



WORLD RANGER DAY 2023

INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION STATEMENT

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at COP15 in December 2022, has set out ambitious biodiversity targets. Target 3, states that we need to “ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed...”¹.

Achieving these targets will not be easy and most certainly will not be possible without significant investment into the workforce needed to deliver on these targets. The key word to focus on is the word *effectively*. The target should not be focused purely on getting a greater area under conservation, but more on how existing and new areas are better conserved, so that global threats such as biodiversity loss and climate change are mitigated. The 30x30 targets should be seen as a minimum if we are to “restore, maintain and enhance nature’s contributions to people” as per Target 11².

The International Ranger Federation recognises rangers as essential planetary health professionals for the critical tasks they perform, such as: protection, conservation, biodiversity monitoring, visitor services, fire management, law enforcement, education, first responders, preventing zoonotic disease, community support and regulation of sustainable use. Protected and Conserved Areas cannot be effectively conserved without these functions and an adequate area-based workforce where rangers, either state, indigenous, community or voluntary guardians, are at the forefront. In the recent paper by Appleton *et al* (2022)³, it was estimated that there are approximately 286 000 rangers. The sector already suffers from a shortage of capacity, so to meet the 30x30 target, the number of rangers needs to increase to 1,5 million. Concurrently, there will need to be substantial improvements in resourcing, working conditions, conduct, and capacity, to ensure a competent, diverse, and professional ranger workforce.

^{1&2} <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/>

³ Appleton, M.R., Courtiol, A., Emerton, L. *et al*. **Protected area personnel and ranger numbers are insufficient to deliver global expectations.** *Nat Sustain* 5, 1100–1110 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-022-00970-0>



Rangers face many existential threats, most of which cannot be addressed at a site level but rely on National government interventions to ensure safer conditions for rangers. This year, the International Ranger Federation (IRF) with the Thin Green Line, have recorded a staggering 148 in the line of duty ranger deaths, where 32% were attributed to homicides and 24% being vehicle accidents. The real dangers of the job are also highlighted by the 18% of ranger casualties that arose from the very animals that they look to protect. Asia continues to be the region that experiences the greatest number of ranger deaths (70), followed closely by Africa (65).

The International Ranger Federation calls on all who benefit from ecosystem services, such as the regulation of air, water and climate, soil health, pollination and protection from natural hazards and disasters, to come together to celebrate and support rangers and give recognition to the value that their work provides for the benefit of people and planet.

[End]

Did you know?

The reason why 31st July is celebrated as World Ranger Day is because it was the day that the International Ranger Federation was established, in 1992.

INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION DEFINITION OF A ‘RANGER’⁴

There is a wide range of working titles in use globally, all of which fit the definition of the term “Ranger”. We have identified a number of additional titles, listed in the appendix. For this document, the term **Ranger** will be used to refer to any of the relevant working titles.

Rangers play a critical role in conservation; they are responsible for safeguarding nature, and cultural and historical heritage, and protecting the rights and well-being of present and future generations. As representatives of their authority, organisation or community, they work, often for extended periods, in protected and conserved areas and wider land- and seascapes, whether state, regional, communal, indigenous, or private, in line with legal and institutional frameworks. They should be dedicated and knowledgeable, and should always act in a professional manner.

Rangers provide a combination of services, which may include:

- Protecting, conserving, and restoring natural and cultural values in protected and conserved areas and wider land- and seascapes.
- Enforcing relevant laws, maintaining area integrity, ensuring compliance, and managing visitors.
- Maintaining a safe, secure, and balanced environment for communities and wildlife.
- Developing and maintaining trusting and respectful dialogue and relationships with key stakeholders.

⁴ International Ranger Federation (2021). Ranger Code of Conduct. Version 1.0. International Ranger Federation, Victoria, Australia, <https://www.internationalrangers.org/toolkit/ranger-code-of-conduct-videos/>



- Empowering, collaborating with, engaging and supporting indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Providing education and awareness for communities, visitors, the younger generation, and society.
- Monitoring and researching wildlife, habitats, and features of cultural and historical importance.
- Managing and controlling environmental risks and providing assistance during emergencies.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION:

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) is a non-profit organization, established to promote the vital role that rangers play in the conservation of the world's natural and cultural treasures. The IRF actively promotes and supports the formation of ranger associations around the world to ensure that rangers are more adequately supported and represented. The IRF's membership comprises over 100 ranger associations around the world. For more information, please visit www.internationalrangers.org.

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