

Rangers, we salute you

Every year on 31 July, nations around the globe observe World Rangers Day to commemorate the countless brave rangers who have sacrificed their lives to protect our natural heritage.

KNP honours rangers with ceremonial event



The Ranger Services staff perform the guard of honour for the KNP Rangers. Approaching the Ranger monument and laying the wreath at the ceremony are MEC: Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mpumalanga Province, Mr Petrus Ngomane (middle), Chief Ranger, Nicholas Funda, and Head Ranger Ken Maggs from the KNP Ranger Services Department. Senior members of the South African Police Service, South African National Defence Force and South African National Parks Honorary Rangers formed part of the ceremonial wreath laying.

On the day, Kruger National Park (KNP) management and staff members held a ceremonial event in honour of the Ranger Corps, the living and those who were injured or passed on in their line of duty for the welfare of the park.

“Rangers are a key force in protecting the wildlife and fundamental to maintaining the integrity of this national park. The job of a ranger, with its associated dangers, needs men and women who keep focus out there in the bush and very few people have the courage and necessary skills to perform this important task other than rangers,” said the KNP managing executive, Glenn Phillips.

Activities included Rangers’ drill, a guard of honour, wreath laying ceremony, the recognition for one of the eldest living retired KNP Rangers - Lance Corporal Willie Nkuna and a key note address by the MEC: Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mpumalanga Province, Petrus Ngomane who urged communities and conservation institutions to work together in order to eradicate environmental crime for the enhancement of the province.

South African National Parks (SANParks) has 19 national parks and rangers look after these parks on a daily basis by conducting duties such as daily patrols, looking out for snares, signs of poaching activity and report on other eventualities such as erosion, alien plants and the total integrity of our environment. Law enforcement and community relations are some of the efforts that also form part of the rangers' duties.

Further celebrations are scheduled to take place on Thursday, 3 August wherein a Special Sports Day for the rangers will take place.

“ [#SaluteOurRangers](#) - We salute their commitment and dedication in protecting and conserving wild flora and fauna [#WorldRangerDay](#) pic.twitter.com/tr3CpLkoPy— SANParks (@SANParks) [July 31, 2017](#) ”

Putting out fires are Golden Gate Highlands Park

Various stakeholders joined at Golden Gate Highlands Park outside Clarens in the eastern Free State to celebrate World Rangers Day. While the event was delayed because of a fire that broke out in the park which had to be attended to by the rangers, it did not deter the mood as rangers know that fire plays a role in the ecology. Rangers bolstered the celebrations when they contained the fire, demonstrating what they are faced with in the environment.



Rangers drill

Whilst normal working hours for an average person is eight hours a day, rangers work long hours and sometimes under a lot of pressure to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage for the enjoyment of the people.

“Our rangers are brave and committed towards the cause, the fire that broke out this morning is a perfect example of what their lives are all about, putting down fires and ensuring that our fauna and flora are protected at all time. They deal with fires, poachers and all sorts of situations on a daily basis. We salute these men and women who stay away from their families for days in order to assist us in our conservation mandate,” said the keynote speaker, Lombard Shirindzi, general manager of the Northern Region Parks.

To end off the celebration, rangers put on a display of a crime scene, a drill and sealed it by reiterating their commitment by taking their rangers' pledge.