

# Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE



June 2024 # 122

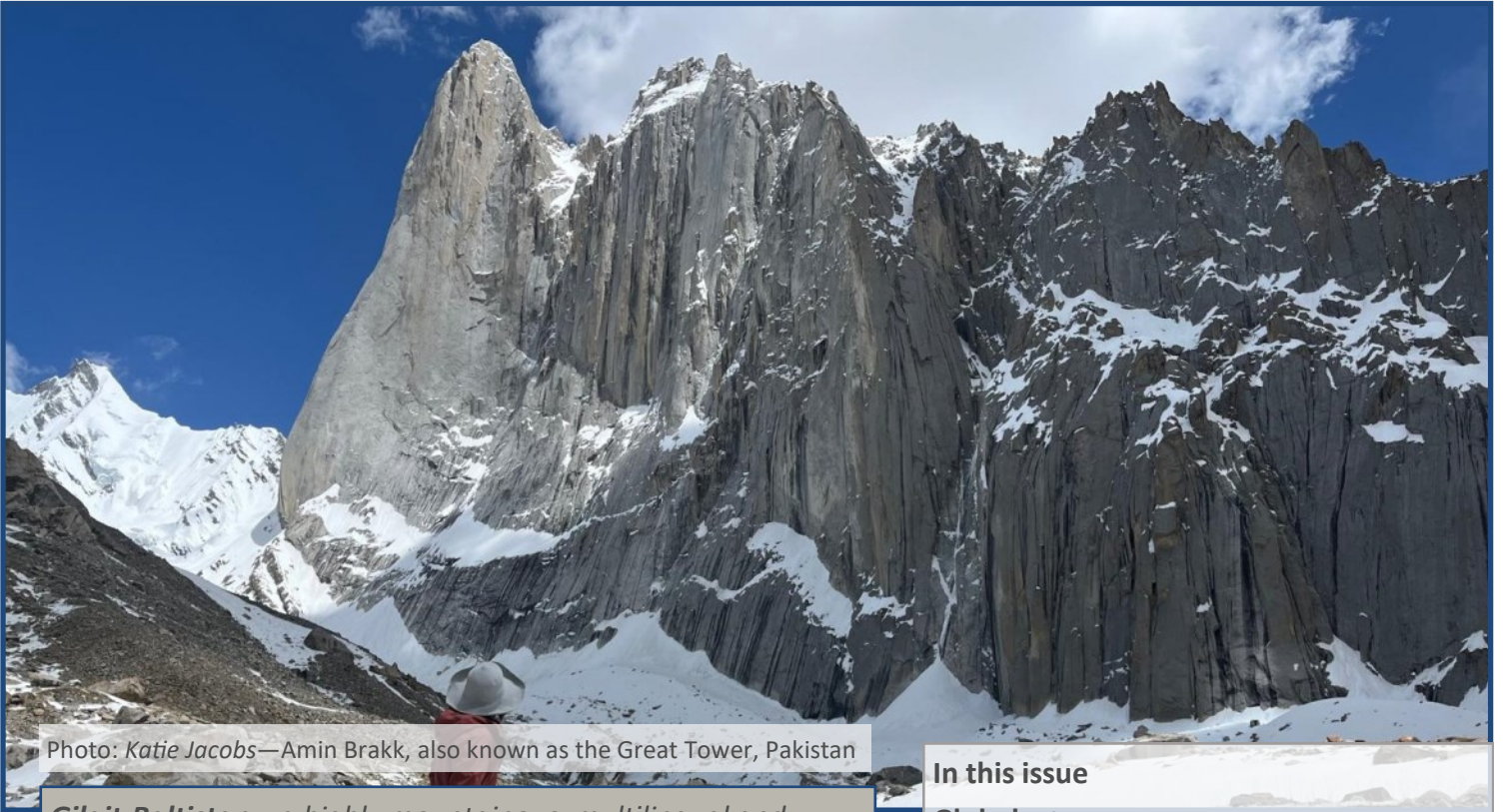


Photo: Katie Jacobs—Amin Brakk, also known as the Great Tower, Pakistan

*Gilgit-Baltistan—a highly mountainous, multilingual and multiethnic region in Northern Pakistan. It holds the world’s highest mountain ranges such as the Karakorum, the western Himalayas and the Hindu Kush; famous peaks such as Nanga Parbat and the K2 and the mightiest glaciers the world has ever seen.*

*The ethereal beauty of these diverse landscapes and remnants of civilisations make for a spectacle of the most pristine and picturesque of topographies.*

*Farrah Adnan Faraz (from introduction in Gilgit Baltistan)*

## A note from the editor

Welcome to the 122th Mountain UPDATE. It seems many articles in this Update (glaciers, snow gums, wolves, bears, feral horses...) have been explored and discussed in previous editions, but as we all know mountain conservation, protected area management and wildlife management are all complex issues that can take many years to resolve.

And sometimes there is a good news story!

June 2024

## In this issue

**Global**—from Chair Mountain Specialist Group

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### Mountain SG Committee

Mountain Update is a quarterly newsletter distributed to members of the Mountain Protected Areas Network.

The Mountain Specialist Group acknowledges the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters where we live and work and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship they have to Country.

The views expressed in this UPDATE are not necessarily those of the IUCN WCPA.

IUCN WCPA Mountain UPDATE # 122 Editor: Gillian Anderson [peopleinnature@bigpond.com](mailto:peopleinnature@bigpond.com)

## Global:

### From *Peter Jacobs Chair IUCN WCPA Mountain Specialist Group*

#### *WILD12—in the Black Hills of South Dakota*

Our recent publication, “A Decision-Support Tool to Augment Global Mountain Protection and Conservation, including a Case Study from Western Himalaya” was published in the Land Journal last year. If you missed it the links are below

Website: <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/12/7/1323>

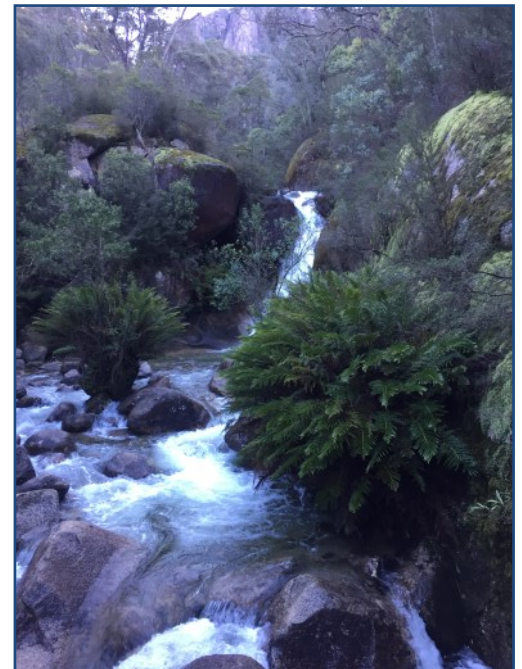
PDF Version: <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/12/7/1323/pdf>

I am delighted to announce that the paper has been accepted to be presented at the Wild 12 World Wilderness Congress in Black Hills, South Dakota, August 25-31 2024.

Erik Beaver, Mountain Specialist Group committee member and co-author will be attending the Congress to present the paper. This is a great opportunity to expose our work to a wide audience and make connections to further this and other work of the Mountain Specialist Group, particularly in alignment with 30\*30 strategies.

Wild 12 will have strong cultural theme: “to be a part of a historic moment when wilderness is reinterpreted through the lens of traditional cultures, rooting Indigenous principles and lifeways at the centre of the movement to keep Earth wild”.

**If you are planning on attending Wild 12 please do make contact with Erik and show your support:** [ebeever@usgs.gov](mailto:ebeever@usgs.gov) or [ebeever10@gmail.com](mailto:ebeever10@gmail.com)



#### *Places to Protect, Victorian Alps: Australia*

On other matters closer to home, the welcome cessation of native hardwood logging in Victoria last December means the future of 1.8 million hectares that was allocated to logging is now being decided.

Mountain protected areas in Victoria have traditionally been designed around logging interests, meaning many high value natural areas have been excluded and protected areas in our mountains are fragmented and lack connectivity.

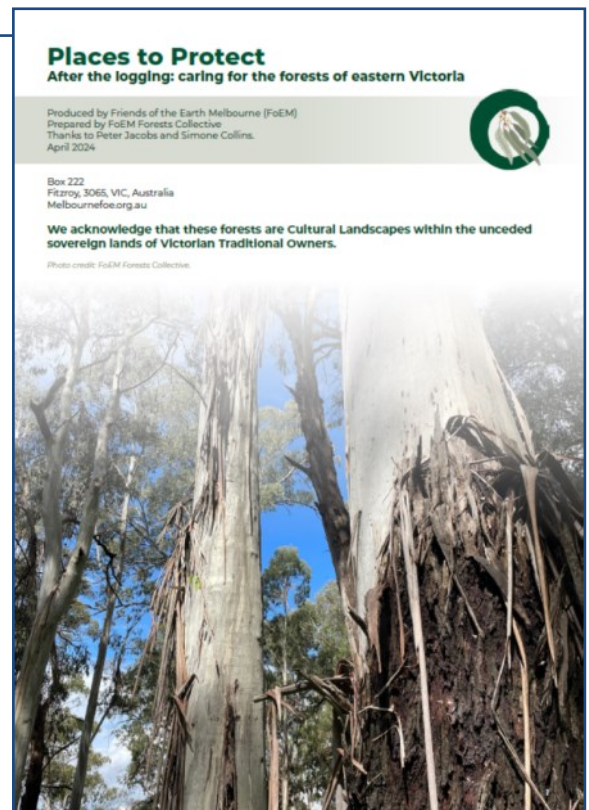
This now provides a rare opportunity to encompass areas that need protecting into the Alpine National Park and achieve large scale connectivity with other mountain protected areas.

This process must and will of course be undertaken in close collaboration with the aspirations of Traditional Owners of the land.

This is a very exciting opportunity to properly plan for protecting our large mountain landscapes without the encumbrance of catering for logging our forests.

There is the usual band of anti-park protesters that wish to continue to exploit these precious areas for their own benefits so it important to promote a conservation science based approach and make the conservation message a respected one.

Sound familiar?



# Africa

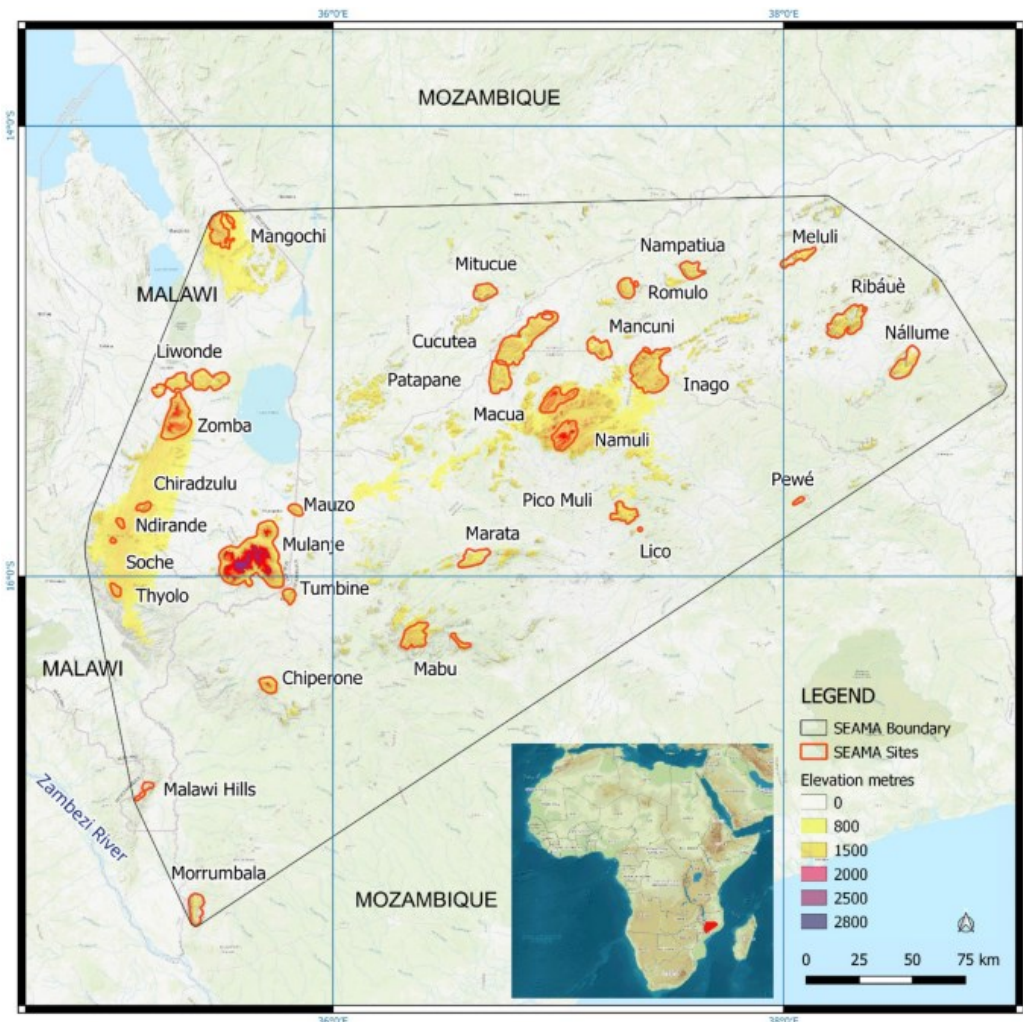
## *South East Africa Montane Archipelago as a new ecoregion*

*From GMBA Newsletter - April 2024*

Recent biological surveys of ancient inselbergs in southern Malawi and northern Mozambique have led to the discovery and description of many species new to science, and overlapping centres of endemism across multiple taxa. Combining these endemic taxa with data on geology and climate, we propose the 'South East Africa Montane Archipelago' (SEAMA) as a distinct ecoregion of global biological importance.

The ecoregion encompasses 30 granitic inselbergs reaching > 1000 m above sea level, hosting the largest (Mt Mabu) and smallest (Mt Lico) mid-elevation rainforests in southern Africa, as well as biologically unique montane grasslands. Endemic taxa include 127 plants, 45 vertebrates (amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals) and 45 invertebrate species (butterflies, freshwater crabs), and two endemic genera of plants and reptiles.

Existing dated phylogenies of endemic animal lineages suggests this endemism arose from divergence events coinciding with repeated isolation of these mountains from the pan-African forests, together with the mountains' great age and relative climatic stability. Since 2000, the SEAMA has lost 18% of its primary humid forest cover (up to 43% in some sites)—one of the highest deforestation rates in Africa. Urgently rectifying this situation, while addressing the resource needs of local communities, is a global priority for biodiversity conservation. [Read more...](#)



Location and extent of the South East Africa Montane Archipelago (SEAMA) showing core sites in red, and an outline boundary of the convex hull of the ecoregion (created using QGIS version 3.28.12 LTR <https://qgis.org/en/site/>).

## America—south

### Andean alarm: climate crisis increases fears of glacial lake flood: Peru

*The Guardian March 2024*

Lake Palcacocha is high in the Cordillera Blanca range of the Peruvian Andes, sitting above the city of Huaraz at an altitude of about 4,500 metres. When the lake broke through the extensive moraines, or natural dams, holding it in place on 13 December 1941, it sent nearly 10m cubic metres of water and debris into the narrow valley towards the city, 1,500 metres below.

The result was one of the most devastating glacial lake outburst floods – or “GLOFs” – ever recorded. The force of the water altered the area’s geography for ever, and killed at least 1,800 people, and possibly as many as 5,000.

Like all such lakes, Palcacocha was formed as a glacier receded, the water filling up the hollowed-out land around it. This process – and the floods that can result – is natural but now, scientists say, the climate crisis is increasing the risk it poses.

Scientists warn that the climate crisis is having a serious impact on GLOFs. The vast majority of scientific studies show an overwhelming thinning of glaciers globally. That’s particularly the case in the Andes and Peru.

Read the whole article: [Fears of glacial lake flood in Peru](#)



For the past nine years, Luciano Lliuya has been in a landmark legal case, supported by Germanwatch, against the German energy company RWE over its alleged role in contributing to the climate crisis, increasing the risk to his home. German judges visited Huaraz (above) and the lake in May 2022. The next stage is an oral hearing to get expert opinions on flood risks this year.

## America—south

### Venezuela’s last glacier lost

*NBC News & The Guardian May 2024*

It is thought Venezuela is the first country to have lost all its glaciers in modern times.

The country had been home to six glaciers in the Sierra Nevada de Mérida mountain range, which lies at about 5,000m above sea level. Five of the glaciers had disappeared by 2011, leaving just the Humboldt glacier, also known as La Corona, close to the country’s second highest mountain, Pico Humboldt.

The **Humboldt glacier** was projected to last at least another decade, but scientists had been unable to monitor the site for a few years due to political turmoil in the country.

Now assessments have found the glacier melted much faster than expected, and had shrunk to an area of less than 2 hectares. As a result, its classification was downgraded from glacier to ice field.

The world has recently been experiencing the El Niño climate phenomenon, which leads to hotter temperatures and which experts say can accelerate the demise of tropical glaciers.

“In the Andean area of Venezuela, there have been some months with monthly anomalies of +3C/+4C above the 1991-2020 average, which is exceptional at those tropical latitudes,” said Herrera, a climatologist and weather historian who maintains a chronicle of extreme temperature records online.

In a last-ditch attempt to save the glacier, the Venezuelan government has installed a thermal blanket to prevent further melting, but experts say it is an exercise in futility.

**Venezuela is a mirror of what will continue to happen from north to south, first in Colombia and Ecuador, then in Peru and Bolivia, as glaciers continue to retreat from the Andes.**



For the people of the Venezuelan state of Mérida, the glaciated peaks of its Sierra Nevada have been a source of pride since time immemorial: The mountains are part of the regional identity and the origin of various legends in the area that relate them to mythical white eagles.

The Humboldt glacier 2019 photo: Jose M Romero

## America—north

*Possibility of national park in Peel Watershed being re-explored: Canada*



From Parks Canada & Y2Y April 2024

**A national park in the Peel Watershed would permanently protect the area, contribute to the recovery of species at risk, and support the continuation of Indigenous cultural practices for future generations**

The Grand Chief Ken Kyikavichik of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Chief Dawna Hope of the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, the Honorable Nils Clarke, Minister of the Environment for the Yukon, and the Honorable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, have announced their shared commitment to explore the feasibility of establishing a new national park in the Peel Watershed, situated in the Yukon and in the traditional territories of the Gwich'in and the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun.

The Peel Watershed holds great cultural significance and is central to the traditions, cultures, and ways of life for both the Gwich'in and the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun who have been caring for these lands and waters since time immemorial. The forests are essential for sustaining boreal caribou as well as grizzly bears, peregrine falcons, and moose. The canyons welcome an abundance of waterfowl, birds of prey, and other migratory birds each spring, and the Peel River and its tributaries hold important spawning areas for whitefish and other important fish species.

### *Wolf culling to save Mountain Caribou: Canada*

Since 2015, a slaughter has unfolded in the mountains of British Columbia, all in the name of saving southern mountain caribous, classified as threatened in Canada. Each winter, sharpshooters hired by the provincial government kill hundreds of wolves from low-flying helicopters. Nearly 2200 of the predators have been killed, including 248 in the most recent winter.

The policy has provoked lawsuits and protests from conservation groups and dueling papers in scientific journals about whether the carnage benefits caribou herds. This week, in *Ecological Applications*, a research team looking at 51 years of population trends and conservation actions. Even critics of the culling say it offers compelling data that, at least in the short term, killing wolves is one of the few actions that aids ailing caribou populations.

Killing wolves or combining that with other strategies such as penning pregnant caribou stood out as the measures that gave the biggest boost to caribou numbers. Overall, the researchers estimated that an additional 1548 southern mountain caribou were alive in 2023 thanks to the various efforts.

The results, however, don't sway a wildlife specialist with Pacific Wild, a British Columbia-based conservation group that has taken the provincial government to court in an unsuccessful effort to halt the wolf killing.

**"The provincial government has acknowledged that one of the biggest factors that are contributing to caribou decline is habitat loss," she says. "Yet they continue to log critical caribou habitat."**

Yukon Territory's Peel Watershed Photo: Tayu Hayward (from Y2Y News)

News of the Canadian government's intention to explore creation of a new national park in Yukon Territory's on Gwich'in and First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun territory is welcome, say staff at Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative.

Lands and waters being considered include the Peel River corridor, Turner Lake Wetlands, and Caribou River, all identified for permanent protection under the 2019 Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.

For close to 25 years, Y2Y has been involved in efforts to safeguard the Peel, supporting local partners and advocating for permanent protection.

This could be the first new national park in the Yellowstone to Yukon region since 2014 when Nááts'ihch'oh was designated a national park



Southern mountain caribou are listed as threatened in Canada Photo: D.MOSKOWITZ

There is little disagreement about the root cause of the caribou's plight. Logging of old growth forests has cut away at habitat preferred by southern mountain caribou—a type of woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) that occupies swaths of south and central British Columbia and Alberta

Read whole article [Controversial wolf killing appears to help caribou, but concerns persist | Science | AAAS](#)

# America—north

## Rocky Mountains National Park—timed entry: USA



From National Parks Conservation Association News May 2024

Today, Rocky Mountain National Park leadership officially made its seasonal **timed-entry system permanent**. The final environmental assessment was lauded by former Rocky Mountain leadership and advocates including the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).

“NPCA applauds Rocky Mountain Park for finalizing this strong and forward-looking visitor use management plan,” said NPCA Colorado Program Manager Tracy Coppola. “After the park’s visitation increased by nearly 50% over the last decade, innovative and thoughtful action was needed. Park leadership delivered, with a final plan that is adaptive over time, transparent, and built in community, alongside advocates, Estes Park and Grand Lake leaders, and all who care about this national park and Colorado treasure.”

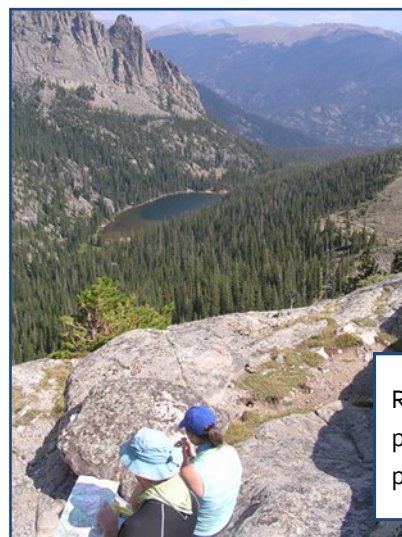
**Rocky Mountain is one of the busiest parks in the national park system, experiencing a 42% increase in visitors over the last decade; the park’s less than 3 million visitors in 2010 grew to 4.6 million in 2019.**

Over the last five years, park leadership worked alongside local business communities, park advocates and others to draft and finalize the management plan, to support a more sustainable future for park visitors, resources, staff, and infrastructure.

**“Our world is not the same as when our parks were first created, and 21st century park management must innovate to meet new challenges,”** said Coppola. **“We encourage park managers across the country to collaborate and share best practices that will shape park experiences and preserve these priceless places, for generations to come.”**

**Benefits of timed entry at Rocky Mountain National Park include:**

- Reduced traffic during peak hours, which provides an improved, less stressful experience on roadways, parking lots, and trails.
- Animals have more room to roam, leading to fewer negative encounters with people.
- Park rangers can focus more on leading interpretive talks, helping visitors stay safe, and keeping facilities clean, and less on managing crowded parking lots and turning tourists around.
- Flexibility, with options for visitors to secure a timed-entry permit weeks in advance; the day before; or outside of required reservation hours.



Rocky Mountains NP popular day hike  
photo: *peopleinnature*

# Europe

## Wolf—Dog

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*The Guardian March 2024*

From the moment the rangers first saw him on their trail cameras, the problem was apparent. The wolf, spotted deep in the woods of Italy's Gran Bosco di Salbertrand park, was not grey like his companion, but an unusual blond. His colouring indicated this was not a wolf at all, but a hybrid wolfdog – the first to be seen so far into Piedmont's alpine region. And where one hybrid is found, more are sure to follow.

"We thought he would go away," says Elisa Ramassa, a park ranger in Gran Bosco who has tracked the local wolves for 25 years. "Unfortunately, he found a female who loves blonds."

The blond specimen spotted in Piedmont illustrates the latest development in a worrying new trend.

**Over the past two decades, Europe's decimated wolf population has slowly been resurrected through years of painstaking conservation work. Now hybrid numbers are rapidly growing – and if their spread continues, scientists fear they may put the European wolf – as a wild, genetically distinct animal – at risk of extinction.**

Hybrid wolfdogs are not a new phenomenon. While present-day wolves and dogs are distinct sub-species, they belong to the same canine family, and have retained genetic overlap since humans began domesticating ancient wolf ancestors thousands of years ago. Modern wolfdog hybrids had not been well studied until recently, however, when advances in genetics made it possible to prove their existence.

*In some regions they are all hybrids, and there is nothing you can do. You cannot send the army and kill everything. Luigi Boitani, wolf expert*

Time has proven Boitani right. Today, a growing number of studies point to the presence of hybrids in nearly every European country with wolves, and in some areas their numbers are growing steadily.



Wolfdog in the mountains (photo: Massimo Rosso)



Elisa Ramassa and fellow ranger Massimo Rosso search for wolf tracks in Gran Bosco di Salbertrand park photo: Massimo Rosso

The Gran Bosco di Salbertrand Natural Park is a nature reserve in Piedmont, Italy. Established in 1980, it protects the Site of Community Importance of the Great Woods of Salbertrand, in the Val Susa, south of the Dora Riparia, between 1,000 and 2,700 meters above sea level.



Gran Bosco di Salbertrand Natural Park photo: N Valente

## SE Asia—Oceania

### Action on feral horses: Kosciuszko NP, Australian Alps

Feral horses on the plains above Kiandra in the Kosciuszko national park. Photo: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

*From Invasive Species Council & The Guardian May 2024*

**More than 5,000 feral horses have been culled since the recommencement of aerial shooting in the Kosciuszko national park, with the NSW environment minister, describing the number as proof of the need to control the threat the animals pose to the alpine wilderness.**

Conservationists said for the first time the number of horses removed from the park would exceed the annual growth in horse populations, giving hope that a major threat for under-pressure ecosystems was starting to be addressed.

Data released by the government this week shows 5,539 horses have been killed since aerial shooting resumed late last year. A further 427 horses were removed through other methods, such as trapping and rehoming and ground shooting, since the last population surveys in October, which estimated the number of feral horses in the park had ballooned to 17,000.



“The numbers speak for themselves. There have been simply too many wild (feral) horses in Kosciuszko national park,” Minister Sharpe (above with image of endangered Broad-tooth rat) said. “The NSW government is delivering on its commitment to protect and restore our environment, and I am sure we will soon see the benefits for our native plants and animals as well as our precious alpine

**The Invasive Species Council’s advocacy director said the council’s own analysis of the government’s publicly available data suggested more horses had been removed from the park in the past 11 months than in the previous 21 years combined. Habitat destruction caused by horses is one of the key threats to the species, along with fire and climate change.**

### **Our Changing Snowscapes - Protect Our Winters Australia**

The average Australian ski seasons will shrink from the current 105 days to 81 by 2030 and just 70 days by 2050 even if emissions are cut radically, a new study claims.

Commissioned by volunteer-run climate advocacy group Protect our Winters Australia, the wide-ranging report examines what global heating could mean for industries like tourism and hydropower; for the Murray-Darling Basin (almost a third of the basin’s annual flows are from the high country), for First Nations people and for unique ecosystems. The modelling includes allowances for snow making and is designed especially for ski fields.

But the report also outlines widespread impacts on ecosystems, including on snow gums – the only tree that can survive in the sub-alpine landscapes.

[As global heating cuts Australia’s snowfall ski season may go downhill, report warns |](#)



Snow gums are threatened by increasing frequency of bushfires, plus the trees are also suffering a die-back likely linked to water stress and the changing climate that’s favouring a native wood-boring beetle.



# Oceania—New Zealand

## *Taranaki maunga, Egmont National Park: NZ*

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### ***New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC) News***

The Taranaki Crossing is a project within the Egmont National Park, connecting and upgrading a network of walking tracks on the maunga (mountain).

A total of 25 km of tracks have been improved – creating a mix of short walks, day walks and the foundation for a multi-day walking experience at Taranaki Maunga.

The Taranaki Crossing is a partnership between Ngā Iwi o Taranaki, DOC and Kānoa (MBIE). We work together to improve partnership with iwi and cultural expression along with enhancing the economic and tourist potential of the maunga.

Track improvements have helped protect alpine flora and fauna, including important ecological sites Ahukawakawa Wetland and Pouakai Tarns. We want to enhance the visitor experience at Taranaki Maunga, while also limiting the impact of visitors to this beautiful location.



A karakia and blessing by Ngāti Ruanui has marked the formal opening of the suspension bridge over the Manganui Gorge, one of the most striking features of the Taranaki Crossing project on Taranaki Maunga.

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**Egmont National Park can be found on the western coast of New Zealand's North Island. Here the volcano Taranaki rules supreme.**

Egmont National Park is a mountainous area that encompasses three volcanic cones. It contains a diverse range of vegetation that has developed in an environment of frequent volcanic activity. As the only large forest tract within the Egmont Ecological District, the park provides the district's only habitat for many bird species.

Taranaki is linked by legend to the mountains of the central North Island. It is said that Taranaki carved out the bed of the Whanganui River on a tragic flight from its ancestral home to the east. Today Taranaki is still venerated and its summit is sacred to the tangata whenua of the area.



Mt Taranaki photo: Stefan Marks DOC web

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# Himalayas—Central Asia

Cultural Significance, Biodiversity, Carbon Sequestration, Ecosystem Services...

**Taken from *The Conversation* (author Nita Dyola Quebec University) May 2024**

The Himalayas are home to a vast diversity of species, consisting of 10,000 vascular plants, 979 birds and 300 mammals, including the snow leopard, the red panda, the Himalayan tahr and the Himalayan monal. There are around 3,160 rare, endemic and sensitive plant varieties that hold special medicinal properties.

The region represents a huge mountain system extending 2,400 kilometres across Nepal, India, Bhutan, Pakistan, China, Myanmar and Afghanistan. It has a number of climate types and ecological zones, from tropical to alpine ecosystems including ice and rocks in the uppermost zone. All these ecological zones are compressed within a short elevation span.

The Himalayas — along with the related Tibetan Plateau — provide considerable ecosystem services and as the “third pole” are also the source of most of Asia’s major rivers, a fact that has earned it the additional moniker of *the world’s water tower*.

Like other regions of the Earth, the Himalayas are currently exposed to a rise in temperature. The warming rate in this area is three times higher than the global average, with an estimated increase of 0.6 C per decade.

**These warming conditions force many species to move towards cooler sites at higher elevations. However, this movement can increase competition for resources and space, particularly at higher elevations, leading to biodiversity risks.**

Trees are one of the main carbon sinks in the Himalayas, storing about 62 per cent of total forest carbon. The cooler forest soils in the northern biomes, including boreal forest and tundra, allow for further carbon storage as undecomposed organic matter.

**Conserving its biodiversity is crucial in maintaining a wide range of ecosystem services. The mountains help lessen the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by sequestering carbon within plant biomass and is home to a beautiful array of wildlife.**

It is crucial to adopt respectful approaches that consider both the ecological needs of these fragile ecosystems and the economic interests — and socio-cultural perspectives — of the people who live there. Solutions must originate from a serious and deep discussion among the major players, representing global and local interests.

While hiking on the mountains, one can easily notice the distinct changes in vegetation within a fairly small change in elevation. The biodiversity changes are most noticeable where the treeline gives way to alpine grasslands.

During the course of our recent [comprehensive field study in Kangchenjunga, Nepal](#) we recorded approximately 4,170 trees belonging to 126 different species every 100 metres in elevation change from 80 to 4,200 metres above sea level.

We also found that the middle elevations from 1,000 to 3,000 metres above sea level had higher levels of biodiversity compared with the mountain top and bottom.

Such high diversity is the result of a dynamic balance between warm temperatures and abundant precipitation.



Human-caused climate warming and increasing deforestation have also fueled an invasion of non-native species. For example, the crofton weed poses a real risk to the native Himalayan pine trees. Photo: (above) *Pinus roxburghii*.

Read the whole article:

[The high and mighty Himalayas: A biodiversity hotbed facing significant challenges](#)

## Scree and Talus

### Indigenous Filipinos fight to protect biodiverse mountains from mining From Mongabay April 2024

At the foothills of the Victoria-Anepahan Mountains in the Philippines', the Indigenous Tagbanua have lived with the rhythms of nature for generations. They rely on the lush landscape for everything they need, from food and water to nontimber products.

But their forest and way of life are under threat as mining companies covet the mountains for their nickel and other mineral resources, which are highly sought after for the global transition to renewable energy. The Indigenous Tagbanua are organizing to halt these mining plans before they begin, along with downstream farmers, church and civil society groups. Concerns raised by the Tagbanua and other mining opponents include loss of land and livelihood, reduced supply of water for irrigation, and damage to a unique and biodiverse ecosystem.



Aurora borealis fills an overnight sky, with rare sightings all over Europe - The Grossglockner mountains near Zell am See in Austria 11 May 2024

Photo: JFK/APA/AFP/Getty

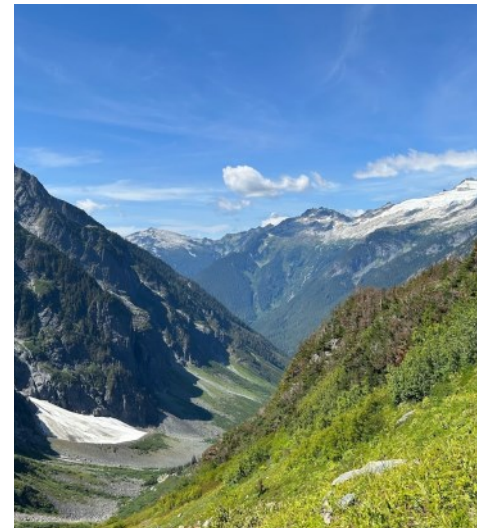
### Tanzania's 'mountain of millipedes' yields six new species

Scientists have recently described six new species of millipedes, including one from an entirely new genus, in Tanzania's Eastern Arc Mountains. This brings the number of new species found in the Udzungwa Mountains since 2014 to 81 — further confirming the rich biodiversity of these isolated mountain blocks.

### Grizzly Bears The Conversation April 2024

In Washington, NPS has partnered with US Fish and Wildlife on a plan to reintroduce grizzly bears to the North Cascades ecosystem (photo R). The threatened species has not been seen in the area for more than a quarter-century. Between three and seven bears will be released into the park each year in the groundbreaking project that could last up to a decade, with an ultimate aim of building back a healthy population of about 200 bears within six to 10 decades.

**It's why we have multiple wilderness areas in the North Cascades, it's why we have big pristine national parks. They are supposed to be managed to protect their resources in perpetuity, and grizzly bears, all wildlife, are a resource of the parks. (NPCA)**



### Warmer & Wetter Monsoon Season

**ICIMOD News May 2024** As Afghanistan reels from flash floods that have killed more than 300 people and destroyed thousands of homes, the countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya are braced for what might be a difficult monsoon season ahead, with experts warning of above average temperatures, and higher rainfall for Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. The outlook for June to September comes after a heatwave broke temperature records across the region last month—Nepal saw wildfires blaze in every province when high temperatures followed below-average winter precipitation.

**This year's monsoon outlook is worrying. It is also set against an overall warming trend, which we know is linked to greater melting of snow and ice and the loss of the permafrost – the hidden glue that stabilizes many mountain slopes, and whose thawing is often a key factor in the sorts of devastating flash floods and landslides we are now seeing across our region.**

## Scree and Talus cont.

### Not so lonely at the top From Nepali Times March 2024

Ten years ago Nepali guides were largely just ground handling agents for international expeditions. But after 'The Everest Brawl' took place at Camp 2, when one hundred Sherpas had a confrontation with European mountaineers, there has been a shift in the business of mountaineering from foreign to domestic (Nepali) operators.

Nepali high altitude guides started working directly with international clients, building and marketing their own brands through the Internet. Such direct contact brought down prices because of lower wages, operating costs and liability requirements compared to international companies.

### Barrier to block views of Mount Fuji The Guardian April 2024

A huge barrier to block views of Mount Fuji will be installed at a popular photo spot by Japanese authorities exasperated by crowds of badly behaved foreign tourists.

Mount Fuji, Japan's highest mountain, can be photographed from many spots in the resort town of Fujikawaguchiko. This viewpoint is particularly popular (right) because the majestic – and active – volcano appears behind a Lawson convenience store, which are ubiquitous in Japan.

### Devils Tower NPS News June 2024

**The month of June holds spiritual and cultural significance for the tribes closely associated with Mato Tipila – Bear Lodge (Devils Tower).** The 1995 Devils Tower National Monument Climbing Management Plan established a voluntary closure for all climbing routes on the Tower out of respect for the cultural activities of Native Americans. The voluntary climbing closure has been implemented each June since 1996. As a result, the average number of climbers that choose not to climb during June has seen an 85% reduction. **ED Note: Maybe the climbing closure should not be voluntary?**



Devils Tower rises above the surrounding grassland and ponderosa pine forests like a rocky sentinel. Geologists have studied the formation since the late 1800s, and today still wonder how it formed. Although much of the Tower's geologic story is agreed upon, theories differ on certain details.

Protected in 1906 for its scientific value, Devils Tower remains a place of scientific study, public wonderment and sacredness. We know that the Tower is formed of a rare igneous rock, phonolite porphyry, and is the largest example of columnar jointing in the world.

### Warming climate is turning rivers rusty with toxic metals The Guardian May 2024

Mountain rivers in the US state of Colorado are going rusty and the warming climate is to blame, according to research. An increase in toxic heavy metals has also been observed in Arctic streams, leading to concern that this phenomenon may be more widespread.

From the Andes to the European Alps, researchers have seen an increase in heavy metals in mountain streams in recent decades, but it has not been clear what is driving the trend. Analysing 40 years of water chemistry data from 22 of Colorado's mountain streams, researchers found that the concentrations of copper, zinc and sulphate had doubled over the past 30 years.

The study, published in Water Resources Research, found that drier weather and reduced stream flow accounted for about half of the rise, but the remaining increase was most likely due to thawing of underground ice, exposing more rocks to groundwater and releasing the metals contained within them.



Mountaineering in Nepal has changed a lot since the first 1924 British expedition. photo: Tendi Sherpa



For mountain communities the water may need additional treatment to make it safe; and as the climate continues to warm the problem will affect a greater number of communities around the world.

## Tools, Publications & other media

**[The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development](#)** (ICIMOD) and the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) have partnered to develop a new mobile app to strengthen community resilience and disaster preparedness in Nepal.

The app, called 'PrakopAlert', is targeted at members of the public and provides users with weather forecasts for rainfall, temperature, lightning alerts, hail warnings, wind speed, and stream flow information for rivers across Nepal.

### **[International dialogue in Nepal calls for urgent climate action in mountains](#)**

**From Mountain Partnership News** The Government of Nepal hosted a two-day international expert dialogue on "Mountain, People, and Climate Change" in Kathmandu in May. Main takeaways from the event include highlighting the importance of unified efforts to tackle the climate crisis and the need to increase climate finance, technology transfer and inclusive policies for sustainable mountain development. This expert dialogue marks a significant step towards strengthening mountain-based actions in the context of climate change. ... [Read more](#)

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### **[Explore the Tourism Collection](#)**

Tourism is a critical economic development strategy around the world, providing needed jobs and developing infrastructure, while connecting visitors to constructed attractions and sites of natural beauty. However, tourism and the growing field of ecotourism invariably impact native ecosystems and species. Scientific research investigating the impacts of tourism provides valuable insights which can inform more sustainable development strategies, drive policies, and enhance destination management including the protection of natural resources.

### **[Mountain Research and Development Vol 44, No 1 available online and open access](#)**

A study across the Andean region details how immigration is linked to an increase in exotic plant species, posing challenges for local ecosystems. An article on the heterogeneity of Swiss alpine summer farms provides a typology to facilitate tailored policies for sustainable mountain agriculture. And a review of pastoralism in Changthang, Ladakh, shows that integrated strategies that respect pastoralists' stewardship can help sustain this age-old production system and culture.

<https://www.mrd-journal.org/>

### **[Unite for Nature](#)** A world of Good News from IUCN

Some good news after all! From Canada to North Macedonia, from Nigeria all the way to Pakistan, *Unite for Nature* brings you hope inducing developments in nature preservation and restoration.

The world of good news captures conservation developments from different parts of the world to highlight the impact and advancement of conservation targets globally. Learn about these developments in the link above.

### **From Pedro da Cunha e Menezes Chair Trails Advisory Group**

We are preparing, jointly with the World Trails Network, a draft resolution on the role of long-distance trails as greenways, linking protected areas and being an auxiliary tool for wildlife migration. The goal is to have this resolution approved at the World Conservation Congress, in Abu Dhabi, next year and discussed at a side event at the CDB COP in Cali, Colombia later this year. Contact Pedro [cunhaemenezes@gmail.com](mailto:cunhaemenezes@gmail.com) if interested.

"Mountain solutions for a sustainable future – innovation, adaptation, youth and beyond" is the theme of this year's **[International Mountain Day](#)** (IMD) on 11 December. Over centuries, mountain communities have developed solutions to adapt to their harsh environments, deal with climate change, reduce poverty, and protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems in mountain regions. IMD 2024 aims to focus on innovative solutions, fostering adaptation strategies and empowering youth for a sustainable future. ... [Read more](#)

Looking for Mountain Research and many other excellent tools and publications? The Mountain Update has only a very tiny selection! Try Mountain Research & Development (MRD), [Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment \(GMBA\)](#), [Mountain Research Initiative](#), [ICIMOD](#) and [Mountain Partnership](#)—to mention a just few great sources of mountain information!

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## Important links

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas for an outline of the role of Mountain Specialist Group [WCPA Mountain Specialist Group](#)

Please go to [https://youtu.be/ NuY89TWscl](https://youtu.be/NuY89TWscl) a short video of Protecting Mountains IUCN WCC presentation by Peter Jacobs (Chair Mountain Specialist Group).

## Some events of interest

Events - MRI - Mountain Research Initiative  
 Mountain Partnerships Events [Here](#)  
 Alparc: [Alparc Events](#)

### WCPA Mountain Specialist Group Committee

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Young Professional Group	Shailyn Drukis	<a href="mailto:shailyn.drukis@gmail.com">shailyn.drukis@gmail.com</a>

While Mountain Network members can choose not to be WCPA members and still be involved and receive the Mountain UPDATE, the WCPA Chair, and Mountain Specialist Group Executive and would like to encourage all to become WCPA members. This helps to secure good governance and management of the WCPA and the Mountains Group and enlightens all members to the wider activities of the WCPA.

To learn more about WCPA membership go to: [WCPA Get Involved](#)

For any relevant mountain protected area news, please email me (Gill) on [peopleinnature@bigpond.com](mailto:peopleinnature@bigpond.com)

I look forward to hearing from you soon!