



World Female Ranger Week on June 23-30, 2024, amplifies the voices of female wildlife rangers on a global stage.

Real Women, Real Stories, Real Impact. This pioneering global awareness week, spearheaded by international NGO, How Many Elephants (HME) celebrates and supports female wildlife rangers - They're bold, changing the game and paving the way for women to stand alongside men at the forefront of conservation, but they need allies.

Building on their success of World Female Ranger Week last year, reaching over 500 million viewers worldwide, this year's event is set to be even bigger. There will be online and live events, global media interviews, plus a fundraising platform to raise vital funds for the rangers worldwide.

As champions of wildlife conservation, role models, educators and beacons of hope, female rangers are not only transforming attitudes towards the role of women around the world; they are showing the capabilities and success of females in traditionally male roles. However, less than 11% of the global wildlife ranger workforce is female. With women being natural communicators, protectors and investing their earned income in their families, bringing gender equality into the workforce is enhancing community conservation efforts and relationships.

The founder of How Many Elephants and World Female Ranger Week, Holly Budge says, "having patrolled with multiple ranger teams across Africa, I've seen first-hand how these bold women are impacting lives; Protecting wildlife, uplifting communities and empowering other women. WFRW highlights the significant gender imbalance in environmental conservation. My team and I will continue collating gender-specific data about female rangers globally, enabling us to identify their needs, find tangible solutions and help build effective policies to contribute towards positive outcomes; for female rangers and conservation as a whole."

The pandemic crippled tourism and funding for conservation projects globally. The lack of tourists visiting national parks led to many rangers losing their jobs or having significant salary cuts. The knock-on effect of this was huge. For example, one ranger in Africa may support up to 16 family members. Additionally, reduced vigilance in tourist hotspots left wildlife even more vulnerable to poaching.

The often-challenging work of rangers is paramount right now. Day and night, female rangers patrol wilderness areas, monitor wildlife, seize snares, work with communities and in some cases, arrest poachers, all to protect nature. Some rangers are away from their families for long periods, sometimes facing workplace security issues and battling social stigma. Many of these women have overcome adversity, poverty, and marginalisation. Becoming a ranger has empowered them, turned them into breadwinners and property owners, and has allowed them access to higher education and much-needed healthcare.

Holly and her team have identified over 4500 female rangers in 18 African countries so far, and over 5500 female rangers around the world, including in Guyana, Malaysia, Sri-Lanka, Indonesia, India, Tasmania and Scotland to mention a few.

Meet some of the women who give their all to protect wildlife from extinction.

- **Indonesia: Pera Pinem**

Pera was the only female ranger in North Sumatra (and possibly Indonesia) for three years. Through her work, she protects Sumatran elephants, orangutans and tigers and is actively working with local communities to reduce human/wildlife conflict. To become a ranger, Pera had to go against her family and culture. It was not deemed acceptable for women to be working in the jungle, let alone sleeping besides a man they're not married to or related to. Pera has experienced much prejudice due to her decision to become a ranger but in doing so, has paved the way for other women to become rangers.

- **Malaysia: Mariani 'Bam' Ramli,**

Founder and President of the Gibbon Conservation Society (GCS) in Malaysia, Bam single-handedly founded GCS in 2013 after meeting 'Ellek', a confiscated infant gibbon. She encountered other distressed gibbons in need and in response, she sold her possessions and moved to a secluded estate to provide a natural home for them. As Bam spoke out against gibbon ownership, she faced backlash, and some villagers labelled her as a 'witch'. Over the last decade, Bam has faced great adversity in her fight for the gibbons but despite the hardship she has built a strong organization. Today, she and GCS operate two rehabilitation projects.

- **Liberia: Grace Kotee**

Grace is a ranger in The East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) in Liberia. Growing up as a child in a rural village, Grace felt bad when she saw people killing and eating wildlife. She promised she would do something to protect the forest resources of Liberia and the world at large. Grace still battles social stigma as some of her community think that working as a ranger *"is not a feminine job"* and she is often criticized. *"Culture/ society sees a ranger career as a male job and doesn't encourage me. Sometimes when I am riding my bike they tell me that I will not bear children if I continue."* A few of the challenges Grace faces at work are discrimination from her male counterparts and limited time with my husband and family.

- **Guyana: Claudia**

Meet Claudia, a ranger from the South Rupununi Conservation Society. Through education, research and conservation they are dedicated to sustaining and protecting the threatened wildlife of the Rupununi. *"Before I became a ranger I was mostly doing farming. The biggest challenge was convincing my village leader that I can be a ranger even though I have a young baby."*

- **Kenya: Susan**

Meet Susan, a ranger from Big Life Foundation. Her family could not afford to pay for her secondary education, so she stayed at home and learnt traditional Maasai women's duties, but she always wanted to do something more with her life. *"In Maasai culture, like so many things, conservation and anti-poaching work has always been something that was done by men and girls are raised to become dutiful wives. From my community, not many women receive a salary like I do, and I am happy to be an example to other women and girls to prove that we can support our families just as well as men can. I use my salary to support my three children and my mother. I am also saving up to pay for school fees because I want to finish the education I was not able to have as a girl."*

WFRW Ambassador, Dr Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka from Uganda, says *“I’m delighted to support World Female Ranger Week. Gender equity in the conservation arena is such an important and prevalent topic. There is still much work to do but World Female Ranger Week plays a key role in raising awareness of the work of female rangers and women in conversation in the broader picture.”*

HME welcomes strategic partnerships to expand the campaign's reach to strengthen the support of female rangers. Businesses and individuals can set up branded fundraising pages via www.worldfemalerangerweek.org

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Links:

www.worldfemalerangerweek.org

www.howmanyelephants.org

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