



## GUARDAPARQUE

March, 2011

Volume 5

Number 3

---

**Guardaparque** is a publication prepared monthly (when possible) and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), an organization of non-governmental and governmental ranger organizations from around the world. If you have a submission for **Guardaparque**, please send it to editor Bill Halainen ([Bill\\_Halainen@contractor.nps.gov](mailto:Bill_Halainen@contractor.nps.gov)). Summaries in Spanish for each article were prepared by Rick Smith ([rsmith0921@comcast.net](mailto:rsmith0921@comcast.net)).

### **Law Enforcement And Emergency Services**

#### **Pacific Ocean Parks**

##### **Japan Tsunami Causes Damage At Several Parks**

*Summary/Resumen:* The huge tsunami caused by the earthquake in Japan damaged a few parks bordering the Pacific Ocean – two in the U.S. and one in Ecuador. /El gran tsunami causado por el terremoto en Japón dañó a algunas áreas en la costa del Pacifico, dos en los EEUU y uno en Ecuador.

\*\*\*\*\*

The terrible tsunami that caused so much destruction on Friday, March 11th, crossed the Pacific Ocean and came ashore on numerous islands and continental coastlines – including many parks that are on the edge of the ocean (a score or more in the USA alone). Although many park beaches and lowlands were closed and evacuated, only three reports of damage were found in a review of online news stories from around the world. Those follow. If you know of any other parks that were affected, please send along a note to the editor:

- Galapagos National Park (Ecuador) – Minor damage has been reported at Galápagos Islands World Heritage site. The tsunami struck at high tide as a series of marine surges, rising over 1.7 meter above the normal high water mark and flooding coastal buildings. No injuries were reported. Visitor sites near populated islands had not suffered major impacts by waves and remain open. The visitor pier on Santa Cruz remains closed due to minor damage. The Giant Tortoise Breeding Center will not be open to visitation until visitors can be properly attended (by the way, “Lonesome George,” the last giant tortoise from Pinta Island, was moved to high ground prior to the tsunami as a precautionary measure). In contrast, the Marine Biology Laboratory at the Charles Darwin Research Station, located right on the water front, suffered serious flooding and is out of service until key equipment can be replaced. The park also reports that the southwest side of San Cristobal island is among the most affected. Infrastructure to facilitate visitation here has been significantly damaged. Marine iguanas are in full nesting season at this time of year, and it is likely that some mortality will have occurred due to the flooding and resulting erosion of coastal nesting sites, but not to a significant degree.

- Pu`uhonua o Honaunau National Historic Park (Hawaii, USA) – Tsunami surges entered the royal grounds and fish ponds throughout the day on March 11th, scattering marine debris and coastal vegetation throughout park grounds. Much of the park remains closed as crews assess damage and begin clearing debris. Visitors at present are able to access limited areas of the park, including the visitor center, paved parking area and an amphitheater. The royal grounds, pu`uhonua, picnic area, and two trails all remain closed to entry.
- Kaloko Honkohau National Historic Park (Hawaii, USA) – The unimproved road to Kaloko Fishpond remains closed because the coastal trail, picnic and parking area at the pond were damaged and debris covers the ground far inland.

Sources: U.S. National Park Service Morning Report, UNESCO World Heritage

### **Democratic Republic of Congo – Virunga National Park Two More Rangers Killed In Fighting In Park**

*Summary/Resumen:* Two more Virunga NP rangers have been killed in fighting in and around the park, one in February and one earlier this month./Dos guardaparques más del parque nacional Virunga han sido matados en febrero y marzo.

\*\*\*\*\*

The terrible fighting and injuries and deaths of rangers in Virguna continue.

On Thursday, February 17th, a vehicle carrying 15 rangers was attacked outside the park. Two rangers were wounded and one (Michel Katchupa) died in the night from his injuries. His funeral was held on Saturday, February 19th, at Rumangabo Headquarters. This brought the total number park personnel killed since mid-January to six, plus five soldiers who assisted in park patrols. See the last edition of *Guardaparque* for a report on the earlier deaths.

On Sunday, March 6th, illegal boats were detected on Lake Edward, which is in the park on the border between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. A speedboat with a patrol of rangers from Ishango in the DRC tried to intercept the boat. As they approached, Mai Mai militia opened fire on them. The rangers continued with the operation, intercepted the boat, and arrested three people. One boat was seized. Sadly, a ranger was seriously wounded in the attack. Ranger Paluku Mayani Vianney was hit in the stomach and the bullet lodged in his liver. He was flown to Nyankundi Hospital in Beni, where he was operated on in an attempt to remove the bullet. Although initial medical reports indicated he had stabilized, tragically he collapsed and died on March 13th. He was buried in Mutsora, his home community. Mayani was the seventh ranger to have died this year in the efforts of the DRC Rangers to protect Virunga National Park.

Source: Gorilla.cd, the official Virunga NP website, sent along by IRF member Roger Cole. This is a website worth bookmarking. Go to <http://gorillacd.org/>, then click on “Warden’s Log.”

### **United States – Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Parts Of Park Closed Due To New Eruption**

*Summary/Resumen:* A large, active volcano in the park began erupting earlier this month, causing closures of some park areas./Un volcán activo empezó a hacer erupción al comienzo de marzo forzando los guardaparque a cerrar algunos sectores del parque.

\*\*\*\*\*

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is the home of Kilauea, one of the world’s most active volcanoes, and Mauna Loa, the world’s biggest volcano. Because of that, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) maintains a facility in the park and keeps a close eye on both. On Saturday, March 5th, USGS scientists flying over Kilauea spotted a new eruption on its east side.

Due to hazards to visitors, the park instituted emergency operations procedures, mobilized 30 rangers and other park staff, and began closing areas where visitors might be endangered until further notice, including Chain of Craters Road, all east rift zone and coastal trails, and the campground at Kulanaokuaiki. The eruption has slowed down over recent days, so many of the closures have been lifted, at least for now. Scientists are keeping a close watch on the volcano, though.

For eruption updates, go to: <http://volcanoes.usgs.gov/hvo/activity/kilaueastatus.php>  
For webcam images, go to: <http://volcanoes.usgs.gov/hvo/cams/>

Source: National Park Service Morning Report.

### **United States – Glen Canyon National Recreation Area Rangers Fight Major Fire In Park Marina**

*Summary/Resumen:* Park rangers used a new fireboat to put out a big fire at a park marina that destroyed a dock and a number of boats./Los guardaparques emplearon un nuevo barco equipado a combatir los incendios para controlar un incendio que destruyo un atracadero y algunos barcos.

\*\*\*\*\*

Glen Canyon NRA, which is a park with a large and very long lake, is a popular spot for boating and has several marinas. On March 2nd, a fire broke out in a houseboat at one of those marinas. Rangers trained as firefighters were on scene within minutes with the park's new fireboat (see picture below) and were able to save 40 vessels from destruction.



Four houseboats were completely destroyed, though, and a fifth was seriously damaged. The marina docks also suffered heavy damage. The overall loss was placed at \$1 million U.S. The cause of the fire is not yet known.

The park had just acquired the fireboat, needed because of the fairly frequent boat fires there. Source:

National Park Service Morning Report.

## **Species Management**

### **Kenya – Tsavo East National Park Kenyan Elephants Now Wearing Anti-Poaching Collars**

*Summary/Resumen:* Researchers are putting collars with GPS devices on them to track elephants and better protect them from poachers./Los investigadores están poniendo collares con GPS en los elefantes para mejor protegerlos de los cazadores furtivos.

\*\*\*\*\*

Kenya's Tsavo East National Park is home to more than 12,000 elephants, but they are under threat from habitat loss, drought and poaching. Park officials there are looking to satellite technology for a solution. They plan to track some of the animals by GPS to map exactly how they use the huge area. The Kenyan Wildlife Service has teamed up with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to fit GPS collars on eight male and female animals for a 20 month period.

"The collar that we just fitted has a GPS component and a VHF component" says Elphus Bitok, a researcher scientist with the Kenya Wildlife Service. "The GPS component communicates with the satellite and the satellite will relay back the information via internet where you can be able to assess on real-time basis where the elephant is."

Knowing exactly where the animals are, say rangers, will help improve security and fight poaching and produce better ways to intervene when there are instances of conflict with humans.

The project has been funded by IFAW, whose president and CEO, Fred O'Regan, said the cost of losing elephants and other wildlife and their habitats is greater than securing them: "Another thing we are trying to do out here is to identify where the legitimate migratory corridors that we can protect to make sure this animal thrives for the future."

The elephant population in Kenya is increasing, rising eight percent over the past two years. With the latest satellite technology now helping, environmentalists will be hoping that trend continues.

\*\*\*

There's a good video that goes with this. Copy the URL below into your browser – it's worth a minute of your time: [http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv\\_en/ns\\_me/2011-03-17/183619717253.html](http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv_en/ns_me/2011-03-17/183619717253.html)

Source: NTD Television

### **Laos – Nam Et Phou Louey National Park New Road Project To Run Through Laos' Last Tiger Habitat**

*Summary/Resumen:* A road is going to be built through the country's only protected area inhabited by breeding tigers, putting the small population at risk./Una carretera será construida en la única área protegida con una población de tigres que reproducen, poniendo a la población pequeña en peligro.

\*\*\*\*\*

A new road project in Laos will run through the nation's only protected area inhabited by breeding tigers, Nam Et Phou Louey National Park. With only about two dozen tigers (*Panthera tigris*) left in the nation, conservationists fear that the road will harm the fragile population, which is known to be breeding. However, local officials say the road is necessary to improve access to remote villages and alleviate poverty in the region, which is among the worst in the province. The provincial governor says that the road will aid conservation efforts in the park by allowing authorities to stop illegal logging and poaching, but studies around the world have shown that roads in wild lands lead to far more deforestation and poaching by creating easy access.

Last year, Laos was one of the signatories of the Global Tiger Summit. In its National Tiger Action Plan, Laos called for a core zone in the 15,000 square kilometer park that would remain fully protected.

The nation has also set goals of increasing the tiger population in the park by 50% and doubling prey population by 2020. Laos is home to the Indochinese tiger subspecies (*Panthera tigris corbetti*). Although listed as endangered, the total population of this subspecies is not known with confidence. Recent estimates have ranged from 350-1,000 individuals and the only known breeding population is in Nam Et Phou Louey National Park.

Source: Mongabay.com

## **Parks And Protected Areas**

### **Cambodia – Virachey National Park Government Approves Creation Of Rubber Plantation Within Park**

*Summary/Resumen:* The government of Cambodia has approved the creation of a huge new rubber plantation within the nation's largest national park. /El gobierno de Camboya ha aprobado la creación de una nueva plantación de goma dentro de los límites del parque nacional más grande de la nación.

\*\*\*\*\*

Cambodia has approved the creation of a 9,000 hectare (22,200 acre) rubber plantation in Virachey National Park despite its status as a protected area. Spanning 332,500 hectares in Ratanakkiri province, the park is Cambodia's largest. A concession to clear cut the forest and establish a rubber plantation was awarded to Srun Sovannaphoum Investment Co Ltd.

"It is good because that area is uninhabited, so when the company comes to invest they will also construct a road," Ratanakkiri provincial governor Pav Hamphan told the *Phnom Penh Post*. Meanwhile, villagers in another region of Cambodia are protesting the loss of their forest, known as Prey Lang, to rubber plantations.

"Cutting some part of Virachey National Park may not affect villagers, but it seriously affects the forest and this province will lose even more forest land," said Pen Bonnar, coordinator for local rights group Adhoc.

The World Bank has invested \$5 million into managing Virachey National Park, which has suffered from illegal logging.

The rubber plantation concession is not the first time Cambodia has handed parts of the park over to private industry. In 2007 the government granted Australian gold-mining company, Indochine Mining, rights to exploratory mining in half the park.

The wildlife of Virachey National Park have been little studied, but a Rapid Assessment Survey (RAP) in 2007 found evidence of healthy populations of dholes – listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List – inhabiting the park, in addition to gaurs, yellow-cheeked gibbons, stump-tailed macaques, Asiatic black bears, Malayan sun bears, and Asian small-clawed otters. The short survey also found a number of species that may be unknown to science.

Sean Willmore, director of The Thin Green Line Foundation, has a draft letter that he is encouraging members to send to the king and prime minister of Cambodia (via the environmental minister) in an effort to stop this plantation. Contact Sean at [sean@thingreenline.info](mailto:sean@thingreenline.info) for particulars.

Source: Mongabay.com

## **Democratic Republic of Congo – Virunga National Park Oil Company Plan To Drill Within Park Put On Hold**

*Summary/Resumen:* The government has halted planned oil exploration within Virunga National Park while an environmental assessment is conducted./El gobierno de la República Democrática del Congo ha suspendido la exploración para petróleo en el parque nacional Virunga mientras se complete una evaluación ambiental.

\*\*\*\*\*

Some good news from Virunga – the halting of oil exploration within the park, at least for the time being.

Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism Jose E.B. Endundo issued a letter to the worldwide conservation community earlier this week clarifying the government's position on the published intentions of a publicly-traded British oil company, Soco International, to undertake oil exploration in Virunga National Park.

Endundo said that he'd begun what he called "a comprehensive, transparent and inclusive" strategic environmental assessment to analyze the best options available to the Congolese people. The assessment will provide recommendations to the ministry, which will decide "which of the social and economic benefits will ensure true development for the region and its people," adding that the assessment "will be conducted with support from a number of donors of public aid."

"The Environment Ministry did the right thing, and what we hope to see next is a firm declaration guaranteeing there would be no exploration in this iconic and fragile park now or in the future," said Natalia Reiter, a spokesperson for the global conservation organization WWF International. "It is outrageous to see the narrow interests of oil companies taking priority over the need to maintain one of the most precious places on this planet. Allowing oil exploration in this iconic park would set an extremely dangerous precedent that even the most precious places on Earth are open for oil and gas development."

Source: Environmental News Service

## **Park People**

### **Ivory Coast – National Park System Rangers Drafted Into Military And Engaged In Fierce Fighting**

*Summary/Resumen:* Rangers have been drafted into the army to fight rebels as the country continues in post-election chaos. An IRF member there would like to hear from other rangers./Los guardaparques del país han sido reclutado al ejército para pelear con los rebeldes durante el caos después de las elecciones. A un miembro de la Federación Internacional de este país, le gustaría comunicarse con otros miembros de la FIG.

\*\*\*\*\*

In late February, IRF received a note from Joachim Kouassi Kouamé, president of the Game Rangers Association of Côte d'Ivoire, a member association. The news was not good – here's the text, slightly revised:

"It's been a long time since you had news from me...I was very busy at work and due to the political situation in my country, I have no time. I spent much time in the bush with the military on patrols. As you probably know, we had a bad time now here in Côte d'Ivoire after the presidential election last November. Since then, neither of the candidates has recognized the results and the country is slowly going into a dramatic situation. The economic situation is extremely difficult and foreign banks have been closed. Everything is missing. Last night (February 24th), I participated in a violent fight in the capital of the country from 1 a.m. 7:30 a.m. against rebels who infiltrated into the city. Tonight, we are preparing to go into the bush to hold our position.

Be aware that, since the beginning of the war in September 2002, rangers in Côte d'Ivoire have been incorporated into the military in every mission in the war. I've had trouble with my email address and have lost contact with rangers throughout the world. So please, let them know our critical situation by forwarding this message to them. I am safe and my family also. But I lost many friends and colleagues.”

On March 4th, Joachim followed up with this note:

“We still continue to help the military in the war and we hope that this critical situation will be very short. We need to have more time to take care of our protected areas. For the time being, I am trying to hold the situation. But if the situation become worse, I will let you know.”

Joachim and his fellow rangers in Côte d'Ivoire would love to hear from you. They need whatever support we can provide. Joachim's email is [ahounze@yahoo.fr](mailto:ahounze@yahoo.fr) .

The fighting continues there and the situation is no better. Enter “Côte d'Ivoire” in a Google news search and you'll see what's going on...

Source: Bill Halainen, Editor

\* \* \* \* \*

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](mailto:Bill_Halainen@contractor.nps.gov) .

--- ### ---