



INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION NEWSLETTER

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IRF News

President's Report

I attended the annual meeting of the Portuguese Rangers Association (APGVN) in the Natural Reserve Paul do Boquilobo north of Lisbon during the first week of February. The meeting was well attended and reminiscent of recent ranger association meetings I have attended elsewhere. Commitment and animated debate were essential ingredients of the gathering. The Portuguese rangers are experiencing problems over the unification of guarda and vigilante pay structures and would welcome advice. APGVN is strongly committed to IRF and involved in the Johann Jacobs Project, which is investigating ranger standards in Europe and the involvement of youth in the environment through rangers.

I was also involved in a meeting in Montpellier, France, in early February. IRF was asked to offer advice on an EU funded project on "Training Methods in European Protected Areas." The meeting also provided an opportunity to further enhance the profile of the Federation in Europe and to improve the prospects of a French ranger association.

Later in February, I travelled to Northern Ireland to attend the annual meeting of the Northern Ireland Countryside Staff Association (NICSA), which is an IRF member association. I gave an update on IRF activities and a preview of the Kruger Congress. During this same period, IRF treasurer Mike Marshall attended the annual meeting of the Game Rangers Association of Africa in Kruger NP and also met with the Congress organizing committee to discuss the programme and finances.

On March 29th, Mike Marshall and I met 'Ish' Ishwaran from UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC) during a visit he was making to England. We discussed funding for WH delegates to the Kruger Congress and input from WHC to the Congress. He is keen that WH delegates make a positive contribution in return for their funding; it was suggested that this could be done through poster presentations and a separate workshop for WH delegates within the Congress. Ish said that funding will likely be available, and that a bid in December this year would be necessary. We said that if the U.S. bid for funds is successful, then we would target this money essentially at Africa - with one or two delegates from Southeast Asia, India, and/or China. It's likely that WHC will hold a workshop for African WH site managers in January, 2000. I asked that John Forrest or another IRF representative be invited by WHC. The meeting will take place in Arusha, Tanzania.

We also discussed a proposed IRF bid to train rangers in a World Heritage site in Albania, possible links to the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, joint bids for funding, and a memorandum of understanding between WHC and IRF. Ish agreed to advise us on potential sources of core funding for IRF other than WHC. We also discussed our proposal for a UN Wildlife Protection Force following the announcement recently of a UN task force to address poaching and trade in wildlife.

I have continued with efforts to increase our membership, and it is heartening to report that we have made recent breakthroughs with Cameroon, Slovenia and Poland, and that the Czech Rangers Association has just joined IRF (see below). I have received a request to join IRF from Hunan Forestry Dept in China, but we do not as yet have the ability to permit this. We need to discuss the possibility of an associate or corporate membership in Kruger. Meanwhile, I have suggested that they can receive our newsletter if they wish.

I am pursuing the possibility of the IRF being registered as a charity in the United Kingdom so that we can attract funds more easily. Bill Wade is also investigating incorporation in the U.S. We may also need to consider some form of registration in South Africa and elsewhere as required in the future.

There has also been action on other fronts:

- A memorandum of understanding between IRF and IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) has been drawn up and approved by IRF's executive council. The draft was submitted to WCPA's executive council in late April and received a very positive initial response. More details on this in the next newsletter.
- A similar memo on joint co-operation with Europarc will also be prepared shortly. A meeting is to be arranged in the next few weeks with WWF International to discuss training in Africa and other areas of potential co-operation.
- The internet website is progressing and investigations into potential page sponsors are being pursued.
- I plan to meet with a member of our Countryside Management Association's international committee to discuss the establishment of an exchange bureau within the next month and would welcome any other offers of assistance from other continents.

The biggest disappointment of my secondment period has been the inability to attract core funding for the Federation, but I will continue to pursue all possibilities. I now have a contact in the European Parliament thanks to Maria Cunha in Portugal, and I will be making contact with that person. I returned to my post in the Peak National Park on April 1st, but will be continuing with IRF business in my spare time. I will be sending out a review of my secondment term shortly.

Gordon Miller
President, IRF

Editor's note:

Gordon Miller did a tremendous job on behalf of rangers everywhere during the six months he was 'on loan' from his park to work full-time for IRF. He worked tirelessly to achieve IRF's goals, to establish links with the international conservation community, to strengthen the internal organization of IRF, and to promote the ranger ethic and image wherever he could. Thanks, Gordon, on behalf of us all.

Thanks also to the following organizations who provided funding or support for Gordon's six month assignment: Peak District National Park Authority, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), World Wide Fund for Animals (WWF), Countryside Commission for England and Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage, Countryside Management Association, Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association, and many individual rangers.

IRF Member Directory

An updated International Ranger Federation member directory is either enclosed with this newsletter (if you receive a printed copy), or follows in the next message (if you received an electronic copy via the Internet). Please advise the editor if any changes or corrections need to be made.

There are MANY changes in the directory, some of them small (ALAVA, for example, has moved its offices down the same street it was on before), so be sure to use this edition and discard previous editions.

New and Developing Ranger Associations

There have been promising developments in several countries regarding the establishment of national ranger associations and potential affiliations with IRF.

- Czech Republic - The Association of Protected Area Rangers of the Czech Republic has been accepted as the newest member of the International Ranger Federation. The 23-member association was endorsed by the Slovak Rangers Association. The names of the chairperson and the IRF contact appear in the new directory. The association was formed during a meeting last fall and has been registered with the republic's home office as a civil organization. They are working on a joint ranger program with Danish rangers, and have so far published two newsletters.
- Kenya - Dr. Richard Leakey, director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, has given Kenyan wardens/rangers the go-ahead to form an association. A meeting was held in Nairobi on April 24th to discuss the formation of the organization and registration of members. In the meanwhile, Daniel Onsembe continues to be the Kenyan representative to IRF.
- Slovenia - IRF now has a representative in Slovenia - Martin Solar at Triglav National Park. See the directory for more information.
- Venezuela - Jose Melchor is the new IRF representative in Venezuela. His name and addresses are also in the directory.
- Cameroon - We now have a contact in Cameroon as well, Samson Essam. Samson has begun the process of establishing a ranger association there. See the directory for address particulars.
- Poland - Zbig Niewadomski has met with the director of Polish Parks, who has given approval for the legal formation of a Polish Rangers Association. Work on establishing the association is now underway.

Third World Congress

According to Congress organizer Merle Whyte, almost 200 notifications of interest in attending the Third World Congress had been received by early April - with many more expected from within South Africa shortly. Although there have been few contacts so far with rangers in other African nations, the Congress has sent out notifications to appropriate embassies and other individuals.

As noted above in President Miller's comments, IRF is making a concerted effort to raise funds for scholarships to cover the cost of travel to South Africa for rangers who might otherwise not be able to attend. The U.S. Association of National Park Rangers has submitted a request to the Turner Foundation for \$60,000 in scholarship money for rangers from the Western Hemisphere - principally Latin America and the Caribbean. The request will be considered at the Foundation's July meeting.

Declan Keiley has sent along an update on the "Africa in the Roar" project, in which IRF members will be driving three four-wheel-drive vehicles from Egypt to Kruger NP, picking up rangers on the way. An outline agreement has been developed with Landrover whereby they will provide vehicles for the project, and it also appears likely that a supporter has been found who will provide camping gear. Rangers may join different legs of the trip at a cost of \$600. This will give rangers a chance to meet other rangers, share a unique trip, and get onto TV. If you'd like an outline brochure, contact Declan via the Internet at keiley.broads@dial.pipex.com, telefax him at 44-1502-715911, or call him at 44-1502-713303.

If you're interested in attending the Congress and looking for more information, contact: The Secretariat, IRF Congress, PO Box 147, SKUKUZA 1350, Kruger National Park, South Africa. The telephone/telefax number is 27-13-7355195; the e-mail address is merle@mpu.co.za.

News About IRF Associations

Costa Rica Ranger Association (Costa Rica) - Rafael Gutierrez

The Costa Rica Ranger Association is working on a special program. They have received some money from The Nature Conservancy and Fundacion Neotropica to let 40 park rangers finish high school and also let 25 park rangers study management and administration of natural resources at Universidad Estatal a Distancia of Costa Rica in 1999.

National Park Wardens Association (Canada) - Mark Halley

Canadian wardens are lobbying for the authority to carry pistols for personal safety. A new law which may soon go into effect in Canada would dramatically increase penalties for poaching, which could be as much as five years in jail and a fine of \$50,000 to \$150,000. This increases the possibility that poachers would rather shoot a warden than risk the jail term or fine. Although Parks Canada wardens routinely carry rifles and shotguns in their vehicles, they don't carry weapons on their persons. NPWA may seek support from other IRF associations on this issue in future months.

Scottish Countryside Ranger Association (Scotland) - Tony Wilson

SCRA recently held its annual general meeting (AGM). The existing council members were reelected, and Tony Wilson became a new vice chairperson. He will continue, however, as SCRA's international representative.

SCRA's "twinning" arrangement with the Iceland Wardens Association is progressing. The exchange will take place for a two-month period this summer. The two associations hope that this will be the first of a series of such events. SCRA has also been approached by some rangers in Australia about the possibility of a year-long exchange with one of their members, and there's also the possibility of an exchange with a ranger from California in the USA. A group will be set up within SCRA to coordinate future exchanges.

Two members of SCRA recently attended the Northern Ireland Countryside Staff Association's AGM at Newcastle in Northern Ireland. This provided an excellent opportunity to cement relations between the two organizations. SCRA extends its thanks to NICSA for a most enjoyable and informative trip.

SCRA's training program is being reviewed at present, as they've had a number of inquiries about how courses are run.

The next SCRA conference will be held in April, 2000, at the University of St. Andrews. The topic will be "water," and will cover all aspects of marine and freshwater conservation. More details will be available in the near future.

Asociacion De Guardaparques y Guias de Naturaleza (Uruguay) - Juan Carlos Gambarotta

Ivan Arnold from Bolivia has contacted Juan Carlos Gambarotta and asked for information on the aims and objectives of IRF so that Ivan can help convince rangers to create a national association of rangers in Bolivia.

OET, the Organizacion Para Estudios Tropicales, will conduct a training course in Costa Rica from August 22 to October 14, 1999 entitled "Curso De Manejo De Areas Silvestres Tropicales." Financial support is available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. You must apply by June 25. The Internet address for further information is edamb@ots.ac.cr.

Slovak Ranger Association (Slovakia) - Vlado Vancura

It is almost a tradition that the Slovak Ranger Association invites a number of ranger friends from nearby countries to its annual meetings. In the recent past, it was rangers from Poland and Hungary; this time it was Czech rangers. The meeting was held from March 25 to March 27 in the Slovak Karst Biosphere Reserve in the southern part of Slovakia, right at the boundary with Hungary. The caves of Slovak Karst Landscape Protected Area and the caves of National Park Aggtelek on the Hungarian side were put on the list of World Heritage Sites a few years ago.

The first day of the meeting was devoted to the agenda of the association. They also had a guest - Ivan Vololeuk, the president of the Association of Carpathian National Parks and Protected Areas - and an informal ranger party in the evening. On the second day, Slovak rangers crossed the Hungarian boundary, and, with local rangers as guides, spent almost four hours in the great underground labyrinth of caves in NP Aggtelek. This was followed with a meeting with the director and chief ranger and an excursion to Aggtelek park headquarters. The evening program - slide shows and a discussion and presentation by Hungarian rangers back on the Slovak side - was a great end to a busy day. The meeting showed the ability of rangers to organize events on an international scale, and led to great enthusiasm in preparing for the next meeting in October in National Park East Carpathy with their Polish and Ukrainian colleagues.

Naturvejleder Foreningen i Danmark (Denmark) - Ida Marie Jensen

The association's AGM was held from March 3 to March 5; the theme was "Quality in Nature Interpretation - And How We Can Be Sure That It Will Continue!" There are about 200 rangers in Denmark, and there are activities during the year that include courses containing different subjects and meetings about education of new rangers.

The international committee is working on many issues. There is a group of about eight rangers that is trying to raise money for the Third World Congress in South Africa. They will try to develop a project and find partners in South Africa; updates will appear in future newsletters. One ranger on the international committee, Per Mikkelsen, is working for two years on a project to help develop an education for rangers working in the 30 to 35 national parks in Lithuania. Peer Noergaard is working with the "Coalition Clean Baltic," which is a joint effort by Baltic countries - Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Denmark - to work on nature and environmental issues. Ranger Joergen Stubgaard has traveled to Kaliningrad in Russia to help with education of rangers working in national parks there. Ranger Soeren Andersen has been in Thailand on a project called "Nature Interpretation and Public Awareness for Environment;" he was teaching rangers and other environmental interpreters.

Bundesverband Naturwacht (Germany) - Heike Flemming

Alfred Heilmann has stepped down from presidency of Bundesverband Naturwacht and has been replaced by Beate Blahy. Heike Fleming is serving as both secretary/treasurer and translator for the association. Alfred has been a strong supporter of the IRF and he is to be congratulated for his hard work in building up the German Ranger Association. Bundesverband Naturwacht now has 125 members.

Game Rangers Association of Africa (South Africa) - John Forrest

John sent along a note in February about the status of the African training initiative which was endorsed by IRF at the Second World Congress in Costa Rica:

"Following advanced instructor level training for some rangers in Mozambique, a proposition was put to the Mozambique government, at their request, for the training of somewhere between 200 and 500 field rangers over an extended period. We do not expect an answer for some time.

"The Garamba situation remains confused. The World Wildlife Federation (WWF) spent a great deal of money purchasing equipment to replace that lost during the last war. Fraser Smith moved back into Garamba and commenced re-building and re-activating the infrastructure, including a training camp, (but) they are back in the middle of another war. Fraser Smith had to leave the area, and WWF, at least temporarily, has ceased taking an active role in trying to save the rhino, of which we now do not know how many are left. We have heard that at least one and maybe more rangers have been killed and three wounded. It is our opinion that the time has now come for a massive publicity campaign to persuade the international community of the seriousness of the situation and the need to DO something instead of looking the other way. Fraser Smith is still doing his best and has, I believe, found some alternative funding.

"At the request of WWF (UK), GRAA submitted a price for training approximately 150 field rangers in Nigeria. They found our price too expensive (although it was less than we charge in South Africa), so we submitted an alternative price extending the training over a longer period. However, they still found the price too high, as they wish one person to train all 150 over a period that we consider unacceptable if standards are to be maintained. The GRAA normally works on one instructor per fifteen field rangers, which we are prepared to extend to one to twenty-five if they are prepared to work at night and extra hours. But, as an organization, we are not prepared to sacrifice what we consider to be the absolute minimum standards of training if African rangers are to be effective in the long term. We know what we are talking about.

"Politics and an inability to make adequate contact with the right people in other African countries are inhibiting any further progress here.

"In the meantime training has been concentrated on field rangers working in private conservation areas in southern Africa. This is proving successful."

News About Rangers

Russia

Natalia Danilina, director of Russian nature reserves (zapovedniks), has sent along a note about the new web site established for zapovedniks. It can be found at <http://www.zapovedniks.ru>.

Uganda

As most of you know, a number of park visitors and a ranger were killed by terrorists in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park in Uganda in early March. The ranger's name was Ross Wagaba. President Gordon Miller subsequently sent a telefax to the director of the Uganda Wildlife Authority, expressing "our sorrow and deep sympathy for the loss of fellow ranger Ross Wagaba..." The fax continues: "The world's media will often highlight the loss of life of tourists and foreign nationals in these incidents, but little is said about the dedicated work of the rangers on the ground." Gordon asked that our sympathies be extended to Ross Wagaba's family. He closed by noting that IRF would be holding its Third World Congress in South Africa next year and said that IRF "would be delighted if rangers in Uganda could become part of the 'world family of rangers.'"

United States

Many rangers from outside the United States have asked how they can enroll as volunteers in U.S. parks (last year, 118 international volunteers worked in parks in the United States). The following information comes from a manual used by the U.S. National Park Service's Office of International Affairs:

The International Volunteers in Parks (IVIP) program is in many ways different from the regular volunteer programs in the parks because of special requirements of the United States Information Agency (USIA) for the issuance of a J-1 visa. The NPS J-1 visa program allows foreigners to train/study in the United States for up to 18 months while receiving compensation (usually in the form of park housing and/or food).

The NPS Office of International Affairs (OIA) is in charge of issuing the IAP-66 (application for a J-1 visa). Because of USIA regulations, the IVIP program is more of a training program than a work program. Candidates should be students working on park-related degrees (natural sciences, education etc.) or people already in park or conservation-related careers. The park is required to have a description of the training program with clearly set objectives and goals for the volunteer along with the work to be performed. The park training program is designed to enhance the volunteer's education or career goals. The aim is that 1) the international volunteer makes a valid contribution to park operations here and that 2) the volunteer gains career enhancing knowledge that will contribute to a park-related or a natural or cultural resource-related field in the volunteer's home country.

IVIPs should contact the volunteer coordinator at the park of their choice. Once the park has received and approved the application, it must contact OIA and provide the information needed by that office to complete the IAP-66 J-1 visa application. OIA must have all the information necessary at least 30 days before the volunteer leaves his/her country.

The volunteer MUST acquire a supplemental health insurance policy before the IAP-66 can be sent to him/her from OIA. This adds an extra cost to the individual, but assures medical care in case of accidents outside of working hours. Parks some times pay for insurance for volunteers from poorer countries.

For more information, contact: National Park Service, Office of International Affairs, International Volunteer Coordinator, 1849 C Street, NW, MS 0050, Washington, DC 20240. You may also call 202-565-1293, or send an Internet message to David.Krewson@nps.gov .

Upcoming Events

October 28-30, 1999	Annual Conference, Australian Ranger Association, Darwin.
April, 2000	Annual General Meeting, Scottish Countryside Ranger Association, University of St. Andrews.
September 10-16, 2000	International Ranger Federation, Third World Congress. Kruger National Park, Republic of South Africa. Contact: John Forrest via the Internet at gra@sco.eastcoast.co.za .

IRF Directory

The directory contains the names, addresses and phone and fax numbers for principals in the federation. Phone numbers generally do not contain international prefixes; some are also listed as they appear within a country and may not work exactly as printed internationally.

IRF Executive Council - Officers

President Gordon Miller, Countryside Management Association.
Address Fold Head Cottage, Grindsbrook Booth, Edale via Sheffield, S30 2ZD, England
Phone 01433-670210 (home), 01433-670216 (work)
Fax Same
Internet GMillerEco@compuserve.com

Vice President Rick Smith, Association of National Park Rangers
Address 2 Roadrunner Trail, Placitas, NM, 87043, USA
Telephone 1-505-867-0047
Telefax 1-505-867-4175
Internet rsmith0921@aol.com

Secretary Sue Clark, Countryside Management Association
Address 6 Pelham Road, Braughing, Ware, Herts. SG11 2QU, United Kingdom
Telephone 01920-822600
Telefax 01920-823007 (work)
Internet sclark@irf.force9.co.uk

Treasurer Mike Marshall, Countryside Management Association
Address South East Cottage, 34 The Street, Barney, Fakenham, Norfolk, UK, NR21 0NB
Telephone 44-1328-878053 (home), 44-1328-878951 (work)
Telefax 44-1328-878951 (work)
Internet Marshall.I.R.F@btinternet.com

IRF Executive Council – Continental Representatives

North America Yvette Ruan, Association of National Park Rangers
Address PO Box 69, Hawaii NP, HI 96718
Telephone 808-985-8646 (home), 808-985-6030 (work)
Telefax 808-985-8640 (work)
Internet yvette@aloha.net

Central America Ronald Mora, Costa Rican Ranger Association
Address Sistema Nacional de Areas de Conservacion, Apartado Postal 10104-1000, San Jose, Costa Rica
Telephone --
Telefax --
Internet Send messages care of: mrdez@sol.racsa.co.cr

South America Juan Carlos Gambarotta, Asociacion De Guardaparques y Guias de Naturaleza, Uruguay (see below for address)

Europe Vlado Vancura, Slovak Rangers Association, Slovakia (see below for address)

Africa John Forrest, Game Rangers Association of Africa, South Africa (see below for address)

Australasia Kristen Appel, Australian Ranger Association, Australia (see below for address)

IRF Staff

Editor Bill Halainen, Association of National Park Rangers
Address 4032 Conashaugh Lakes, Milford, Pennsylvania, 19337, USA
Telephone 1-717-686-3828 (home), 1-717-588-2430 (work)
Telefax 1-717-588-2780 (work)
Internet Bill_Halainen@nps.gov

Member Associations

The following member associations are listed alphabetically according to the English spelling of the home country. All are national associations unless otherwise indicated.

Australia

Australian Ranger Association

President: Kristen Appel
Address c/o Keep River National Park, PO Box 452, Kununurra, WA 6743, Australia
Telephone 61-8-91678827
Telefax 61-8-91687396
Internet Kristen.Appel@PWCNT.nt.gov.au or kristenappel@hotmail.com
Web Site <http://ausranger.hypermart.net>

Australia

National Park Rangers Association of Western Australia

President: Rory Neal
Secretary Gordon Thomson
Address 61 Thomas St., Subiaco, 6008 Western Australia (PO Box 414, Subiaco, 6008)
Telephone 09-3885400
Telefax 09-3823986
Internet --
Web Site --

Canada

National Park Wardens Association

President Mark Halley
Address Box 343, Tobermory, Ontario, Canada NOH 2R0
Telephone 519-596-2624 (home), 519-596-2444 (work)
Telefax 519-596-2062
Internet Mark_Halley@pch.gc.ca
Web Site: <http://www3.ns.sympatico.ca/npwa>

Costa Rica

Costa Rica Rangers Association

Chairman Rafael Gutierrez
Address MIRENEM, Area de Coservacion Corillera Volcanica Central, APDO. 10104, San Jose, Costa Rica
Telephone 506-256-2611
Telefax 506-256-2986
Internet --
Web Site: --

Czech Republic**Association of Protected Area Rangers of the Czech Republic**

Chairperson Petr Grendziok
Address SCHKO Beskydy, Nadrazni 36, Rosnov pod Radhostem 756 61, Ceska Republika
Telephone 0-603-700327 or 0-651-654293
Telefax --
Internet schkob@iol.cz
Web Site <http://www.krnap.cz/asociace>

IRF Rep Michal Skalka
Address Sprava N.P. Krkonose, TES Pec pod Snezkou 542 21, Ceska Republika
Telephone 0-439-896213
Telefax Same
Internet istursa@krnap.cz or prejjhon@krnap.cz
Web Site --

Denmark**Naturvejleder Foreningen i Danmark**

IRF Rep Ida Marie Jensen
Address Naturhistorisk Museum, Universitetsparken, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark
Telephone 45-86-129777
Telefax 45-86-130882
Internet ma@nathist.aau.dk
Web Site: --

Ecuador**Galapagos Ranger Association**

Chair Ruben Cevallos
Address Asociacion de Guardaparques, Parque Nacional Galapagos, Puerto Ayora, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador
Telephone 593-5-526511
Telefax 593-5-526190
Internet png@ga.pro.ec (on the subject line, put "Mensaje para Ruben Cevallos")

England/Wales**Countryside Management Association**

Chair Declan Keiley
Address 82 Grove Road, Beccles, Suffolk, England
Telephone 44-1502-705911 (home), 44-1502-713303 (work)
Telefax 44-1502-678202
Internet gillingham.broads@dial.pipex.uk

IRF Rep Colin Dilcock
Address 86 Littledale, Pickering, North Yorkshire, YO18 8PS, England
Telephone 44-1751-473712 (home), 44-1439-770657 (work)
Telefax 44-1439-770691
Internet C.Dilcock@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk
Web Site: --

Finland**Suomen Luonnonsuojelualueiden Henkil/Kunta**

Chairman Trygve Lofroth
Address Finnish Forest and Park Service, Southcoast Park Area, 21 660 Nagu, Finland
Telephone 358-2-4651697 (home), 358-2-4651866 (work)
Telefax 358-2-4651862
Internet trygve.lofroth@metsa.fi
Web Site --

Germany**Bundesverband Naturwacht**

Chair
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site:

Beate Blahy
Voigtland STR.24, D-16248, Hohensaaten, Germany
0333-68398 (home), 03334-212035 (work)

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Secretary
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Heike Flemming
Dorfstrasse 9, 16248 Ludersdorf, Germany
--
--
H.Flemming@t-online.de
--

Iceland**Iceland Wardens Association**

IRF Rep
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Steinunn Asmundsdottir
Egilsstadir 1, P.O. Box 85, 700 Egilsstadir, Iceland.
--
581-3651
--
--

IRELAND**Ranger Association of Ireland**

Chairperson
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Brendan O'Shea
Killarney National Park, County Kerry, Ireland
064-31440 (work)
064-33926
--
--

Italy**Associazione Ligure Agenti Di Vigilanza Ambientale**

Chairperson
Address

Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Augusto Atturo
Associazione Ligure Agenti di Vigilanza Ambientale, Via Martiri della Liberta 23/7,
16156 Genova GE, Italy
010-661758
010-661758
ecopol@iol.it
<http://users.iol.it/ecopol>

Nepal**Rangers Association of Nepal**

Secretary
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Ashok Khand
Royal Chitwan National Park, Kashara, Chitwan, Nepal
977-56-21932
977-1-229380
--
--

Northern Ireland**Northern Ireland Countryside Staff Association**

Chairman Bob Davidson
Address School House, 14, Lough Road, Upper Ballindery, Lisburn, BT28 2PQ, Northern Ireland
Telephone 1648-301289 (work), 1849-453137 (home)
Telefax 1648-301287
Internet --
Web Site --

IRF Rep Hugh McCann
Address Drumadavey, Irvinestown, County Formanagh, BT94 1LQ, Northern Ireland
Telephone 3656-21066 (home), 3656-21588 (work)
Telefax --
Internet --
Web Site --

Portugal**Associacao Portuguesa de Guardas e Vigilantes da Natureza**

Secretary Francisco Jose Semedo Correia
Address c/o Parques Natural de Sintra-Cascais, Rua General Alves Rocardas 10 2 Esq, 2710 Sintra, Portugal
Telephone --
Telefax 1-923-5141
Internet --
Web Site --

Romania**Romanian Rangers Association**

Chairman Calin Georgescu
Address 27 Academiei, Suite II, Sect. 1, 70108 Bucharest, Romania
Telephone 40-(0)-1-312-66-39
Telefax 40-(0)-1-312-42-63
Internet ncsd@sdpn.ro
Web Site --

Scotland**Scottish Countryside Rangers Association**

Chair Bob Reid
Address 16 Chestnut Grove, Larkhall, Lanarkshire, ML9 2AS, Scotland
Telephone 44-1698-884083 (home), 44-1698-266155 x 131 (work)
Telefax 44-1698-252925 (work)
Internet --

IRF Rep Tony Wilson
Address Kellie Toll House, Newton of Balcormo, Arncroach, Fife, KY10 2RE
Telephone 44-1333-720334 (home), 44-1334-472151 (work)
Telefax 44-1334-479654 (work)
Internet: nar@st-and.ac.uk
Web Site --

Slovakia

Chairman
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Slovak Rangers Association

Vladoj Vancura
Hviezdoslavova 150, Liptovsky Hradok, 03301, Slovakia
421-844-221-214 (work), 421-844-223-436 (home)
--
vlado@aprojekt.sk
--

South Africa

IRF Rep
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Game Rangers Association of Africa

John Forrest
P.O. Box 131, Umkomaas 4170, Republic of South Africa
0323-30374
0323-30374
gra@sco.eastcoast.co.za
www.wildnetafrica.com/gamerangers/home.html

Sweden

Individual
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Naturvarda

Thomas Hansson
Stenhuvuds National Park, S-27735 Kivik, Sweden
46-414-70677
46-414-70677, 70982
thomas.hansson@odata.se
--

United States

President
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

Association of National Park Rangers

Cindy Ott-Jones
PO Box 4314-Bullfrog, Lake Powell, UT 84533
1-435-684-2386
--
rcoj@hubwest.com
<http://www.anpr.org>

IRF Rep
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet

Rick Smith
2 Roadrunner Trail, Placitas, NM, 87043, USA
1-505-867-0047
1-505-867-4175
rsmith0921@aol.com

United States

IRF Rep
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet
Web Site

California State Park Rangers Association

Mike Lynch
PO Box 292010, Sacramento, California 95829-2010, USA.
1-916-558-3734 (home)
1-916-387-1179
lynch@psyber.com
--

President
Address
Telephone
Telefax
Internet

Jill Dampier
--
1-916-885-4527
--
damp@psyber.com

Uruguay**Asociacion De Guardaparques y Guias de Naturaleza**

Chair Juan Carlos Gambarotta
Address Poste Restante, Asctillos, 27200, Uruguay
Telephone 70-06-00 (Montevideo)
Telefax 96-45-20 (Montevideo)
Internet: jgambaro@adinet.com.uy
Web Site --

Individual Members

The following are individual members who are in the process of forming national associations in their countries:

Cameroon

Individual Samson Essam
Address B.P. 11287, Yaounde, Cameroon
Telephone 237-30-59-41
Telefax --
Internet eyette@camnet.cm

Kenya

Individual Daniel O. Onsembe
Address District Warden Office, Post Office Box 879, Kakamega, Kenya, East Africa
Telephone 331-20425
Telefax --
Internet --

Malta

Individual Alexander L. Borg
Address Malta Planning Authority, Sultana Building/3, Mediatrix Place, Zabbar ZBR OZ, Malta
Telephone 356691978
Telefax 356464804
Internet --

Slovenia

Individual Martin Solar
Address Triglav National Park, Kidriceva 2, 4260 BLED, Slovenia
Telephone 386-64-741-188
Telefax 386-64-743-568
Internet Martin.Solar@TNP.gov.sl

Venezuela

Individual Jose Melchor
Address Final Avenida de los Chorros, Oficina de la Region Capital de INPARQUES, Buzon
Parque Nacional Laguna de Tacarigua, Caracas 1080-A, Venezuela
Telephone 58-01-42184928
Telefax 58-2-237-1779 (Atencion: Jose Melchor)
Internet aarteaga@telcel.net.ve