

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Alibaba Foundation and Paradise Foundation Hold First African Ranger Awards

Awards honor 50 African rangers with financial grants for their service protecting wildlife

August 7, 2018, CAPE TOWN, South Africa – Wildlife rangers are Africa's heroes not just because they protect its endangered species but because in turn that protects jobs and the economy, Jack Ma, one of China's richest men, said at a ceremony today for his new foundation's African Ranger Awards.

Fifty rangers working in 17 countries across Africa won the 2018 awards, the first to be given annually for 10 years by the Alibaba Foundation and the Paradise Foundation, a Chinese not-for-profit environmental conservation organization.

The Paradise Foundation was founded by Mr. Ma, Alibaba Group Executive Chairman, and other Chinese entrepreneurs, artists and philanthropists to focus on preserving the planet through charitable actions, a scientific approach and efficient business management.

Tourism and community conservation were among Africa's fastest growing economic sectors but both relied on the survival of wildlife currently targeted by poachers, Mr. Ma said at the event in Cape Town attended by 11 of the winning rangers.

"Rangers are the heroes because they protect the natural world for us and by doing that they protect jobs. I'm very honored to be able to do this very meaningful thing and recognize their work," Mr. Ma said. "When our grandchildren ask us what did we do that is meaningful in the world, we will be able to say that without [rangers] you would only see lions or elephants on BBC documentaries, but because of rangers you can still go and see them in the wild."

Erik Solheim, UN Environment Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Edna Molewa, Minister of Environmental Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, and Songtian Lin, Chinese Ambassador to South Africa, all addressed the event. Local and international NGOs took part, and representatives of leading Chinese enterprises presented the awards, which included a \$3,000 personal grant to each winner.

The honorees were selected from 146 nominations drawn from 21 African countries. Among the selected rangers, many have been injured or faced significant danger in confrontations with wildlife criminals. Five rangers who lost their lives in the course of their work were among the 50 award winners.

They work in dangerous conditions, often far from their families and without the necessary resources. The award winners represent just some of the estimated 20,000 to 25,000 frontline staff who risk their

lives every day to protect Africa's rich and diverse natural wildlife. A 2016 survey found that 82% of rangers had faced mortal danger at work, and 60% had been directly attacked by poachers. More than 1,000 of Africa's rangers lost their lives protecting wildlife and wild habitats between 2000 and 2016.

Rodrigue Mugaruka Takembo, a winning ranger working in Upemba and Kundelungu National Park Complex in the Democratic Republic of Congo, described being captured and tortured during the course of his work.

"There is danger, and there is corruption, there is disappointment, but there is also hope," he said. "Today I find more hope, as I see more and more people than ever before are standing with us rangers."

Asha Mnkeni, Tanzania's first female ranger, described following her father in his profession as a wildlife ranger. "He showed me a picture when I was a child of a poached elephant, it was so horrific and from that day I have hated the poachers, and from that day I decided to do this job," she said.

Alibaba Foundation, a charitable organization established by Alibaba Group, is committed to helping to protect Earth's natural resources. Since 2012, the Foundation has been working alongside international agencies to combat illegal online trafficking of wildlife.

"As more and more people come to know the power and the beauty of nature, more and more will become volunteers to stand with the rangers and protect it," said Lijun Sun, a partner of Alibaba Group and chairman of Alibaba Public Welfare Foundation, said during the ceremony. "The Ranger Awards are designed to empower rangers, but also make more people and enterprises to be involved. We can use the power of modern technology, artificial intelligence, and mobilise resources, so everyone becomes a protector of the environment."

The Paradise Foundation and the Alibaba Foundation are sponsoring in full both the cash rewards for outstanding rangers and the program's management expenses for the next 10 years, expected to be \$1.65 million in total.

"Compared to everything these rangers sacrifice, our contribution is small," said Shawn Zhang, CEO of the Paradise Foundation. "We hope that these awards will show them our appreciation and draw attention to their important work."

The winners include:

- Asha Mnkeni, the first female ranger employed by Tanzania's National Parks service
- Craig Williams, who helped reduce rhino poaching where he works in South Africa by 20%
- Fernando Macamero, who evicted illegal miners helping poachers in a Mozambique national park, facing a backlash including from his family, and was later blinded while on duty
- Jeneria Lekilelei, a Kenyan herdsman working with his peers to convince them not to kill lions
- Nanyuki Lapalee, a Kenyan former poacher now using his bush skills for conservation, and working to reform other poachers

- Voster Mweene, whose team has patrolled 43,000km of a Zambian national park, increasing arrests and convictions of poachers significantly

Statistics show that Africa is home to the richest diversity of wildlife in the world, including more than 1,000 species of mammals, 500 kinds of birds and 2,000 types of freshwater fish. Unfortunately, poverty, illegal hunting and black-market trading have posed a serious threat to the continent's bio-sustainability.

Over the next ten years, 500 rangers will be recognized through the program. The Foundation hopes that the African Ranger Awards will continue to raise public awareness of the importance of safeguarding Africa's diverse wildlife and creating sustainable development.

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Interviews with rangers can be arranged.
For more details please visit <http://www.pfi.org.cn/en/mission/ranger-awards/>

About The Paradise Foundation

The Paradise Foundation is a nonprofit organization that focuses on protecting prestigious lands and waters around the world. The Paradise International Foundation is currently led by co-chairmen Jack Ma, Pony Ma, and executive chairman Shen Guojun. The Foundation honors cooperation and expands its conservation projects globally in regions of high conservation value. It also attaches great importance to local conservation and management capacity building, helping to explore sustainable fund-raising models and promote environmental-friendly products. Outdoor activities are organized for the public, especially for the young people, with volunteer jobs being provided. By doing so, the foundation aims to encourage more people to lead a healthy lifestyle that contains the wisdom of "from nature, back to nature" and fulfill our vision of "preserving more green mountains and clear waters for future generations."

About The Rangers

- The inaugural African Ranger Awards were given to 50 Rangers including 5 deceased rangers
- They were from 17 African countries: Kenya, Tanzania, DR Congo, Gabon, Liberia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, CAR, Nigeria, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia, Rwanda, Senegal, Malawi and Cameroon
- Full details of all rangers including contact details are available.
- The following 11 rangers will attend the Cape Town awards ceremony

1. Alfred Kiprotich Bett, Kenya

Tourism Warden of Mara Conservancy

Nominated by Aruasa Kiprono David, Tourism Officer of Mara Conservancy

- Alfred oversees a team of rangers and civilian staff, and a key part of his job is to oversee ticket sales and revenue collection for this key part of Kenya's Masai Mara National Reserve, ensuring transparency and opposing corruption

2. Asha Saidi Mnkeni, Tanzania

Park Ranger Grade III of Udzungwa Mountains National Park (attached to Tanzania National Parks)

Nominated by Damian Edward Saru, Senior Park Warden and Head of Conservation Department, Tanzania National Parks

- The first woman ranger employed by Tanzania's National Parks when she began in 2003, Asha now heads an elite Rapid Response Team and works hard not just to deal with poachers, but to convince local populations of the value of conservation

3. Craig Jake Williams, South Africa

Section Ranger of Kruger National Park (attached to South African National Parks)

Nominated by Don English, Regional Ranger of South African National Parks

- Helped reduce rhino poaching success rate significantly in his section of Kruger, one of the worst-hit for rhino killings where incursions had spiked between 2016 and 2017

4. Fernando Sebastene Junuario Macamero, Mozambique

Head Ranger of Mariri Investimentos/ Niassa Carnivore Project, Niassa National Reserve

Nominated by Keith Seymour Begg, Director of Mariri Investimentos/ TRT Conservation Foundation

- Helped clear 2,277 illegal gold miners from Niassa who provided cover + support to poachers, facing a huge backlash including from his own family. Injured and lost sight in eye when evacuating prosecutor from a riot outside a courtroom. Soon after returning to work, disrupted major poaching ring

5. Jeneria Lekilelei, Kenya

Field Operations & Community Manager of Ewaso Lions

Nominated by Shivani Bhalla, Founder and Executive Director of Ewaso Lions

- Former herdsman who came to love and understand lions, now works to stop people killing them by building and maintaining strong links to local communities. Lion populations grew fivefold in the areas where he works

6. Jacob Oliech (undercover; in alias), Kenya

Ranger of Mara Elephant Project

Nominated by Wilson Sairowua, Tracking Manger of Mara Elephant Project

- Passion for wildlife protection led him to give tip-offs to authorities about poachers, eventually leading to his job as an Intelligence Officer. His undercover work has led to recovery of 41kg of ivory and 898kg of bushmeat, and arrest of 18 poachers, and 14 middlemen and dealers. His team together has arrested 139 poachers and recovered 693kg of ivory

7. Kapona 'Nanyuki' Lapalee, Kenya

Anti-poaching Ranger of LEWA Wildlife Conservancy

Nominated by Michael William Watson, Chief Executive Officer of LEWA Wildlife Conservancy

- Former elephant poacher, Kaponka killed 50 elephants in five years but reformed after having to kill babies who wouldn't leave their poached mothers' sides. Now a lead tracker but also very important community liaison where he works in northern Kenya, and he helps talk to other poachers to convince them to change their ways

8. Mugaruka Takembo Rodrigue, Democratic Republic of Congo

Deputy Chief Warden and Head of Anti-Poaching, Upemba and Kundelungu National Park Complex

Nominated by Robert Muir, Chief Warden of the Upemba and Kundelungu National Park Complex, and Emmanuel de Merode, Chief Warden of Virunga National Park

- Helped save 173 eles from hunters who had driven them outside the national park to hunt them. Helped moved illegal miners out of the national park. Went undercover to record Western company offering bribes to search for oil in national park

9. Voster Mweene, Zambia

Park Ranger of Liuwa Plain National Park (attached to African Parks Zambia), Department of National Parks and Wildlife

Nominated by Ian Pollard, Field Operations Manager of Liuwa Plain National Park

- Death threats from poachers (including against his family) forced him to move to new park after successful antipoaching elsewhere. Now in his new job he has overseen significant increase in arrests especially in those that lead to convictions, more than 100kg of ivory seized, and almost 43,000km his ranger teams have patrolled

10. Walter Raleigh Odokorwot, Uganda

Community Conservation Warden of Kidepo Valley Conservation Area (attached to Uganda Wildlife Authority)

Nominated by Charles Tumwesigye, Deputy Director Field Operations of Uganda Wildlife Authority

- Devised and carried out very successful Human-Wildlife Conflict strategy in major national park (Murchison Falls) then was selected to move to another to roll it out there. Very successful so far: key to it is giving local people work as Community Wildlife Scouts, bringing benefits from protecting wildlife

11. Bivougou Hamed Salvador

Ecogarde Team Leader, Minkebe National Park

Nominated by Prof. Lee White CBE, Executive Director of Gabon's National Parks Agency

- Organises patrols in Minkebe, scene of some of Gabon's worst elephant poaching, including three-week foot patrols in very hard territory. Has engaged in firefights with Cameroon poachers, and arrested others, escorting them out of the rainforest to be prosecuted.