

Notes and News

International effort launched to protect park rangers

IUCN and the International Ranger Federation (IRF) have co-launched an initiative to address physical threats and violence faced by rangers in protected areas around the world. The "Protect the Protectors" initiative seeks to draw international attention to the increasing dangers faced by rangers - including assaults by poachers, smugglers and other criminal elements - and to enhance ranger safety.

"This initiative grew out of concerns expressed by our member associations regarding the increasing loss of lives among rangers, particularly in the developing world," said Gordon Miller, IRF executive director. "There is a need for rangers to be better trained and equipped to meet threats. These threats occur in all habitats, including marine." IUCN and the IRF are working to raise the issue at the upcoming Fifth World Parks Congress (8-17 September 2003) in Durban, South Africa. The congress is expected to seek solutions for the root causes of violence and conflict affecting protected areas. Miller says the initiative will encourage governments and ranger-employing agencies to improve training and equipment where it is perceived to be deficient.

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Effort underway to advance marine reserves throughout Caribbean

Seeking to promote the creation and effective management of a network of marine reserves in the Caribbean Sea, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas-Marine and the (US) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have commissioned the development of a plan to be delivered in September 2003. To include regional activities related to research, monitoring, training, management, and communication, the plan will explore reserves as a tool for biodiversity conservation and fisheries-resource management. It will also feature a set of proposals for promotion to potential funders.

The Nature Conservancy, a US-based international NGO, is coordinating the expert consultation process to elaborate the plan. A workshop this June in Miami (Florida, USA) will convene approximately 25 marine reserve experts to review a draft plan and select project proposals to address its needs.

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Intensive course available on Caribbean MPAs

Graduate students, practitioners and others interested in MPAs in the Caribbean region are invited to enroll in an international course to be held 7-13 July 2003 at the Marine Station of Puerto Morelos, Quintana Roo, Mexico. Co-led by researchers from the National University of Mexico and the University of Miami (US), the seven-day "Marine Protected Areas in the Mesoamerican Region" course will examine social and biological aspects of MPAs and feature field trips to three protected areas. Tuition is US\$200/person. **For more information:** e-mail **Ligia Collado-Vides** at lcv@hp.fciencias.unam.mx, or **Daniel Suman** at dsuman@rsmas.miami.edu.

Note

The web server that hosts the MPA News website sustained a malfunction for several hours on 9-10 April 2003, temporarily precluding visitors from accessing the website. MPA News apologizes for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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