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INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION

MESSAGE FROM THE IRF PRESIDENT

COVID-19 is still affecting the way the world functions. The recent International Union for Conservation's (IUCN) World Conservation Congress was an important event to forefront rangers which, after being postponed a few times from its original 2020 date, went ahead in Marseilles, France in September 2021. Thankfully, despite various travel restrictions, the International Ranger Federation (IRF) was represented together with the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA). It was also good to see some of our members there as well. It was through a collective effort that rangers were included in the [Congress' Manifesto](#) where it was recognised that: "Around the world those working to defend the environment are under attack. This includes communities and frontline workers like rangers. IUCN commits to work to protect environmental defenders". This comes after a well celebrated World Ranger Day where rangers around the world shared their stories and activities whilst also paying respects to those ranger colleagues that are no longer with us. Thanks to our partners for all the tools and media material that was developed and shared, especially the series of Ranger videos. If you have not seen them, then download them by clicking [here](#), watch and share them with fellow rangers and others in your network, so that they may appreciate the value of a ranger.

We know that the pandemic has broadened the spectrum of challenges faced by rangers, many of which have now become more life-threatening than before. We often think that these are related to places such as Africa and Asia where rangers are confronted by armed poachers or militia. Reading a recent article titled [Up trouble Mountain](#) (Micah Ling, September 2021), it emphasised the significant other human challenges that are being experienced. In July, we held a webinar as part of the Ranger Round Table collaboration, where we focused on ranger safeguards and well-being. The one aspect that is a growing hidden threat is the mental health of rangers. The stresses of being a ranger are real and we need to really ensure that the correct support is in place for rangers to match what is being confronted in the workplace.

The other issue which the IRF is tackling is that of inequality and equity in the ranger sector. The report by Seagers, J. *et al* (2021), [Towards Gender Equality in the Ranger Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities](#), is a sobering reminder of the current realities faced by women and how we can make some real gains in this regard. That is why we would also like to congratulate CONAF for arranging the first Latin American Female Ranger Congress and leading on this important issue. We are confident that it will prove to be a milestone in the recognition of female staff in the region's ranger workforce.

The past period was filled with ranger related activities. Congratulations to those rangers that challenged each other in the Wildlife Ranger Challenge. Although it has been focused on Africa, this successful initiative will hopefully expand globally in time to come.

The IRF also held its first ever AGM online and it was available in French and Spanish. This is an important governance process that is legally required, and it provided an opportunity to share with the membership what the IRF board has been busy with, as well as what is in store for the year ahead for the IRF and its members. We thank those who participated, and we hope more will be in attendance next time.

Stay safe in conservation,

Chris Galliers

INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) held its inaugural annual general meeting (AGM) on 28-29th August 2021, since becoming a registered legal entity in September 2020. Not only was it the first AGM for the IRF but it was also its first held online. Ranger associations across the globe gathered to hear how the IRF supports and serves the role of rangers around the world.

IRF President, Chris Galliers launched the proceedings with a comprehensive report into the IRF's recent endeavours and future directions. The focus was on partnerships and collaborations with other non-government organisations where long standing relationships with the Thin Green Line Foundation (TGLF) was recognised along with important links with the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) who have been pivotal in assisting with the development of policies, codes and standards to promote professionalism and accountability in the ranger ranks.

Since the World Ranger Congress held in Nepal in 2019, another 47 new members have joined the IRF. Exciting new developments have taken place in the last 12 months including the introduction of a World Ranger Day Toolkit, an IRF Welcome Pack for new and emerging ranger associations and the development of an essential online space for rangers, the Force For Nature app, helping to raise the profile of rangers and represent the diversity of roles that rangers play globally.

Future highlights for the IRF and its members include the development of the first ever State of the Ranger Report, roll out of the Ranger Code of Conduct, and the production of the IRF Strategy which, when finalised and implemented will guide the federation's forward planning, improve its internal and external communications, increase its membership base and provide for future financial security for the organisation. Exciting and formative times are certainly ahead for the IRF and its members.



Image credits: Wehrner Montoya

IRF STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

With work on the IRF Strategy development now underway, IRF Vice President, Linda Nunn would like to alert all member associations that there will be a questionnaire coming to you all to help feed into developing the work of IRF over the coming years. Whilst IRF realizes that you have all recently been asked to complete the Ranger Association survey, this questionnaire will have different questions about what the future role of the IRF might be and how it can help to support your association into the future. The IRF is its members; you are all the IRF - so this will be your chance to input your opinions and ideas for the future of the IRF. The questionnaire should be distributed by the end of October - watch out for it arriving in your inboxes!



RANGER ASSOCIATION STUDY UPDATE

The International Ranger Federation (IRF), in collaboration with Re:wild (formerly Global Wildlife Conservation) and the University of Central Florida (UCF) is conducting a study to examine the characteristics and functions of ranger associations, challenges that ranger associations face, and ways in which ranger associations can improve. To date, we have conducted 51 interviews across 27 different countries. Additionally, the research team has developed a survey for rangers, with questions about their work context, as well as experiences and perceptions of ranger associations. The survey is online, anonymous, and has been translated into 7 languages to date. Currently, 162 surveys have been completed. The breakdown of interviews and surveys can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Breakdown of Interviews and Surveys by Region

Region	Interviews Completed	Surveys Completed
North America	6	19
Latin and South America	21	43
Africa	11	26
Europe	5	60
Asia	4	4
Oceania	4	10

As the study continues, we encourage you to participate in the voluntary and anonymous survey. The survey can be reached by clicking on the link provided below:
Survey Link: http://ucf.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eyUV9HWJJDHGwya
Finally, if you would like to participate in a confidential interview, please inform the research team at richard.elligson@knights.ucf.edu of your interest.
Your responses and knowledge are valuable and will play a vital role in shaping the future role of ranger associations!

IRF AT THE IUCN



Image credits: Monica Alvarez

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) was present and active at the International Union for Conservation's (IUCN) World Conservation Congress held in Marseille, France from the 3rd to the 11th of September.

Together with the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA), IRF participated at the event 'Supporting Rangers Today, Conserving the World Tomorrow'. In this event, ranger videos were shared with the audience including the premiering Code of Conduct video. The URSA 5-year Action Plan was presented followed by the Force for Nature App, a platform that connects rangers worldwide. The event included a conversation panel with the IRF Federation Officer, the President of the Game Rangers Association of Africa, a Ranger from Nepal and the Regional Vice-Chair of Europe at the World Commission for Protected Areas-IUCN.

The discussion covered various aspects of the ranger profession. Some highlights of the conversation included: rangers should be in forefront discussions related to conservation of protected and conserved areas; rangers require proper training and capacity; also better recognition and working conditions.

Overall, it was a very well received event by the audience (present and online participants) and allowed for a dialogue and Q & A session afterwards. URSA reached out to the international community to join efforts and help achieve its ambitious Action Plan to support rangers around the world.



Image credits: Monica Alvarez

The IRF also participated at the event 'Results of the Latin American Congress on Protected Areas (III CAPLAC)' in which it briefly shared key messages of common challenges rangers face in Latin America and shared a video of members of the Latin America Ranger Federation. The video included a message to national authorities to support rangers more actively, to act with urgency to improve their working conditions and to enable safe working environments. Some of these messages were also included in the presentation of the Latin America Protected Planet Report 2020 held at the Congress.

Other mentions of rangers, their work and ranger awards were presented by Kathy McKinnon, former WCPA chair, during her report to IUCN members at the General Assembly of the Congress.

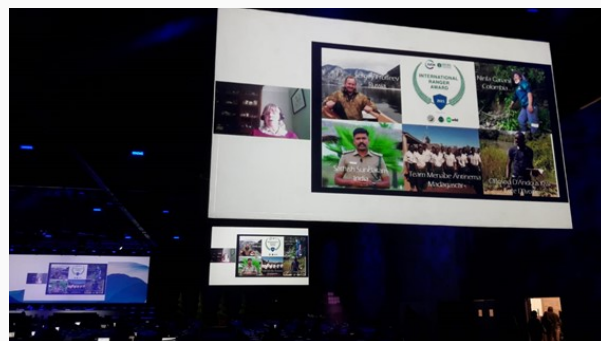


Image credits: Monica Alvarez

Finally, thanks to collaborative work with URSA, members and ranger associations who participated at the

Congress in person or virtually, were included in the Marseille Manifesto at the World Conservation Congress. In the Manifesto, rangers were recognized as environmental defenders who are under attack and the IUCN committed to work to protect them. Perhaps the first time in the history of IUCN that this has occurred and is a big step for improving the recognition of the profession worldwide.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress Marseille Manifesto can be downloaded in three languages here: <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/programme/marseille-manifesto>



IRF AT THE WORLD RANGER DAY FESTIVAL

President of the IRF, Chris Galliers, IRF Asia Representative, Rohit Singh, and IRF Federation Officer, Mónica Álvarez had an online live conversation during the World Ranger Day Festival to share with the audience the work of the Federation, the roll of honour, common challenges of rangers worldwide, the recently published Code of Conduct and other initiatives led by the IRF.

There was also an active participation from the IRF at the URSA panel discussion during the festival. Facilitated by the IRF's Federation Officer, Mónica Álvarez, there was an active conversation with rangers from different regions: Nicorine Yigba Nuah from Cameroon, Christian Robles Puchi from Costa Rica and Mr. Bunty Tao from India. During the conversation, objectives of URSA's 5-year Action Plan were discussed from the different perspectives of each of the rangers on the panel. Videos of the sessions can be accessed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyn-BAZSdKY&list=PLwKFsJZmdxpF1vakX68pc8xjHh2pWwkv6&index=16>



Image credits: Monica Alvarez

THE THIN GREEN LINE FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR FALLEN RANGER FAMILIES



The Thin Green Line Foundation (TGLF), working in conjunction with The Thin Green Line Foundation UK, supported 76 families in 22 countries with Fallen Ranger funds in 2020-2021. With funding from Avaaz, the families of over 20 COVID-19 ranger casualties were included in this support.

The Fallen Ranger Fund assists the families of rangers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. This is a financial lifeline supporting families through shocking circumstances.

Thank you to the people across our partner network who work diligently to coordinate applications for support on behalf of Fallen Ranger families in need; representing Game Rangers International (Zambia), PAMS Foundation (Tanzania), Freeland Thailand, Freeland India, The Orangutan Project, and Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA). Our thanks also to the Elemotion Foundation in Sri Lanka and the local support groups working with remote communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo who have also been instrumental in coordinating financial assistance from TGLF.

The TGLF received funding from Avaaz last year to support COVID-19 casualties among rangers. Unfortunately, that funding has been used up and the foundation is no longer able to make an ongoing commitment to support families where a ranger has passed from COVID-19.

To report a Fallen Ranger casualty, including COVID-19 fatalities, please email info@thingreenline.org.au. These reports are shared with the International Ranger Federation and relevant details are recorded for the Roll of Honour of Fallen Rangers.



Image credits: Photo credit: LEAD Ranger of the team at Wildlife Works honouring two recently fallen comrades on World Ranger Day, 2021.

UPDATE FROM THE REGIONS

EUROPE



European Ranger Federation (ERF) (www.europeanrangers.org)

The European Executive Committee (EEC Board) has continued to meet monthly via Google Meet which has kept some momentum with a variety of projects and administrative issues. The continuing COVID restrictions in most European countries have, frustratingly, prevented most face-to-face activity and the long-awaited meeting for the EEC in early October had to be cancelled. Instead, there will be online meetings at the same time to discuss changes to the ERF statutes, planning for the ERF Ranger Congress and training provision.

A recent Zoom meeting enabled an open discussion regarding the links between Thin Green Line Foundation (TGLF) UK and the ERF. TGLF UK covers the whole of Europe and it is likely that ERF will be able to apply for funding providing we meet the strict criteria. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be agreed to in due course to clarify this arrangement.

Our Funding Group has met recently and providing we can arrange some training events and possibly the ERF Congress in 2022, there is a strong possibility of funding contributions towards these events and for a part time officer to be appointed. It's very early days, but without some extra help and support from a paid professional there is a limit to what can be achieved simply by relying on volunteer support.

The partnership process between the Georgian Ranger Association and the Countryside Management Association (CMA – England/Wales and Northern Ireland) is successfully underway.

A joint, virtual photo exhibition of British and Georgian rangers took place on the 14th of September. The main topic of the exhibition was **Nature Around Me** that aimed to show the similarities and differences of ranger work and wildlife in two different countries.

Arranging the exhibition assisted the Georgian and British rangers to get acquainted, make friends and plan interesting activities in the future.

It is also a pleasure to welcome two new Associate members to our fold, namely the Hungarian Rangers Association and the Wolves from Lebanon, an environmental conservation organisation.

GEORGIA

On September 14th, the Georgian Ranger Association organised a photo exhibition, 'Rangers – Defenders of Wildlife', in Telavi, Georgia where photos of the Georgian and British rangers taken in the line of duty were presented. This is the first joint project of the Georgian Ranger Association and Countryside Management Association, which serves to popularise the ranger profession, raise environmental awareness and promote partnership among Georgian and British rangers. The exhibition was attended by representatives of local and international organisations working in Telavi, as well as guests from the UK and other countries. Two mayor candidates of the town also came to see the exhibition.

The sponsor of the exhibition was Caucasian House. Special thanks to Mr. Roger Cole, who initiated this partnership and Chloe Bradbrooke who assisted in selecting and sending the photos. As a result, a guest from the UK, Mr. Peter Nesteruk, who lives and works in Georgia, suggested the development of a strategic paper for GRA and fundraising.

Here is the link of the TV story about the exhibition: <https://knews.ge/?p=63517>



Image credits: Salome Idoitze, Tusheti National Park, Oreti Lake

COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



The Countryside Management Association (CMA), representing rangers and all countryside and greenspace management professionals in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, launches its professional accreditation scheme for current and new members on the 1st October.

There are three levels of accreditation: as Associate Member (entry level), as Practitioner Member (skilled level) and as Principal Member (accomplished level). Applicants have to provide written evidence of their knowledge, skills and behaviours for a set number of competencies, chosen from twenty-two set out in the CMA Competency Framework.

The Competency Framework aims to comprehensively embrace the full range of competencies expected of those within the countryside, landscape, environmental and parks and greenspace sector, at different levels of operation. This Competency Framework has been consulted upon both amongst current CMA members, and organisations external to the CMA, primarily employers.

The profile, value and professionalism of the countryside, parks and greenspace management sector will be profoundly enhanced by clearly demonstrating the exceptionally wide ranging knowledge and competencies of CMA members.

From 1st October, see the full set of documentation on the CMA website: www.countryside-management.org.uk

CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION

We are delighted to welcome the Dominican Republic Park Rangers Association as a provisional member of the IRF in Central America.



Image credits: Leonel Del Gado

The Thin Green Line Foundation, with its Fallen Ranger Fund, has supported the families of Guatemalan ranger colleagues who died in the line of duty, fighting forest fires. The Fallen Ranger Fund assists the families of rangers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. This is a financial lifeline supporting families through shocking circumstances. On behalf of the IRF, we extend our heartfelt condolences to their respective families.



Image credits: Leonel Del Gado

We also regret the loss of three ranger colleagues from Costa Rica due to COVID-19.



Image credits: Leonel Del Gado

With the support of the European NGO, Czech Republic Ranger Association - a proud member of the IRF - a subsidiary NGO, Forest For Children, was established in Costa Rica. Following up on the agreements in Nepal, we have already begun the exchange of experiences between the Rangers of the Czech Republic and Costa Rica, which took place during the months of January, February and March 2021. Currently, capacity building work is being carried out and an agreement was established with the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica and the organization, For The Oceans, to implement this initiative. Ambassadors from For The Oceans aim to support the protection of and education about the marine environment (Isla del Coco, Pacific Thermal Dome, Osa Peninsula, and Guanacaste Conservation Area) and will also support the initiatives of The Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR) which is an intergovernmental initiative between Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Panamá.



Image credits: Leonel Del Gado

OCEANIA



For the past few months, it seems some of Oceania's ranger associations have been taking the opportunity to emerge from their COVID hibernations and reacquire themselves with their colleagues. Some ranger associations have been lucky enough to hold their annual general meetings in person, while others have utilised MS Teams or Zoom to hold theirs.

Queensland Ranger Association (QRA) Muster

Around 40 Queensland rangers were able to meet in person, with another 40 online, near the beautiful Cape Hillsborough National Park and discuss a range of topics. With the theme, 'working smarter, not harder', this included presentations on digital tools, utilising volunteers and researchers to help with

protected area management and thinking more strategically and/or 'outside the box'. It was a wonderful three days after what has been a very challenging past 12 months.



Image credits: Jolene Nelson

Council of Oceania Ranger Associations

Following on from the QRA Muster, the Council of Oceania Ranger Associations (CORA) met via MS Teams and in person. Most Australian and New Zealand ranger associations attended, as well as one Solomon Islands representative in person.

The past years' achievements were shared, challenges discussed and the year ahead initiatives planned. The biggest achievement CORA hopes to achieve is to host the very first Oceania Ranger Forum in New Zealand next August.

Christchurch Regional Parks Rangers – Canterbury NZ

Spring has sprung early on parks and reserves across Canterbury in New Zealand. The 'Roaring 40's' have blasted Spring storms across the South Island bringing both warm sub-tropical winds of nearly 20C/69F from Australia (thanks guys!) and then sudden southerly changes with snow showers and single digits from the Southern Ocean, followed by bright clear sub-zero -2C/28F frosty days.

Rangers have been out and about on tracks and in bush reserves carrying out maintenance after Winter storms and also planning for work ahead. Track renewals, weed control and pest eradication, along with community education events and supporting community volunteers are high on the work program, all in the midst of coping with COVID-19 lockdowns.

Lots of community aspirations for volunteer projects are very demanding as well as large workloads around project reporting and processes for budget management and health and safety.



Image credits: Rodney Chambers

Tasmania Ranger Roundup

At the bottom of Australia, the island of Lutruwita, Tasmania has around 40% of its landmass protected in parks and reserves and managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service. This year, for the first time, the Tasmanian Rangers Association hosted a Ranger Roundup, providing a networking and professional development opportunity to these desperate Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) staff from across the state. Opened by a Palawa Elder through a Welcome to Country and cleansing smoke ceremony, and supported by both the PWS and by superb catering, around thirty members attended the event to share and learn, and to participate in the AGM.

Presentations ranged from the specifics of new tent platform designs and lessons from the recent mass whale stranding (the largest in Australia), through to broader discussions of fire management to retain natural values and the concepts of wilderness, and even included practical lessons in shingle splitting and the laying of double plank boardwalk.

With the Parks and Wildlife Service and the Tasmanian Ranger Association celebrating their 50th and 40th anniversaries respectively next month, Tasmanian Rangers Association members will be trekking, cycling and kayaking over 500km from the north to the south of Tasmania, raising funds for vital gear needed by Timor-Leste rangers. Equipment such as bikes and backpacks will enable the Forest Guard to continue to protect the most significant biodiversity in the young country.

Please get behind our rangers helping rangers. <https://www.mycause.com.au/page/260935/tasmanian-ranger-association-ranger-relay>.



Image credits: Tasmanian Rangers Association

NORTH AMERICAN REGION

Ranger Brendan Unitt Honored with Memorial

On the one-year anniversary of his death in the line of Duty, Larimer County (CO) Natural Resources Ranger Brendan Unitt was honored with a ceremony including a boat procession and the dedication of a memorial placed in his honor. Ranger Unitt died on 20 August, 2020 while rescuing distressed swimmers on Horsetooth Reservoir during a storm. An award has been created in his memory for any Larimer County employees who demonstrate a passion for service to their community.



Image credits: Andrew Wright

Florida Park Service Ranger Association Releases Photo Album

In 1989, as a gift to the retiring Florida Park Service Director, Ney Landrum, each park and office was asked to provide a photo of their staff. These photos were assembled into an album and presented to Mr. Landrum as a retirement gift. Mr. Landrum's son, Bruce Landrum, attended the 2021 FPSRA Annual Gathering and brought the album for all attendees to see and reminisce. Bruce Landrum has kindly loaned the association the album so that it can be digitized and archived. The album provides a snapshot of the Florida Park Service staff at that moment in time. Most of the photos were not labeled with names, so they are seeking assistance from current and former employees with identifying people in the photos. The album can be viewed here: https://fpsra.org/Park-Staff-Photos-1989?fbclid=IwAR1LXtA1R3a5GLwCzKeSoZkL9UmF7m9a0L7P_A-B86-XSpr-UfBote-g7wY_.

Tennessee State Parks Celebrates World Ranger Day

Tennessee State Parks and the Tennessee Park Rangers Association celebrated World Ranger Day 2021 with an open house event at the newly opened Tennessee State Park Ranger Museum. The museum is located in the Chief Ranger's Office at Henry Horton State Park and celebrates the contributions of rangers for Tennessee State Parks since 1937. To open the museum, former rangers were invited back to what hopefully will become an annual event. Approximately 60 former rangers participated and many stories and tall tales were shared. A short video about the event can be found here: <https://youtu.be/fVSLnO6FoBw>.



Images Credit: Andrew Wright

World Ranger Day Celebrated in California with a Ceremony at Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve

Representatives of multiple agencies and associations gathered on World Ranger Day at Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve to celebrate World Ranger Day. A video from the event is available at <https://youtu.be/0enOAo8f-iA>.

North American Representative Interviewed on World Ranger Day (WRD)

IRF's North American Representative, Andy Wright, participated in two live to-air interviews on The Weather Channel on the morning of 31st July. He discussed the importance of WRD, the Roll of Honour, URSA and the Thin Green Line Foundation, and our WRD event in Tennessee.



Images Credit: Andrew Wright

Associations Cancel Agency Gatherings for 2021

With COVID cases high again in the United States, the Association of National Park Rangers (US) and the California State Park Rangers Association have opted to cancel their annual gatherings again this year, which were scheduled for October. ANPR will hold a virtual annual business and membership meeting on 16th October and they will be holding some smaller regional gatherings to allow folks to meet if they are able.

SOUTH AMERICA

Game Rangers Association of Africa and Federación Latinoamericana de Guardaparques Get Together for the First Time

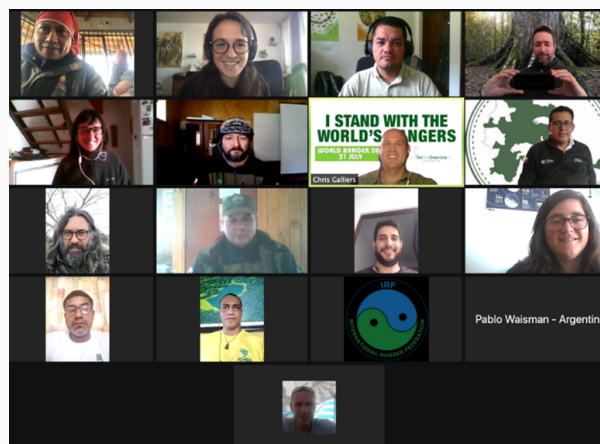
The first virtual meeting between the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA) and the Federación Latinoamericana de Guardaparques (FLG) was held on August 10th to share experiences and lessons learnt in the creation and formalisation process of regional ranger associations.

In the two-hour session and after the welcoming words of IRF President Chris Galliers, Andrew Campbell, CEO of GRAA shared the African experience and lessons learnt in the 50 years of experience of the African association. It was followed by a presentation from Laura Pastorino, acting President of FLG in which she covered the context and background of the FLG and the *Regional diagnosis of the employment situation of rangers in Latin America* that resulted as the main output from the Latin America Ranger Congress held in Baños, Ecuador in 2018.

After the presentations, participants had a Q&A and dialogue session. Governance, funding, and common challenges while formalising the associations were raised. It was an active and interesting meeting for both regional associations who agreed to continue the dialogue to enhance cooperation and support between regional associations.

A total of 17 participants from IRF, GRAA and FLG attended the meeting. Latin America representation included national associations in 7 countries: Uruguay, Costa Rica, Chile, Paraguay, Ecuador, Argentina, and Brazil*[1]. Presentations will be available soon on the YouTube IRF page.

[1] Three different sub-regional associations from Brazil participated at the meeting.



Images Credit: Monica Alvarez

First Female Ranger Congress of Latin America

CONAF Chile has officially launched the *Primer Encuentro de Mujeres Guardaparques de Latinoamérica: Desafíos y Oportunidades*. About 600 female rangers have registered to date and filled out a survey to identify gender gaps and needs of women in the profession.

Now, webinars and virtual roundtables will be held on 28th, 29th, and 30th of September to address the 6 themes of the Congress:

1. Recognition of female rangers
2. Safe environments that are free of gender-based violence
3. Reconciling family, personal and work life
4. Sisterhood and conservation
5. Associativity
6. Lessons learned in analogous organisations

If you are a female ranger and want to participate, log into <https://www.conaf.cl/primer-encuentro-de-mujeres-guardaparques-de-latinoamerica/> and fill out the survey. If you are any ranger and want to participate in the webinar series, stay tuned into the CONAF website to participate!



AFRICA

Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA)

RangerSkills: Upskilling Rangers

Over the past few months, the Game Rangers Association of Africa has confirmed the training of 44 rangers. More specifically, 30 rangers received in-field mentoring sessions, focused on building competencies and developing leaders. Fourteen rangers are being upskilled in Advanced Field Ranger training.

RangerGear: Equipping Rangers

Thanks to the generous donation by Australia's Protected Area Workers Association, the GRAA has been able to facilitate the donation of fire uniforms to African rangers. 200 rangers will benefit from this donation and we are thankful to build important partnerships like these, for the benefit of African rangers.

Rhino Conservation Awards: Raising the Profile of Rangers

On the 25th August, the winners of the prestigious Rhino Conservation Awards were announced during an online event to honour the people and organisations across Africa who play a vital role in protecting our endangered species and ensure our natural heritage is safeguarded for future generations.

All finalists have made an extraordinary contribution to endangered species conservation and each deserves recognition and acknowledgement for the incredible work they do on the frontlines of conservation.

The winners in each category are:



Images Credit: Field Ranger:

Winner: Sebenzile Rwexu, Great Fish River Nature Reserve, Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, South Africa - Game Rangers Association of Africa

FIELD RANGER

Winner: Sebenzile Rwexu, Great Fish River Nature Reserve, Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, South Africa. - During his 36 years as a field ranger, Sebenzile has seen it all and has developed excellent bushcraft skills during this time. His capability and natural leadership qualities have been used to good effect to mentor young rangers. As a senior ranger, Sebenzile leads from the front, maintains high fitness levels and displays steadfast determination using his outstanding tracking skills to ensure he has been directly involved in all arrests made on the reserve in the last 12 months. He continues to set an exceptional example for his peers and despite what the day may throw at him, maintains a smile and a relentless commitment to getting the job done. He is a ranger and leader who deserves recognition.

1st runner up: Lucrescencia Macuacua, Limpopo National Park, National Administration for Conservation Areas, Mozambique.

2nd runner up: Samuel Ndlovu, Kruger National Park, South African National Parks, South Africa.

BEST GAME RANGER

Winner: Bryce Clemence, Anti-Poaching Tracking Specialists, Save Valley Conservancy, Zimbabwe. - Bryce is the founder of Anti-Poaching Tracking Specialists (ATS) and leads a team of highly skilled rangers and their loyal Belgian Malinois dogs who work to ensure the protection and conservation of rhino and other wildlife in the Save Valley Conservancy, Zimbabwe. Bryce has been part of training initiatives to upskill rangers in South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, Congo, and other parts of Zimbabwe. His leadership, grit and commitment has resulted in his team achieving multiple successes despite trying circumstances.

1st runner up: Verissimo Fernando, Luengue Luiana National Park, National Institute of Biodiversity and Conservation, Angola.

2nd runner up: Dennis Kelly, Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, South Africa.

BEST CONSERVATION TEAM

Winner: Niassa Carnivore Project, Mozambique. - Niassa Carnivore Project's work is as much about people as it is about lions and other carnivores. Their dedicated team carries out amazing work monitoring wildlife and undertaking education and outreach, ultimately benefiting both communities and wildlife. Over the past seven years, poaching has declined dramatically, human-wildlife conflict has decreased and wildlife populations have recovered substantially within the Niassa Special Reserve despite the tremendous odds faced.

1st runner up: Zakouma National Park Rangers, Chad.

2nd runner up: Big Game Parks, Eswatini.

BEST CONSERVATION SUPPORTER

Winner: Environmental and Corporate Investigations (ECI), South African National Parks, South Africa. - SANParks ECI have made a significant impact by taking a proactive approach in combating poaching of wildlife. They have been directly or indirectly responsible for or involved in the arrests of 89 rhino poachers over the reporting period inside and outside South African national parks. They continue to provide excellent support and work closely with rangers in the frontlines of conservation.

1st runner up: Neville Agesa Mise, Diani Turtle Watch - Local Ocean Conservation, Kenya.

2nd runner up: StopRhinoPoaching.com, South Africa.

In addition to announcing the winners for 2021, Game Rangers Association of Africa CEO, Andrew Campbell announced an important and exciting change to the official name of the event. From 2022 the Rhino Conservation Awards will be known as **The African Conservation Awards** - highlighting the need to reflect broader conservation efforts across the entire continent in support of all species.



Image Credit: The Cote d'Ivoire ranger team competing in the Wildlife Ranger Challenge

Wildlife Ranger Challenge:

The GRAA is proud to be an organising partner of the Wildlife Ranger Challenge. We had a few teams of our own participating in this year's Wildlife Ranger Challenge alongside 1749 rangers from across 151 protected areas across 24 different African countries. The WRC aims to raise money to support rangers across Africa's protected areas who continue to see drastic cuts in resources and an increase in poaching due to the devastating economic impact of COVID-19.

IUCN World Conservation Congress

The GRAA attended this event, together with the IRF and URSA, to ensure rangers' voices are heard and that the vital role of rangers in the conservation sector is recognised.

GRAA 51st Annual General Meeting

The GRAA will host its Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 13th November 2021. It will be a virtual event, enabling rangers from across the continent and beyond to join, without needing to worry about the challenging logistics of the pandemic. We look forward to welcoming you all then!

CAF Congo:

It has been a momentous year for our CAF Congo ranger work and we would like to share some of our most notable achievements for the year 2021 and future challenges.

We are honoured to finish our 9 months mission in and around the Mususa Forest Reserve located in Butembo town and in the Kandole Community Reserve located in Lubero territory, North Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Globally, it was hard work, resulting in amazing and successful field work missions.

Many thanks to our Field Assistants, Mr Samuel Kabatuko, Mr Eric Paluku, Mr Mbafumojia Jules and Mrs Edouige Kavira based in Butembo town.

Special thanks to all our 40 community rangers for their great work in the Mususa Forest Reserve and Kandole Community Reserve. As a reminder, the Mususa Forest Reserve has reportedly received the attention of scientists from all over the world because of its rich biodiversity.

Thanks to our main sponsors the **PARMER FAMILY TRUST** and the **HARAMBE FOUNDATION**, our conservation areas are well managed and, as a result, there is a positive impact on the wildlife that inhabit them.

However, there are still many things to do and many opportunities here in the region.

Please find attached details of our major achievements during 2021, as well as the Operational Plan CAF CONGO 2022.

UNIVERSAL RANGER SUPPORT ALLIANCE (URSA)



The Universal Ranger Support Alliance or URSA, was founded in July 2020. URSA is a global coalition of conservation organisations building a network of well-supported, professional, and capable rangers who can act as custodians of the natural world. URSA was formed to reassert the Chitwan Declaration and to help support and promote the ranger sector and the work of the International Ranger Federation. URSA, through the implementation of its Action Plan, aims to play a pivotal role in improving the wellbeing of rangers and the communities with whom their work is intrinsically linked, and ultimately, conserving our natural areas.

Please follow the URSA social media handles as follows:

Twitter handle: @ursa4rangers

LinkedIn page: www.linkedin.com/company/universal-rangers-support-alliance

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International Ranger Federation - 41 Devonshire Lane, Winterskloof, 3245, KZN, South Africa - Hilton, KZN 3245 - South Africa

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