Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE

From Patagonia to the Antarctic Peninsula, this journey reminded me that mountains are more than landscapes. They are classrooms, sentinels, and places where science, community, and emotion meet.

Anna Gonzalez Manjon May 2025

A note from the editor Welcome to the 126th Mountain UPDATE.

Unfortunately with the spotlight on glaciers this year there is no good news…research has recently revealed mountain glaciers across the globe will not recover for centuries, even if human intervention cools the planet back to the 1.5°C limit. Right now we are on a 2.7°C warming trajectory.

Not surprisingly there are tributes and funerals for dying glaciers around the world; and to cheer us all up President Trump continues to undo hard won conservation laws in the USA.

There are some 'not strictly mountain' stories like the small mountains of rock at Murujuga with huge cultural and spiritual significance and the spruce trees in the Dolomites.

There is a meeting of world leaders at the first global UN conference on glaciers in Dushanbe, Tajikistan this week (end of May) and coincidently we also have an article about the Tajikistan's Fann Mountains.

June 2025

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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.

From *People* and *Mountains* around the world:

Global

International Year of Glaciers' Preservation

World Glacier Day Conference 21 March 2025 Islamabad Pakistan

There is rising concern about impacts of glacier and snowpack loss by world leaders as the global UN conference focused on glaciers opened in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on Friday 29 May. Officials from over 50 countries are in attendance, including 30 at ministerial level or higher.

The following is from ICIMOD in Tajikistan at the UN Conference. Thursday, 29 May 2025

An international study published in Science finds that glaciers are even more sensitive to global warming than previously estimated; with only 24% of present-day glacier mass remaining if the world warms to 2.7°C, the trajectory set by current climate policies. In contrast, limiting warming to 1.5°C would preserve 54% of glacier mass.

These figures however are global, skewed mostly by the very large glaciers around Antarctica and Greenland. The glacier regions most important to human communities are even more sensitive, with several losing nearly all glacier ice already at 2°C.

This includes the glaciers of the European Alps, the Rockies of the Western U.S. and Canada, and Iceland, with only 10-15% of their 2020 ice levels remaining at 2°C sustained warming. Most hard-hit would be Scandinavia, with no glacier ice remaining at 2°C at all.

All four of these regions are committed to losing at least half their ice already at or below 1°C; starkly mirroring a paper released last week setting the safe margin for Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets at or below that same 1°C level.

Even the Hindu Kush Himalaya, where glaciers feed river basins supporting 2 billion people, show only 25% of 2020 ice remaining at 2°C.

Staying close to 1.5°C on the other hand preserves at least some glacier ice in all regions, even Scandinavia, with 20-30% remaining in the four most sensitive regions; and 40-45% in the Himalayas and Caucuses; stressing the growing urgency of the 1.5°C temperature goal and rapid decarbonization to achieve it.

A sadly striking feature of the study is that glaciers in the Tropics -- the central Andes of Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, as well as East Africa and Indonesia -- appear to maintain higher levels of ice, but this is only because they have lost so much already. What remains today is at very high altitudes where ice essentially "evaporates," rather than melts.

Venezuela's final glacier, Humboldt lost glacier status in 2024; Indonesia's ironically named "Infinity Glacier" is likely to follow within the next two years. Germany lost one of its last five remaining glaciers during a heat wave in 2022, and Slovenia's likely lost its last real glacier a few decades ago.

Link to more information: Glaciers Science Daily

"Our study makes it painfully clear that every fraction of a degree matters," says co-lead author Dr. Harry Zekollari from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. "The choices we make today will resonate for centuries, determining how much of our glaciers can be preserved."

"Glaciers are good indicators of climate change because their retreat allows us to see with our own eyes how climate is changing...but the situation for glaciers is actually far worse than visible in the mountains today," says co-lead author Dr. Lilian Schuster from the University of Innsbruck.

Oceania—Antarctica

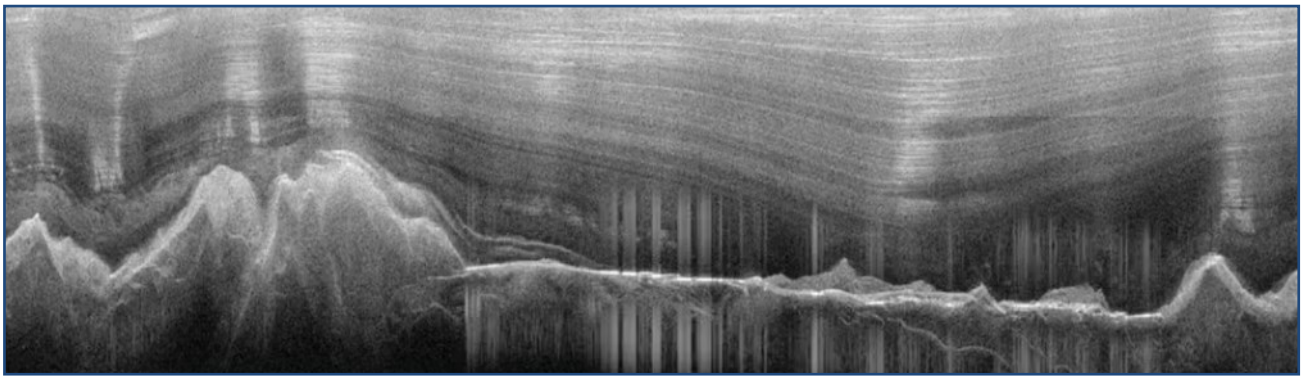
The Sentinel Range of the Ellsworth Mountains in Antarctica contains the highest peak on the continent: the Vinson Massif (4892m). Mark Whitman Mountain IQ web site

From The Conversation May 2025

An underground ocean might be easy to miss, but how do you **hide an entire mountain range the size of the European Alps**, right here on Earth? The answer is ice. In East Antarctica, a mountain range buried under kilometres of ice has revealed fresh secrets about the southern continent.

Some peaks, like the Sentinel Range or the towering Transantarctic Mountains, rise above the ice. But others, like the mysterious and ancient Gamburtsev Subglacial Mountains in the middle of East Antarctica, are completely buried.

The Gamburtsev Mountains are similar in scale and shape to the European Alps. But we can't see them because the high alpine peaks and deep glacial valleys are entombed beneath kilometres of ice.



A radar image showing the Gamburtsev mountain range under layers of ice. Creyts et al., Geophysical Research Letters (2014), CC BY-SA

How did they come to be? Typically, a mountain range will rise in places where two tectonic plates clash with each other. But East Antarctica has been tectonically stable for millions of years.

The new study, published in Earth and Planetary Science Letters, reveals how this hidden mountain chain emerged more than 500 million years ago when the supercontinent Gondwana formed from colliding tectonic plates.

The findings offer fresh insight into how mountains and continents evolve over geological time. They also help explain why Antarctica's interior has remained remarkably stable for hundreds of millions of years.

Antarctica is dominated by three (visible) major mountain range systems

The Antarctic Peninsula Cordillera, which runs the full length of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Further to the south are the Ellsworth Mountains, home to the Sentinel Range and the highest peaks on the Antarctic continent.

Then the Transantarctic Mountains, which run north to south and splits the continent into East and West Antarctica. ***Mark Whitman Mountain IQ web site***

Rwenzori Mountains National Park: Africa's last glaciers

From The Guardian April 2025

Photos: Project Pressure

Africa's last glaciers: an expedition to map ice loss in the Rwenzori mountains – in pictures by Project Pressure. The project in Uganda has captured the disastrous effects of the climate crisis on a vital source of water that is central to the lives and sacred beliefs of the local Bakonzo community.

The Rwenzori expedition team, included rangers, guides and porters from the local Bakonzo community. The mountains are nestled along the border of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

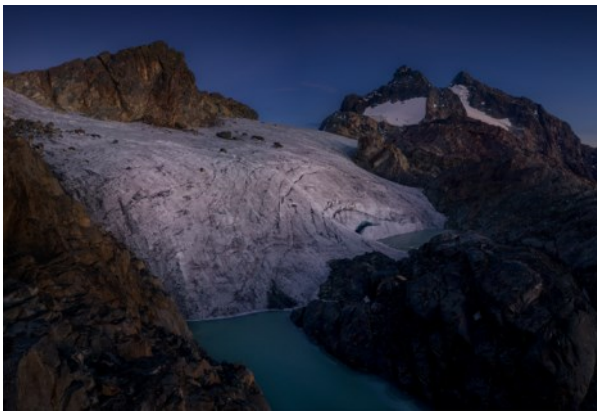
The three highest peaks in the Rwenzori mountains – Speke, Baker and Stanley – have been so eroded by the climate crisis that only Stanley's glacier remains.

Read/see whole article:**Africa's last glaciers: an expedition to map ice loss in the Rwenzori mountains – in pictures | Global development | The Guardian**

By 2024, ice remained on Speke, but not enough to be defined as a glacier.

Location of Rwenzori Mountains

African World Heritage Sites



Mount Stanley holds the last glacial ice in Rwenzori, but the glaciers are fragmenting. Image taken by Klaus Thymann in 2022

From UNESCO

The Rwenzori Mountains National Park provides stunning views of glacier and snow-capped mountains just kilometres from the equator, where it is contiguous with the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Having the third highest mountain in Africa at 5,109 m (after Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya), the Park includes a much larger alpine area than either, covering an area of 99,600 ha of which 70% lies at over 2,500 m in height.

The Rwenzori Mountains are the highest and most permanent sources of the River Nile, and constitute a vital water catchment.

The park has many natural habitats of endangered species and a rich and unusual flora comprising, among other species, the giant heather.

Insecurity caused by rebel insurgence in recent years has affected park management and encouraged illegal activities, the reason for which the property was inscribed in the List of World Heritage in Danger from 1999 -2004.

By 2024 the glacier on Mount Stanley has retreated. Project Pressure's data revealed a loss in surface area of 29.5% between 2020 and 2024

America—south

Following the Largest Guanaco Migration in the World: Argentina

From WCS April 2024 Field Notes

Guanacos require extensive and connected habitat to feed, reproduce, and avoid predators. Their migration is one of the most endangered ecological processes worldwide.

Some causes: habitat degradation from overgrazing and the oil, energy, and mining industries; the construction of barriers such as fences, roads, and urban developments; and the scarcity of food and water due to the climate crisis.

WCS Argentina's *Anibal Aminahuel and Jairo González* recently went to the Payunia Natural Protected Area to monitor them. This is an effort to track these seasonal population shifts and evaluate possible threats to the route.

That way, we can identify key areas to protect.

Accompanied by our mule "Rayo," we entered the Andes mountain range. We crossed the icy El Montañés stream, which descends from the high peaks and empties into the Rio Grande, one of the largest in Mendoza.

We stopped to check camera traps and, as always, we were surprised. We confirmed that this is a crossing point for the "ghost of the Andes", the Andean cat—the most endangered feline in South America.

Eventually Anibal and Jairo reached the extensive plains of the La Payunia Protected Area. Payún Liso (3,833 m) stood out on the horizon. Then herds of guanacos appeared.

They are beginning their migration. More than 20,000 guanacos will travel about 75 km to higher elevations in search of pastures.

All Photos Credit:©WCS Argentina

Wildlife Conservation Society: Science, conservation and inspiration to value and preserve wildlife and their habitats in Argentina.

Patagonia—Antarctica

A Journey to Inspire and Protect

School in Cerro Castillo, Pategonia

From Anna Gonzalez Manjon

It began in a virtual breakout room during a leadership training for women in STEMM. I met Mélisande, she in France, I in Spain, and that brief exchange planted the seed of a collaborative idea: to create a sound-based podcast to help children emotionally connect with the natural world, starting in one of the Earth's most iconic mountain regions: Patagonia.

A year later, Mélisande and I co-developed The Déjà Grands podcast and embarked on a 4,345 km journey across Argentina. Our mission: to record voices, stories, and soundscapes from mountain communities, scientists, and children to inspire curiosity and care for the environment among young listeners.

We travelled from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia, speaking with researchers, local elders, and park rangers. What does nature mean to you? How are glaciers and climate shaping your life? These were our guiding questions. Armed with microphones and backpacks, we also recorded the sounds of wind in forests, birds in remote valleys, and the ice of retreating glaciers cracking under pressure. Patagonia, with its dramatic landscapes and resilient communities, offered both beauty and urgency.

Language posed a challenge (Mélisande learned Spanish in three weeks) but the emotional power of our conversations overcame barriers. "People spoke from the heart," she said. "They were proud to share their communities and their connection with nature."

The aim is to reach more than 10,000 children across Latin America and Europe. The podcast, launching in French and Spanish in September, invites young audiences on a sound journey that awakens their sense of wonder and action for the planet.

Follow our project at:

www.dejagrands.fr/en or on

Instagram: @dejagrands_lepodcast

This initiative was born from Homeward Bound, a global program that empowers women and non-binary people in science to lead on climate and environmental issues. In February 2025, I joined 123 other scientists from 22 countries on the program's final stage: a three-week expedition to Antarctica.

There, in between icebergs and penguins, we studied biodiversity, climate science, and leadership; all while witnessing the changes reshaping the southernmost continent. At Palmer Station, we learned that the Marr Ice Piedmont glacier is retreating nearly eight metres per year. We even experienced rain (rather than snow) during the austral summer.

These changes are a clear signal: our mountain and polar regions are warning us. And yet, surrounded by a network of committed scientists, we felt hopeful. In Antarctica, we weren't just learning, we were transforming together.

From Patagonia to the Antarctic Peninsula, this journey reminded me that mountains are more than landscapes. They are classrooms, sentinels, and places where science, community, and emotion meet.

Anna Gonzalez Manjon is a biologist and Scientific Project Developer at the Kilian Jornet Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to protecting mountains and their ecosystems. She leads educational and hands-on projects, such as sustainable trail restoration and protected area management, to reconnect people with nature, starting from the peaks.

America—north

Unsustainable logging is one of the global north's best-kept secrets

Tongass National Forest, Alaska photo: The Wilderness Society

From The Guardian (by Jennifer Skene) April 2025

The world is running out of time to halt deforestation and forest degradation. Yet instead of stepping up, the United States is dismantling forest protections and undermining global progress – highlighting the dangers of global forest policy that fails to hold the wealthiest, most powerful countries accountable.

Each year, millions of acres of old-growth and primary forests across North America, Europe and Australia are clearcut under the guise of "sustainable forest management". International policy, by design, looks the other way, focusing attention instead on deforestation in the tropics. This double standard allows the world's wealthiest nations to evade accountability for industrial logging's catastrophic consequences.

It is a system built on the false assumption that the global north behaves responsibly, while scrutiny is reserved for tropical countries. But the latest actions by the US highlight just how dangerous and unbalanced this paradigm is.

President Donald Trump has taken an axe to forest protections in the US, announcing two executive orders that aim to strip away foundational checks on destructive logging. This aggressive expansion will degrade irreplaceable forests like Alaska's Tongass national forest – one of the world's largest intact temperate rainforests. It will also increase carbon emissions and make communities more vulnerable to climate disasters.

Adapted from Sierra Club News Oregan Chapter May 2025

Our federal forests provide a multitude of services for all Americans and support the nonhuman species that make up the web of life. Unchecked expansion of logging on these lands threatens our access to clean air, clean water, and the iconic recreational spaces that millions of Americans visit every year.

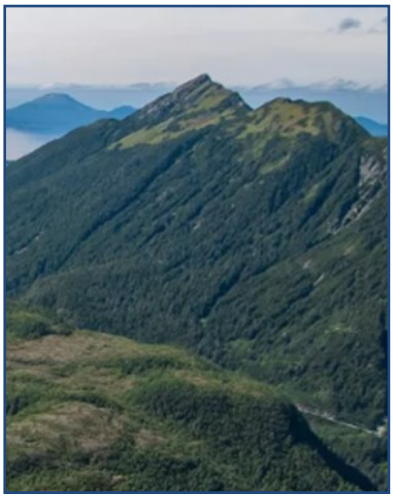
President Trump's executive order issued on March 1st, E.O. 14225, calls for increasing logging on our federal lands by 25%, ignoring the legal mandate from Congress to manage our public forests for multiple uses.

Meanwhile, the "Fix Our Forests Act," which passed in the House and is currently in the Senate, would facilitate the E.O.'s push for a massive logging ramp-up.

Trump's push to expand timber production targets older trees and the few old-growth forests left in the United States. Mature and old-growth (MOG) forests provide habitat for endangered species, mitigate climate change through the absorption and long-term storage of carbon, and protect vital watersheds that provide clean, cold water for healthy fish populations and human communities. Furthermore, Trump's logging E.O. wants to bypass essential protections for endangered species, worsening the ongoing biodiversity crisis.

Jennifer Skene is director of global northern forests policy for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

NRDC works to safeguard the earth—its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends.



Kootznoowoo Wilderness Tongass NF (NRDC)

The **2001 Roadless Rule** successfully protected 58.5 million acres of national forest roadless areas from road building and logging.

But based on the current US administration's actions so far, including sweeping attacks to gut and destabilize the Forest Service, rollbacks at the Tongass National Forest might just be the start to a bigger fight in scope to defend the Roadless Rule.

TWS 2025

Europe

The Town that went Wild: Italy

In the heart of the Central Apennines rewilding landscape, the residents of Pettorano sul Gizio are benefitting from lives that are increasingly entwined with local nature—this village learned to love it's bears.

While depopulation may have drawn bears to the region, in Pettorano sul Gizio bears are now bringing people back.

From The Guardian April 2025

Pettorano sul Gizio is a medieval mountain town full of alleys, watchful cats and wooden doors locked sometime in the last century. In 1920, about 5,000 people lived here, now the population is 390. It resembles many others in Italy's south-central Abruzzo region, home to a shrinking, ageing population.

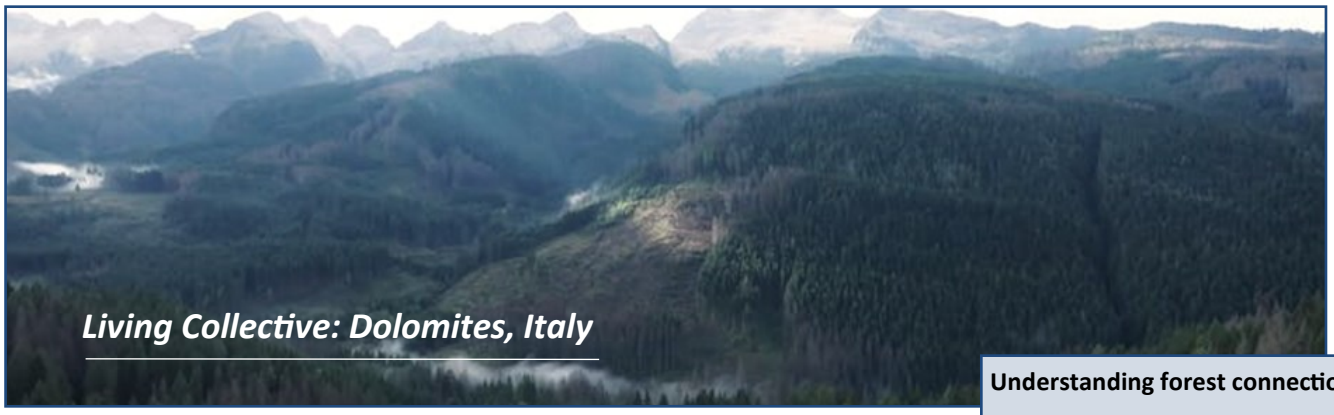
But Pettorano sul Gizio is different – set apart by its passion for bears. A lifesize model of a brown bear and cub stands in the town square, and paintings of bears look down from the walls.

At dawn and dusk, a bear known as Barbara is known to wander the narrow streets – sometimes trailed by cubs – to see if she can pilfer any food.

Now known as "the town that went wild", it has attracted a new crowd of younger people working in nature restoration. Yet, making peace with the town's critically endangered Marsican, or Apennine, bears (Ursus arctos marsicanus), which are endemic to the Abruzzo region, was not easy. Electric fences were erected around more than 100 properties to protect bees, chickens and other farm animals; gates and bear-proof bins were installed; and manuals on how best to live alongside bears were distributed around Pettorano sul Gizio and the neighbouring town of Rocca Pia.

Other European countries are taking note. There are now 18 bear-smart communities across Europe, funded by the EU's Life environmental programme.

Marsican Bear



Living Collective: Dolomites, Italy

Research findings underscore the importance of protecting older forests

From The Conversation & UNSW Newsroom April 2025

Earth's cycles of light and dark profoundly affect billions of organisms. Events such as solar eclipses are known to bring about marked shifts in animals, but do they have the same effect on plants? Researchers in the Dolomites were monitoring the bioelectrical impulses of spruce trees, when a solar eclipse passed over. They left their sensors running to record the trees' response to the eclipse.

The spruce trees not only responded to the solar eclipse – they actively anticipated it, by synchronising their bioelectrical signals hours in advance.

This forest-wide phenomenon, detailed in the journal Royal Society Open Science, reveals a new layer of complexity in plant behaviour. It adds to emerging evidence that plants actively participate in their ecosystems.

Understanding forest connections

These findings align with extensive prior research by others, highlighting the extent to which trees in forest ecosystems are connected. These behaviours may ultimately influence the forest ecosystem's resilience, biodiversity and overall function, by helping it cope with rapid and unpredictable changes.

The findings also underscore the importance of protecting older forests, which serve as pillars of ecosystem resilience – potentially preserving and transmitting invaluable ecological knowledge.

Himalayas—Central Asia

Buddhist monks, local community, authors & scientists gather as part global awareness-raising efforts for the United Nations' **International Year for Glaciers' Preservation 2025** photos: ICIMOD

From ICIMOD May 12 2025 Requiem for a Glacier

Two large memorial plaques carved in Nepali granite were installed in the Yala Glacier base camp (5090m) Langtang Valley of Nepal on Monday 12 May; to mark the rapid disappearance of one of the longest and most consistently measured glacier in the Hindu Kush Himalaya. This 3,500km-long mountain range stores more snow and ice than any region outside the two polar regions.

The stones left at the base of the glacier carry messages by two world-famous authors, **Manjushree Thapa** and **Andri Snaer Magnason**, in English, Nepali and locally spoken Tibetan.

Thapa's inscription states:

"Yala, where the gods dream high in the mountains, where the cold is divine. Dream of life in rock, sediment, and snow, in the pulverizing of ice and earth, in meltwater pools the colour of sky. Dream. Dream of a glacier and the civilizations downstream. Entire ecosystems: our own sustenance. The cosmos. And all that we know and all that we love."

Magnason's inscription reads:

"*A message to the future: Yala glacier is one of 54,000 glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayas, most of which are expected to vanish this century due to global warming. This monument is to acknowledge that we know what is happening and what needs to be done. Only you know if we did it. May 2025 426ppm CO2 [parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere]"*

Yala is the first glacier in Asia and the third glacier worldwide to carry words by Magnason.

Yala Glacier is remarkable both for the pace of its retreat and its role in upskilling regional glaciologists – hundreds of whom have trained on the glacier due to its proximity and relative ease of access to Kathmandu.

Glacier funerals:

OK glacier Iceland 2019

Pizol glacier Switzerland 2019

Clark glacier Oregon USA 2020

Basoino glacier Switzerland 2021

Ayoloca glacier Mexico 2021

Lemhang glacier Bhutan 2021 (due 2017 glacial lake

Himalayas—Central Asia

Fann Mountains destined to be a protected area: Tajikistan

From Elaine Thomas Australian Alps national parks program manager

Nestled between China, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, **Tajikistan** is a small, mountainous state which was historically of great significance — Alexander the Great built cities here, it was central to the Silk Road and the Great Game was played out along its rivers and passes.

The Fann Mountains, near the nation's capital Dushanbe, have snow-capped peaks with seven that rise over 5,000 meters. The highest point is Chimtarga peak at 5,489m.

There are many lakes in the Fanns. The best known are Alaudin lakes in the Chapdara River valley and the Kulikalon Lakes on the northern slope of Chimtarga peak.

Though the landscapes in the Fann often seem empty, in fact that's far from the truth. People have lived here for millennia, and some of them have preserved their languages and cultures since ancient times. Their villages sit by the riverside, and in summer the shepherds drive their flocks to high meadows over mountain passes.

The Fann Mountains have been nominated for World Heritage listing in recognition of its beautiful and unique mountain landscape, the presence of a range of rare plants and animals and its cultural heritage.

The Fann Mountains are part of Tajikistan's Tentative List, which is a list of properties that a country intends to nominate for World Heritage status.

There are the following species found under the threat of disappearance inhabited in the Fann mountains: snow leopard, bearded eagle, golden eagle, turkestanic desert falcon, asian moufflon, and other birds.

From UNESCO Tajikistan Tentative List

One of the best trekking destinations of Central Asia, the Fann Mountains impress with its remote wilderness and beautiful scenery photos: Elaine Thomas

Scree and Talus

De-extinction' – is it greenwashing? *Mongabay May 2025*

Colossal, a biotech company in the United States made headlines last month by revealing photos of genetically modified gray wolves, calling them "dire wolves," a species that hasn't existed for more than 10,000 years. Some observers have been asserting that "de-extinction" is real. But it's not, says podcast guest Dieter Hochuli, a professor at the Integrative Ecology Lab at the University of Sydney.

However, he does agree that certain aspects of the technology could be used to solve problems plaguing existing species in certain situations, such as the northern quoll in Australia, which is particularly vulnerable to the bufotoxin secreted by the invasive cane toad. Colossal is working on a program to tackle this issue, but Hochuli says the overarching messaging is harmful. "It doesn't promote the outcomes that we desperately need. We know what the threatening processes are for a large number of animals and plants at risk, and we know what the pathways might be to help support them, but it's hard. It's unattractive work. It's long-term work. It works outside a political cycle. And it doesn't capture the headlines as much."

Kyrgyz Nomad Trail expands to Kyrgyzstan's southwest mountains

The Kyrgyz Nomad Trail (KNT), already the longest hiking trail in Central Asia, is embarking on an ambitious expansion, adding 1 000 kilometres through the rugged Osh and Batken districts of southwest Kyrgyzstan. Trail creator Yuval Yellin announced that this exciting new section will be ready to welcome hikers by summer 2025 ***From Mtn Partnership Peak to Peak March 2025***

IMF urged to protect Madagascar forests against road projects *February 2025*

Thirty-five members of the European Parliament (MEP) are calling on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to renegotiate its funding to Madagascar that could support two highway projects expected to cut across the nation's vital forests.

The IMF in June 2024 announced $321 million to Madagascar through its Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). It aims to aid the country's adaptation to climate change through initiatives like road infrastructure enhancement.

They urged the IMF to only transfer the funds "once there is a formal commitment that protected areas will not be affected by the road projects." With the European Union's antideforestation regulation taking effect in 2026, the MEPs then wanted to urge the IMF not to misuse its resilience fund.

Murujuga's 50,000-year-old rock art

Photos: *peopleinnature*

Australia's new environment minister has approved an extension for the North West Shelf liquefied natural gas project. The gas plant at Karratha, Western Australia, will run until 2070.

This expansion – and the pollution it will release – has led to a recommendation by the International Council on Monuments and Sites to defer UNESCO's decision on the world heritage listing of the nearby Murujuga rock art.

Two of the recommendations prior to renomination of the site are to "ensure the total removal of degrading acidic emissions" and "prevent any further industrial development adjacent to, and within, the Murujuga Cultural Landscape".

Murujuga has more than one million petroglyphs, some up to 50,000 years old.

It has the oldest depictions of the human face in the world and records the lore and traditions of Aboriginal Australians since the first human settlement of this continent. It is strikingly beautiful and is of enormous cultural and spiritual importance to the Traditional Owners. ***From The Conversation & Murujuga National Park web May 2025***

Scree and Talus cont.

Registration is now open for the ***IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025***, where IUCN Members, Commission members, conservation experts and decision-makers will define global priorities, foster new collaborations and inspire real change for our planet. Register today and start planning your journey to Abu Dhabi.

Subscribe to the Congress newsletter. Visit the Congress website

Cute & Endearing – update on Australia's Mountain Pygmy Possum

The endangered mountain pygmy possum is proving itself nothing short of a fighter as its population continues to bounce back in the Australian Alps

The species' numbers in Kosciuszko National Park began to drop in 2017 during the drought, with as few as 700 left in the wake of the Black Summer bushfires in 2020.

It has been a long journey, but as the environment recovers after the natural disasters, so does the possum population. The possums were fed "Bogong biscuits" created as a supplementary food source for two years between 2020 and 2022, until the vegetation recovered," said Dr Linda Broome a threatened species officer with the NSW Environment Department. "If we hadn't fed the possums, they would have dropped down to 500." It is now estimated numbers were back to about 940-950, which was "close to average". ***From ABC News May 2025***

Possums are tiny, with the average adult weighing just 40 grams. These alpine specialists are the only small mammal that hibernates under the snow. There's so little alpine country in Australia making them very unique.

Peak stupidity Some people just love mountains too much—An international university student has been rescued from the slopes of Mount Fuji twice in the space of a week – the second time during an attempt to retrieve his mobile phone. ***Guardian April 2025***

At the first ever ***Canadian National Conference on Ecological Connectivity*** last week, the Royal Canadian Geographical Society launched a new interactive website and story map platform. With support from Parks Canada, the website features a map of national priority areas for ecological corridors in Canada and stories of work going on across the country. It will help increase the understanding of Canadians of the importance of ecological connectivity and inspire action on the ground. website https://rightofpassage.canadiangeographic.ca/ ***From Connectivity Conservation SG April 2025***

Nepali Sherpa guide Kami Rita, 55, has scaled Mount Everest for a record 31st time. It comes about a week after a British mountain guide scaled Everest for the 19th time, breaking the non-Sherpa record. Kami Rita first summited Everest in 1994 guiding a commercial expedition and has made the peak almost ever year since. ***BBC May 2025***

Mountain Research and Development **Vol 45, No 1:**
Woodland Resurgence and Sustainability in Mountains—Patterns, Drivers, and Social-Ecological Consequences

How can woodland resurgence best benefit people and nature? Articles in this focus issue reflect the diversity of woodland resurgence across mountain contexts and the growing importance of restoration. Topics include Andean forest restoration in Peru, reforestation integrating local ecological knowledge in Nepal, forest structural complexity in Nepal, farm trees as cultural keystone species in Morocco, and more.

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

In Morocco's High Atlas Mountains, farm trees are of great cultural importance to the local Amazigh communities. Photo: T Plieninger

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

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/_NuY89TWscI 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**

WCPA Mountain Specialist Group Committee		
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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

I look forward to hearing from you soon!