vulnerable to danger,” said Marc Languy, of WWF’s Eastern Africa Regional Programme. “We are relieved to see that instead of fewer gorillas, which we had feared, there are actually several more animals.”

While on a five day patrol during which they were looking for and counting mountain gorillas, two ICCN patrols removed more than 400 snares placed by poachers targeting small forest antelopes that can harm and maim gorillas. “This clearly indicates that conservation efforts must continue to save mountain gorillas which remain threatened, despite the good news brought by the latest count,” Languy said.

Source: World Wildlife Fund, courtesy of Gordon Miller, past president

Africa – National Parks and Protected Areas Victory For Elephants At CITES Meeting

Summary/Resumen: Representatives attending a recent CITES meeting have turned down requests from Zambia and Tanzania to permit international sales of ivory from government stockpiles. The action is considered a big victory for threatened elephant populations./Los representantes que asistieron una reunión reciente de la Convención de Comercio Internacional de Especies en Vía de Extinción rechazaron un pedido de Zambia y Tanzania de permitir la venta internacional del marfil de las bodegas gubernamentales. Se considera el rechazo una victoria grande para la población de los elefantes en peligro de extinción.

Representatives at a recent meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international agreement to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival, have turned down Tanzania's and Zambia's requests to sell ivory amid concerns about elephant poaching. These countries had asked delegates at the meeting to permit sales from government stockpiles. The ivory trade was banned in 1989, but two sales have since been granted to nations showing effective conservation. Kenya withdrew a bid to ban sales for 20 years, after finding little support.

Most conservation groups were delighted that the Tanzanian and Zambian bids were turned down. "This is a real victory for elephants," said Jason Bell-Leask, director of Southern African operations with the International Fund for Animal Welfare. Others argued that the real issue facing African elephants was poaching, not the occasional legal sale. The latest report from Traffic, the body charged with monitoring the illegal wildlife trade, shows that poaching and smuggling are rife in West Africa in particular, with several Asian nations complicit in smuggling. Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Thailand are picked out as the worst offenders.

Organized crime syndicates are increasingly involved in the lucrative trade. An expert report released on the eve of the CITES conference raised concerns about the extent to which organized crime rings are involved in Tanzania's poaching and smuggling operations. Although commending the national wildlife services for their "professional" approach, it noted signs of a declining commitment to law enforcement and a lack of coordination between wildlife and customs services.

Traffic also noted that almost half of the ivory in the government's stockpiles – which would have been the source for the ivory sales – was of unknown origin. As a result of this, it recommended rejecting Tanzania's bid. Similar misgivings also led to a recommendation to reject the Zambian proposal.

The CITES meeting in Doha, Qatar, also turned down a bid to ban trade in red and pink corals from the Mediterranean Sea. Conservation groups say the corals - which are used in jewelry - are threatened with local extinction if extraction continues. The proposal to ban international trade in the Atlantic blue fin tuna, tabled by Monaco and backed by all of the important conservation organizations working on the issue around the Mediterranean, also fell by a substantial majority.

Source: BBC report summarized by IRF member Roger Cole

Worldwide – Parks and Protected Areas Tiger Populations Continue To Decline

Summary/Resumen: Populations of tigers are dropping dramatically in all countries with that species, largely due to poaching via organized crime rings. International trafficking in wildlife parts is now the third most valuable black market trade, right after drugs and weapons./La población de tigres se está bajando dramáticamente en todos los países en los cuales existe el tigre, en gran parte debido a la caza furtiva por los grupos de criminales bien organizados. El tráfico internacional de la partes de animales ahora está en tercer lugar en cuanto a su valor después de los de las drogas y las armas.

Here's another report from the CITES conference in Qatar...

Tiger numbers are continuing to fall everywhere, and once again organized crime is playing a part, dealing in the illegal trading of tiger parts along with those from bears, rhinos and elephants.

Interpol, the International Criminal Police Organization that facilitates international police cooperation, is currently working with CITES to track and curb the international trade. Last year, the global black market in wildlife products was worth about \$10 billion (U.S.) per year, making wildlife the third most valuable illicit commodity after drugs and weapons.

Despite attempts to protect tigers, numbers have approximately halved over the last decade, with fewer than 3,200 remaining in the wild. CITES enforcement officials report that government agencies, including police and customs, need to step up efforts to combat the illegal trade. Although China and other East Asian countries are the principal consumers of tiger parts, exports travel much further afield.

Earlier this month, Operation Tram, coordinated by Interpol and including enforcement authorities in 18 countries, netted medicines containing wildlife products worth an estimated \$10 million (U.S.) Tigers, bears and rhinos were among the animals used in making the medicines.

Conservationists also point to China's tiger farms as a threat to the wild animals. Although China does not officially permit the sale of goods from these farms, in practice several investigations have revealed tiger parts are being sold. Campaigners warn this perpetuates a market into which wild tiger parts can be sold, often commanding a higher value as products made from wild animals are perceived to be more "potent."

A resolution before the CITES meeting called for greater cooperation between regional enforcement authorities to cut down the tiger product trade, and to ensure that breeding operations are "consistent with the conservation of wild populations".

Source: BBC report summarized by IRF member Roger Cole

United States – Canaveral National Seashore Over 2000 Endangered Sea Turtles Rescued

Summary/Resumen: A recent severe cold wave stunned hundreds of sea turtles in park waters. More than 2,000 were saved through a major cooperative effort by many organizations./Una época de frío severo afectó a la población de las tortugas marinas en el parque. Más de 2.000 fueron salvados debido al trabajo cooperativo de muchas organizaciones.

Mosquito Lagoon in Canaveral National Seashore, located in the U.S. state of Florida, is a major nursery area for juvenile green and loggerhead sea turtles. A week-long period of unusually low temperatures in January immobilized hundreds of these cold-blooded reptiles, causing them to float helplessly, pushed by the wind onto shallow bars. Unless rescued, they faced death by exposure. Park staff therefore mounted a large-scale rescue of these cold-stunned sea turtles.

In an extraordinary interagency effort, personnel from the park and many other organizations, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the U.S. Air Force, together with numerous volunteers, took to the water to retrieve the stranded turtles. These were transported to several processing facilities, the primary one being established at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, where basic measurements were taken before shipping the turtles to more adequate holding facilities, such as Sea World, Marineland and other aquaria and rehabilitation centers.

Over 2100 sea turtles, mostly green with a few loggerheads and a single hawksbill, were retrieved from Mosquito Lagoon and nearby waters. As the water warms and the turtles revive, they will be released back into the wild.

Source: U.S. National Park Service

Parks And Protected Areas

Canada – Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve Steps Taken Toward Establishing New Park In Eastern Canada

Summary/Resumen: Canada is about to establish a new park covering about 10,700 square kilometers of pristine lands in Labrador./Canadá está por establecer un nuevo parque nacional con una extensión de 10.700 kilómetros cuadrados de las tierras prístinas de la provincia de Labrador.

Friday, February 5th, was a significant milestone on the road to establishing a new national park reserve in Labrador's Mealy Mountains. An agreement was signed that day on the proposed boundaries for this future national park and on the further negotiations needed to transfer of provincial lands to the government of Canada.

Representative of the East Coast Boreal natural region, the proposed Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve will be Eastern Canada's largest national park, covering roughly 10,700 square kilometers of pristine landscapes, vegetation and wildlife, including key habitats for the area's threatened caribou herd. It will also protect cultural landscapes of importance to Innu, Inuit, Métis and other people in the region, while providing real and inspiring opportunities for appreciation and enjoyment to all Canadians.

In a message to all Parks Canada employees, its chief executive officer had this to say: "This important step towards the protection of these lands, and the peoples' connections to them, for future generations would not have been possible without the outstanding Parks Canada Team members' work to engage Aboriginal groups, local communities and the provincial government from the very start. The genuine involvement of all interested parties clearly shows how directly linked to our success is our ability to be representative and relevant to Canadians. Your work – and the dedication and commitment with which you do it – makes me very proud to be on your team and I thank you."

Source: Parks Canada memorandum, courtesy of WCPA

News About Rangers

Puerto Rico – Department of Natural Resources Two Rangers Killed In Shootout

Summary/Resumen: Two rangers in the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico were shot and killed by three men while serving as guards at a government building./Dos guardaparques, empleados del Departamento de Recursos Naturales del territorio estadounidense, Puerto Rico, fueron asesinados por tres hombres en un tiroteo mientras estaban guardando un edificio gubernamental.

An attempted robbery at Puerto Rico's Department of Natural Resources led to a shootout that killed two park rangers who were serving as guards on Tuesday, March 23rd. Police said the rangers apparently confronted attackers who jumped a fence at the government building shortly after midnight, leading to the shootout in which one of the invaders also was wounded. The attackers then forced a gate open and fled, taking a car and gun from one of the rangers. A witness' telephone call led police to arrest three suspects, one of whom was hospitalized with a gunshot wound. Officers said they found the gun of one of the slain guards in the suspects' car.

Both the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and police from the U.S. Caribbean territory were investigating the case. Union leaders who represent park rangers blamed the department's secretary for their deaths, saying layoffs of thousands of government workers had led the agency to use rangers in a job they are not trained for.

Source: Associated Press

Democratic Republic of Congo – Virunga National Park Ranger Safari Kakule Remembered

Summary/Resumen: A ceremony was held in January to commemorate the anniversary of the murder of ranger Safari Kakule./Un ceremonia se llevó a cabo para conmemorar el aniversario del asesinato del guardaparque Safari Kakule.

The family and friends of murdered ranger Safari Kakule held a special memorial ceremony on January 20th to mark the first anniversary of his death. Safari had worked on the Gorilla Organization project at Mount Tshiaberimu for more than three years when he and a group of other rangers were attacked at Nyama Patrol Post by rebel militia and Safari was shot dead.



The memorial ceremony for Safari Kakule.

Mount Tshiaberimu workers joined his widow and his three orphaned children at a special ceremony in Musienne village at the family graveyard where Safari is buried. This was followed by a mass in Burusi attended by scores of local villagers, which was presided over by a priest from Kyondo Parish. Prayers were also said in memory of a WWF volunteer, Nicolas Vighanzire, who was murdered at Mount Tshiaberimu in 2007.

Source: The Gorilla Organization web page

International Opportunities

United Arab Emirates – Hili National Archeological Park Opening For Superintendent At Archeological Park

Summary/Resumen: The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage in the United Arab Emirates is seeking a park superintendent for an archeological park./La Abu Dhabi Autoridad de Cultura y Patrimonio de los Emiratos Árabes Unidos está buscando a un director para un parque arqueólogo.

The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) is developing an internationally significant archaeological park scheduled to re-open in 2012. We are seeking a highly qualified, professional national or cultural park manager to serve as a onsite mentor to aid in guiding and developing a promising leader, who will manage the park and protect its resources into the future. Interested? Send your resume to Richard (Dick) Martin at qsmamo@frontiernet.net or call him at 530-547-4961. Salary and benefits will be determined by Human Resources of ADACH.

Here's more on the park: Hili National Archaeological Park preserves a unique and fortuitous combination of settlement, defensive site, and funerary architecture, demonstrating agricultural, craft and trade activities across about three millennia and during two distinct occupational phases. Hili was the location of some of the earliest archaeological work ever undertaken in the UAE, and has been a pioneer in publicly accessible open-air archaeological sites in the United Arab Emirates.

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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@contractor/nps.gov .

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